

Obits/et cetera

Sister Mary Irmina Geyer, taught for 39 years at Mercy

Sister Mary Irmina Geyer, a Sister of Mercy for 63 years, died of congestive heart failure Monday, Sept. 5, 1988, at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester. She was 84.

Born in Rochester on December 6, 1903, Sister Geyer was christened Marie Pauline. Both of her parents were native Rochesterians.

She entered the Mercy congregation in 1925 at age 21, and professed her final vows as a Sister of Mercy on September 3, 1931.

After graduating from Rochester's West High School in 1921, Sister Geyer went on to the New York State College for Teachers in Albany, where she received a bachelor of science degree in commerce in 1937. She later earned a master's degree in economics with a minor in philosophy from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., in 1943.

Active in apostolic ministry during her 63 years as a Mercy sister, Sister Geyer spent 41 years as a teacher. She began as an elementary school teacher at St. John the Evangelist on

Humboldt Street in 1925, before moving on to St. Ann's in Hornell in 1928.

In 1930, Sister Geyer joined the faculty at Our Lady of Mercy High School, which had opened just two years earlier. She remained there for 39 years, primarily as a Spanish and business teacher. She also moderated the Student Government Association and the Catholic Action group at the school for several years.

While teaching from 1954 to 1963, Sister Geyer was director of the congregation's program for junior professed sisters — those women who were in between first and final vows. She also became secretary general in the congregation's administration office in 1967, and she continued in that capacity until 1971.

After retiring from teaching in 1969, Sister Geyer became a secretary for the congregation's administration team from 1971 to 1974. She worked as a secretary in the administration office from 1974 until her death last week.

"She loved her old friends, but she delight-

ed in meeting new people too," said Sister Mary Esther, who had been driving Sister Geyer to therapy sessions since 1980. "She collected names, wrote the names and addresses down in a little black book, and kept in touch with the people over the years. She had connections all over the Rochester area and beyond. She even went out of town to visit them."

Father Anthony Valente, pastor of Our Lady

Queen of Peace parish, celebrated a Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Geyer in the motherhouse chapel on Thursday, Sept. 8. Interment was at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

Sister Geyer is survived by her sister, Mrs. Albert (Helen) Scheg of Albion; niece, Mrs. Chris (Bettie) Lindley; nephew, Bernard Scheg; and three grandnephews, Charles, Kevin and Stephen Fitzpatrick.

Monsignor James D. Cuffney, 80 served 20 years as Auburn pastor

A pastor who always maintained a sense of humor, Monsignor James D. Cuffney, died on Sunday, Sept. 11, 1988, in Auburn. He was 80.

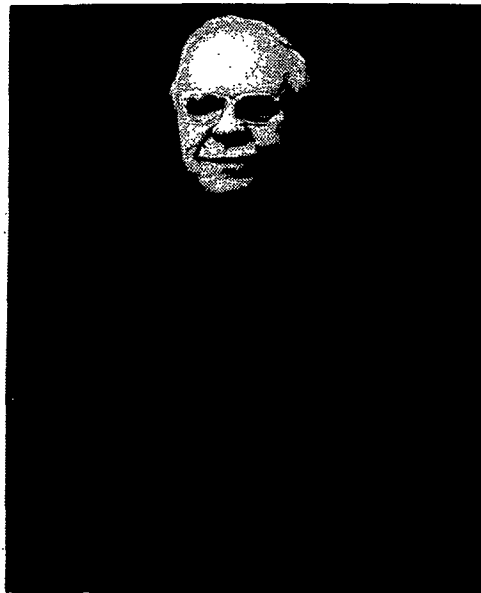
Monsignor Cuffney served for more than 20 years as pastor of St. Mary's, Auburn, where he presided over the fund raising and construction for a new parish school, and the redecoration of the church building. He retired in August, 1979.

Born in Sonyea, N.Y., to James L. Cuffney and Mildred H. Westcott, he moved to Bath, N.Y., with his family at age two. Later, he attended Haverling High School before enrolling at St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries in Rochester.

