

## Brother O'Connor, CFC

Brother Edward C. O'Connor, CFC, who was the guidance director at Bishop Kearney High School from 1967 to 1977 and a Christian Brother for 58 years, died Saturday, Feb. 25, 1989, at St. Joseph's Residence in New Rochelle, N.Y., after a long illness. He was 78.

Brother O'Connor was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, on July 16, 1910, the son of Timothy and Catherine (Sullivan) O'Connor. He attended St. Patrick's High School in Halifax and earned a bachelor's degree in 1930 from St. Mary's College in Halifax. Brother O'Connor entered the Congregation of Christian Brothers in 1930 at West Park, N.Y.

He made his first vows as a brother in 1932 and was assigned to teach at All Saints School in Manhattan. In 1933

Brother O'Connor was assigned to Poyer Memorial Academy in Manhattan, where he taught for four years before being assigned in 1937 to Leo High School in Chicago.

Brother O'Connor was assigned to the formation staff for young brothers at West Park and was appointed superior and principal of the high school in 1946. Three years later, he was appointed superior and administrator of St. Gabriel's Junior College in West Park.

During that period, he became a naturalized citizen and earned two master's degrees in English from Fordham University in the Bronx and in religion from Catholic University in Washington, D.C. He taught at Iona College for one year (1952-53) before being appointed as both a provincial

consultant — a leadership position in the North American Province — and a member of Iona College's board of trustees.

After a six-year term, Brother O'Connor was appointed vocation director for the province, which included all of Canada and the United States.

In 1967, he was assigned to Bishop Kearney High School, where he was the guidance director for 10 years.

Brother O'Connor joined the staff of Iona College's admissions office in 1977. He retired in 1982 and came to St. Joseph's Residence, a care facility for elderly brothers, in 1986.

Brother O'Connor is survived by a sister, Mary O'Connor; a brother, Victor O'Connor; and several nieces and nephews, all from Halifax, Nova Scotia.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held at Holy Family Church and burial was at the Christian Brothers Cemetery in West Park.

## Sister Eunice Murphy, SSJ Irish-born schoolteacher

Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Eunice Murphy of the Sisters of St. Joseph was celebrated in the motherhouse chapel on Monday, Feb. 27. The Mass was celebrated by Monsignor William Shannon, and Fathers Charles Adams, OFM, Francis Feeney and Bruce Ammering.

Sister Murphy died Thursday, Feb. 23, 1989, at St. Joseph Convent Infirmary at the age of 99.

Born in Galway, Ireland, on April 7, 1889, Sister Murphy later moved to the United States, settling in Canandaigua. In 1913, she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph, taking her vows April 14, 1914. In 1915, she began a teaching career that spanned 52 years, including 46 years — 1922-68 — at Blessed Sacrament, Rochester. She also taught at Holy Apostles, Rochester, from 1918-22, and Ss. Peter and Paul, Elmira, 1915-16 and 1917-18.

After retiring from teaching in 1968, Sister Murphy moved to the infirmary, where she lived until her death.

Sister Murphy is survived by one sister, Catherine Quinn of Vidalia, Georgia; and by nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

## Sister Mary L. Vilha

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Monday, Feb. 20, 1989, for Sister Mary Lawrence Vilha, SSND.

Sister Vilha died Feb. 16. She was 86 years old. Born March 12, 1902, in Brooklyn, N.Y., Sister Vilha joined the School Sisters of Notre Dame 65 years ago. She began her elementary education career in Rochester at St. Michael's School, where she taught during the 1919/20 school year. She returned to Rochester from 1930-33 to teach at Holy Family School.

Sister Vilha spent the bulk of her teaching career in or near New York City.

From 1978 until her death, Sister Vilha resided at the School Sisters of Notre Dame Motherhouse in Wilton, Conn.

Sister Vilha was interred in St. Mary Cemetery in Bethel, Conn.

Donations in memory of Sister Vilha may be made to the School Sisters of Notre Dame Development Fund, 345 Belden Hill Road, Wilton, Conn. 06897.

## St. Anne

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County schools, has yet to release its consolidation plan for the quadrant.

In his homily at Sunday Masses on March 5, Monsignor Roche justified overriding the parish-council vote by citing a projected parish budget deficit of \$26,000 for fiscal year 1988-89, and \$50,000 in currently unpaid bills. Combined with parishioners' declining contributions toward the school, this deficit made the council's proposal to keep the school open not "prudent," he said.

But closing the school would be the least prudent step, according to Jerry Reynolds, a member of St. Anne's parish council. "(Monsignor Roche) hasn't shown any figures to show any money we'll save by closing," Reynolds said, asserting that he had compiled a report showing how the parish could save \$40,000 and that Monsignor Roche ignored it.

