

Journeying in faith

Special
Pull-out
Section

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE CATHOLIC COURIER, MAY 14, 1992

Family life prepares the foundation for siblings' responses to God's call



The Zimmer family circa 1960: (front row, left to right) Sister Mary Agnes Zimmer, RSM, Edward Zimmer, Josephine Zimmer, Sister Barbara Zimmer, RSM; (back row, left to right) Father Edward Zimmer, Nelson Zimmer, Raymond Zimmer and Eugene Zimmer.

If not for World War II, the Rochester diocese might have had four Father Zimmers and two Sister Zimmers.

Father Edward Zimmer, pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Auburn, recalled that while he and his three brothers all entered the seminary, his younger siblings left and went into the service during the war. Upon return to civilian life, they opted to pursue "vocations" as husbands and fathers.

Father Zimmer, however, continued his studies and was ordained in 1947.

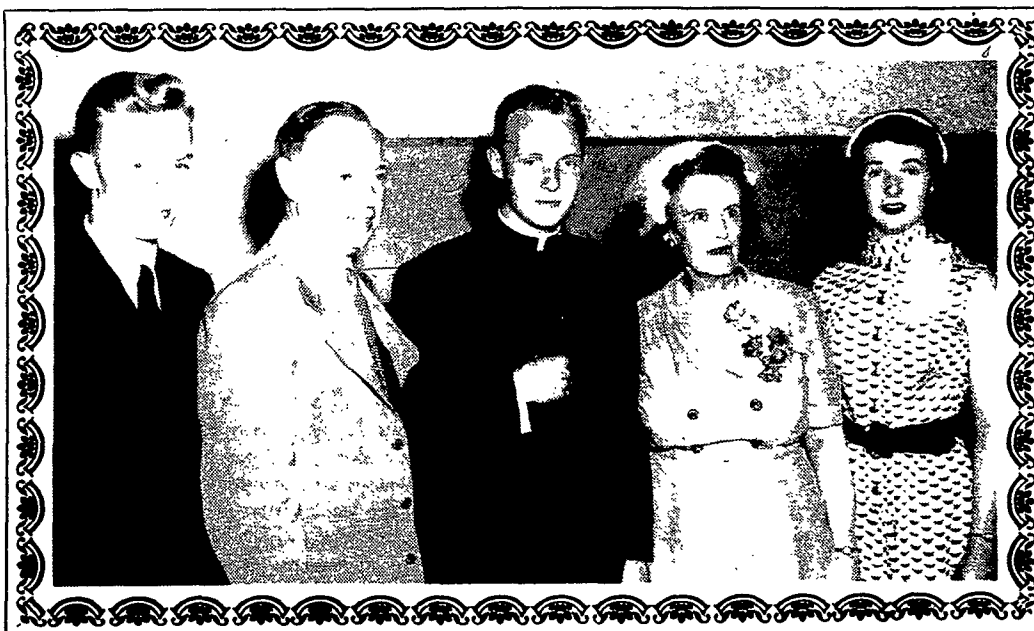
His older sister, Edith, had been a member of the Mercy congregation since 1937, taking the name Sister Mary Agnes, which she has kept to this day. Meanwhile, in 1949, Barbara Zimmer, the youngest of the clan, joined the congregation. The two sisters now serve together at St. Mary's Church, Bath.

Yet even if the three other Zimmers had been ordained, the Auburn family would not have come near any kind of diocesan record, according to Father Robert F. McNamara.

During a conference with seminarians in 1991, the diocesan archivist briefly described families he called "vocational families" — who had "given several sons to the priesthood" and several daughters to congregations of women religious, he explained.

Father McNamara pointed to the Klem clan as perhaps the diocesan champion of these "vocational families." He noted that while his list was not complete, the Klem family — by his count — produced 17 priests and 16 women religious over several generations.

Continued on page 7A



The Cosgrove family gathered for this photograph on June 3, 1951; (from left to right) William Cosgrove (now Father William Cosgrove), Ray Cosgrove, Father James Cosgrove, Margaret Cosgrove and Patricia Cosgrove Dunning.

By Lee Strong, Staff writer