Archbishop Edward Mooney ordained Father Cuffney on June 15, 1935, at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Rochester. He celebrated his first Mass at St. Mary's, Bath, the following day.

From 1935 to 1940, he served as assistant pastor at St. Thomas the Apostle in Irondequoit. After spending the following two years as assistant pastor at St. Mary's, Auburn, he moved to St. Patrick's, Seneca Falls, where he served until 1947. Between 1947 and 1948, he was assigned to St. Mary's, Canandaigua; then he was appointed procurator at St. Bernard's Seminary, where he remained for 10 years.

Meanwhile, in 1952, Pope Pius XII named then-Father Cuffney Papal Chamberlain. After moving to St. Mary's as pastor, he was appointed Dean of Cayuga County by Bishop James Kearney. The following year, 1959, he



Monsignor James D. Cuffney

was elevated to the rank of Domestic Prelate with the title Right Reverend Monsignor.

Monsignor Cuffney also served as District Chaplain of the Knights of Columbus while at Seneca Falls in 1946.

He is survived by: three brothers, William of Salinas, Calif.; Francis of East Aurora; and Robert of Bath; two sisters, Mrs. Rene (Mary Louise) Dittiacur, and Mrs. Charles (Margaret) Reimer; as well as many nieces and nephews.

Diocesan Birthright chapters need non-judgmental volunteers

The nine active Birthright chapters within the Rochester diocese are in need of volunteers in such areas as counseling, office work and staffing the clothing depot.

Birthright provides alternatives to abortion to anyone troubled by an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy. Among other things, volunteers should be non-judgmental, gentle and

able to be confidential.

Each Birthright center is individually staffed and managed. This summer, Birthright International, Inc. is 20 years old. Birthright of Rochester has been serving the local community since July, 1971.

Call (716)328-8700 or your local Birthright chapter for information.

Parishes

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submitted to Bishop Clark in June, 1988, by a subcommittee of the Task Force on Pastoral Structures and Services. The subcommittee, headed by Father Kevin McKenna, developed the plan based on a report presented to Bishop Clark by the task force in March, 1987. Father Tomasso was asked by Bishop Clark to coordinate the implementation of the subcommittee plan.

The regional approach was chosen because "alternate staffing is going to be a regional affair," Father Tomasso noted. "All parishes (within a region) are going to be asked to say how they will deal with alternate staff. It's hard to say which parishes will be involved in an alternate staff, or that a parish can remain an island — because a neighboring parish may have to call on them."

Gloria Ulterino, who helped plan the assemblies, noted that another reason for using the regional meetings is that a regional structure already exists in the diocese. Each assembly will open "up the possibility for parishes in a given area to work together," observed Ulterino, a staff member at Good Shepherd Parish in Henrietta. "In the future, there will be a greater need for parishes to work together. We are not only the Church in our own parish — we are

the Church of Rochester, we are the Church universal."

"The ultimate objective is to get parishes to deal with the future in a way and in a time frame that is appropriate for each parish," said Kevin Olifiers, who worked on one of the subcommittees of the task force. His own parish, St. Paul's in Webster, began looking at alternate staffing 18 months ago in preparation for the retirement this June of long-time pastor, Father John T. Walsh.

St. Paul's received a new pastor, Father Raymond Booth, but Olifiers predicted that some other parishes will be faced with situations in which the diocese will not be able to replace pastors. "As other parishes reach the point when their pastors are retiring, they are going to have to think about possible alternatives," he said.

Olifiers also speculated that the assemblies will force "each of the parishes to think about the rightful place of laity in the parish."

"All the statistics tell us that the leadership in the Church is changing," Ulterino noted. "We know by the year 2000 there are going to be fewer ordained leaders. We need to think in creative terms who will be the leadership in our parishes."