Monsignor Roche, however, said he had seen Reynolds' report, but declined to comment on it.

In his homily, Monsignor Roche did explain that by consolidating with St. Thomas More and Our Lady of Lourdes/Seton Junior High, the parish would only have to pay an annual school subsidy of \$80,000 as opposed to its current yearly subsidy of \$140,000, resulting in a savings of \$60,000 annually.

Yet, closing the school may result in an actual deficit according to Reynolds, who said parishioners' willingness to raise funds for the school subsidy will drop off once the school is closed. Powell echoed Reynolds' sentiments, predicting that the majority of the parish's bingo workers would not volunteer to work once the school closes, resulting in a loss of revenue for the school subsidy.

Whether the majority of parishioners support the school closing depends on whom you ask. Monsignor Roche said that after his homily on Sunday, "feedback from parishioners indicated overwhelming support" for his decision. In the homily, he stated: "I am convinced that the council does not speak for a majority of the parish when it votes to continue St. Anne's school, even though the children will receive a better Catholic education elsewhere."

Mary Louise Pflieger was among parishioners who agreed with the pastor's comments. "People must face reality," she said, acknowledging that as a senior citizen with no children in school she might be unemotional about the issue. "We aren't any different than any other neighborhood facing similar problems," she said.

Robert Marton concurred, observing that spending money to support a K-6 program with such a small enrollment could not be justified. "If I were a businessman trying to operate this way, I would fail pretty soon," he commented.

Marton also noted that a large number of parishioners are senior citizens on fixed incomes, and predicted that these parishioners would support Monsignor Roche,

since the decision would result in substantial savings for the parish.

But school parent Rita Murphy opposed the decision. "I'm totally floored by it," she said. "I'd really like to know who jumped the gun, because the diocese hasn't even looked at the southeast quadrant." Murphy predicted "a mass exodus" of disgruntled parishioners, though she did not include herself in that "exodus."

In Sunday's homily, Monsignor Roche called for reconciliation with his opponents. "We understand that some members of the parish council, and others, are hurt, dismayed and upset. We hope that they will soon be healed and accept the decision in peace and be reconciled."

Reynolds, though, is far from ready to be reconciled. "It was extremely presumptuous of Monsignor Roche and the diocese to cut the legs from under us and then use platitudes ... to get us to implement their lousy decision," he remarked.

Carmen Bush, president of St. Anne's school board, said that she was "very disappointed" by the decision, but that she

had resigned herself to going along with it. "I think it's final. We were not given the option to oppose it," she said.

But Ronald LaMagna, vice president of the parish council, is planning to organize opposition to the decision, and to agitate for Monsignor Roche's removal from his pastorate. Citing several instances of conflict over the years with the pastor, he said, "(Monsignor Roche) is alienating a parish."

LaMagna, along with other parishioners, planned to meet on Tuesday, March 7, to discuss asking Monsignor Roche to leave the parish.

Nonetheless, a number of parishioners feel that Monsignor Roche, and not the parish council, has been victimized by the controversy.

"I think our pastor has suffered enough," Linus Wegman said. "He has done everything humanly possible to keep (the school) open, and the school is sinking the parish," Wegman said, remarking that the school's enrollment was insufficient to justify keeping it open.

## Northeast

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Tony Mordaci, chairman of Christ the King's Catholic School Committee, said the parish was forming a committee to respond to the conditions stated in the report.

Regarding the five other schools targeted for closing, the proposal recommended the following moves:

- In the 1989-90 school year:
  - Our Lady of Perpetual Help's students will be recommended to St. Stanislaus School. "The OLPH building is recommended for reuse to meet other community service needs on a lease or sale basis."
  - St. Philip Neri's students will be recommended to St. Andrew School.
  - St. Salome's students will be recommended to St. Cecilia and Christ the King schools.

In the 1990-91 school year:

- Annunciation's students will be recommended to St. Ambrose, St. Andrew and St. Cecilia schools.
- St. James' students will be recommended to St. Ambrose and St. Cecilia.

Except for OLPH, the proposal recommends reusing all school buildings scheduled to close for pre-k, day care, and/or social programs. Annunciation and St. James school buildings were also to be maintained for possible future use or expansion.

• All remaining northeast quadrant schools will transfer seventh- and eighth-grade students to the junior high program at Bishop Kearney. Blessed Sacrament's building will close as a junior high in June, 1990, and will become part of the southeast quadrant, which will consider it for reuse as a school. Blessed Sacrament's students would be eligible for placement in the Northeast Quadrant Junior High.

The quadrant's seven remaining schools will become K-6 schools in September, 1990.

Pickett's commission will review the plan by Thursday, March 9. Then the proposal and the commission's recommendations will go to Bishop Matthew H. Clark, who is scheduled to make a final decision on or before Monday, March 13.

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