



Sharon Murphy, a student at St. John Fisher College and a close friend of Father Lavery, says a prayer before funeral services begin, Saturday, December 7. Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

Friends bid farewell to Father Charley

About 600 people attended the Mass of Christian Burial for Father Charles J. Lavery on Saturday, December 7, at St. Louis Church, Pittsford. Among the gathering were family members, friends, past and current students at St. John Fisher College, college trustees and local government representatives.

The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark with concelebrants Bishops Joseph L. Hogan and Dennis W. Hickey, a number of area priests and Cardinal George Flahiff, CSB, former superior of the Congregation of St. Basil and retired archbishop of Winnipeg, Canada.

The homily was given by Father Joseph B. Dorsey, CSB, who opened his remarks by saying that the service so far had been much too solemn to suit Father Lavery. "Charley hated the black shirts that most priests wear today," Father Dorsey noted, adding that Father Lavery had preferred to wear a white shirt with French cuffs and cuff links. As a memorial to him, both Father Dorsey and Bishop Clark noted that they were wearing white shirts with French cuffs.

Father Dorsey spoke of Father Lavery's commitment to serving the Rochester community and of the many awards and honors that service brought to him. "The secret of

Father Lavery's life of loving service to God and community ... is found in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, which was the center of his life."

Father Dorsey said that the congregation was not assembled to mourn or grieve over the loss of Father Lavery, but to celebrate over his reception in heaven. "If we listen closely, we can almost hear the Lord say, 'Well done Charley. Because you have been faithful in little things, I will set you over greater things.'"

Father Lavery "walked through life in the way of Jesus ... with only one intent, to make a moment brighter and to teach us that God loves us," Father Dorsey said. In stressful circumstances, Father Dorsey said, he had never heard Father Lavery say an unkind word.

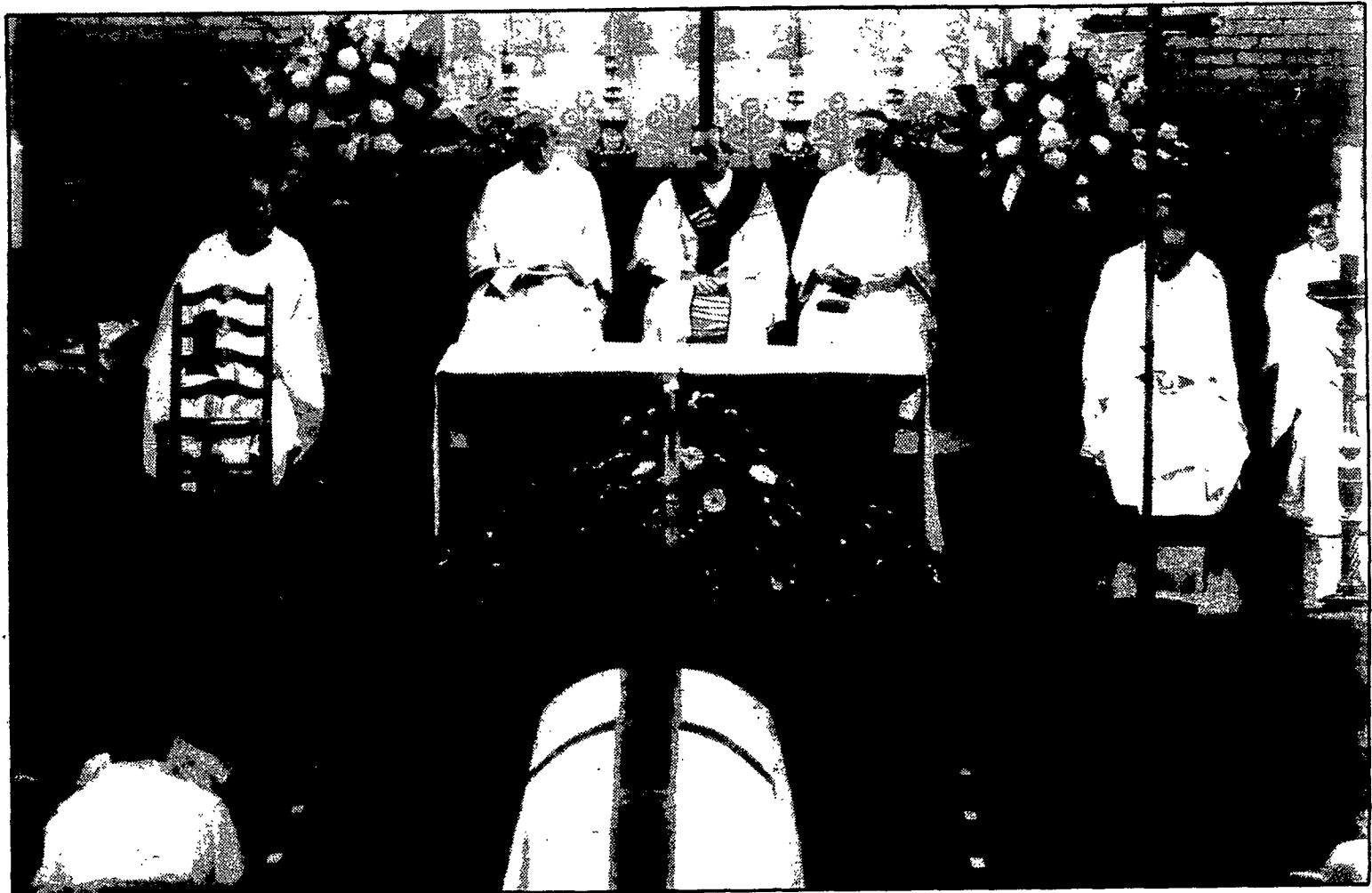
Father Dorsey noted it was fitting that on the day before the feast of the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8), the community should celebrate the fulfillment of Father Lavery's life in eternity. Father Lavery had made his first profession of vows and been ordained on the feast of the Assumption of Mary. Father Dorsey also said Father Lavery would be pleased that he and Rabbi Phillip S. Bernstein had died on the same day (Dec. 3) and would enter into heaven together.



Pall bearers place Fr. Lavery's casket into the waiting hearse for the journey to Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. The funeral procession passed by St. John Fisher College on the way to the cemetery.



Kathy Keogh and her daughter Teresa, 8, of St. Louis Parish, pay their last respects to Father Lavery.



Mass of Christian Burial was said by principal celebrant Bishop Matthew H. Clark (center) with concelebrants retired Bishop Joseph L. Hogan (left), Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey (right), and Cardinal George Flahiff, CSB, retired archbishop of Winnipeg, Canada (far left).