"We firmly believe that our parishes are rich in talented lay people, and their leadership and gifts will do marvelous things for the health of parish life in these new staffing patterns," Father Tomasso said. "We are also actively in-

Community education forums set for St. Mary's Hospital

St. Mary's Hospital has announced the beginning of its Community Education Program, a series of monthly forums designed to promote healthy lifestyles. Each forum is free and open to the public.

The program premieres with the topic, "Winken, Blinken and Nod: Understanding Your Child's Sleep Patterns and Problems." Leading the program will be Dr. Donald Greenblat, director of St. Mary's Sleep Disorders Center. The program will take place Wednesday, Sept. 28, at 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Rhinecliff and Imperial Dr., Brighton.

Dr. Greenblat's presentation will be targeted to parents whose young children may be experiencing nightmares, bedwetting, insomnia or sleepwalking.

Teleconference on grief set for RIT in September

An interactive video teleconference entitled "The Experience of Grief: Helping Oneself and Others" has been scheduled for the Rochester Institute of Technology Tuesday, Sept. 20. The program focuses on the experience of loss, caring for the grief stricken and managing the stress that accompanies both.

The video teleconference features Clinical Thanatologist Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt, a noted author and director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colo., and is designed for a wide audience of grief-care providers such as funeral directors, health care professionals, counselors, clergy and others.

Topics of the conference include the dimensions of grief, reconciliation needs of the mourner and more.

Call Gabrielle Weiss at (716)223-1888 for registration information.

terested in recruitment, formation and education of people for ministry — all kinds of ministry."

While encouraging lay people, the parish reflection program is also concerned with education of parishioners about alternate staffing, Father Tomasso said. "The goal is not only parish staff and parish council involvement, but the involvement of parishioners at all levels," he noted. "The success of alternate staffing rests on parishioners' understanding, cooperation and support for new staffing patterns." He said that the parish reflection teams will oversee the process of education that will

Single parent program slated

October's topic will address, "The Cholesterol Craze: What Does It All Mean?" Presenters for the program will be staff members at St. Mary's cardiac rehabilitation department.

In November, the series will focus on "Vision Quest: Eye Fitness After Fifty." Led by the St. Mary's Eye Center, this program will discuss the latest on treating visual disorders common among older adults.

Pre-registration is required for each forum. For registration information, call (716)464-3519.

Hospice volunteers sought

Cancer Action, Inc. is seeking volunteers to help families care for dying members at home. Volunteers will perform such functions as running errands, offering family members respite by sitting with the patient or simply listening to patient or family concerns.

Training starts October 10, and will involve two evenings per week until November 16. For an interview and more information, call Lindsay Beach at Genesee Region Home Care Association, (716)325-1880, or Betty DellaPorta at Cancer Action, 423-9700.

Crusade

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and "the most simple preacher I've ever heard." Gwen Kelley of Browncroft Community Church, admires Graham as a down-to-earth person. "He's real. You can actually look up to him," she remarked.

Kelley and Linda Hitchcock, both night nurses at Highland Hospital, helped care for Graham during his stay at the hospital last week. Soon after his plane arrived in Rochester, Graham was admitted to Highland. He suffered from a swollen foot, which apparently

became infected after it was bitten by a poisonous spider at Graham's home in North Carolina. The minister was released just two hours before Sunday's service.

"He'd talk to you for hours," Hitchcock said of her patient. "We were more protective of him than he was of himself," she added, noting that Graham visited several patients throughout the hospital.

Graham was equally effective at communicating with the much larger group to whom he spoke Sunday, according to Nicholas Welch, a pairing supervisor from Dayspring Christian Ministries in Avon. "He spoke to issues that were relevant, and gave us an answer we all need," Welch said.

The overall goal of the regional assemblies and parish reflections sessions is to prepare for the future while there is still time for the Church in Rochester to exercise options.

"We're trying to avoid crisis decisions," Father Tomasso said. "The statistics make it look crisis-oriented. I don't think it's a crisis-oriented project. I think it's a continuation of solid ministry with our people."

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