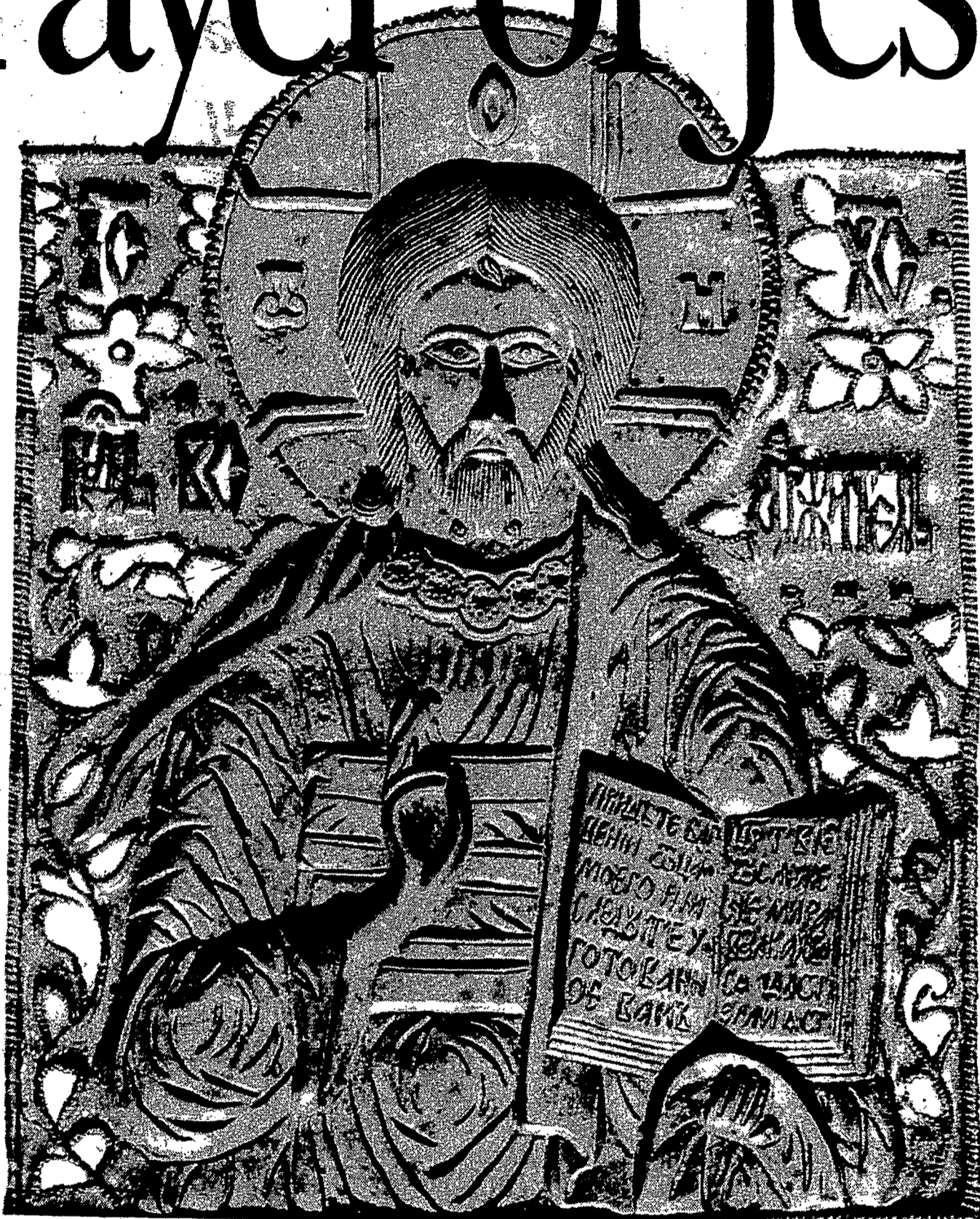


Catholic Courier

See pages 3 and 10 for coverage of Bishop James M. Moynihan's ordination and installation in Syracuse.

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK ■ VOL. 106 NO. 35 ■ THURSDAY, June 1, 1995 ■ 75¢ ■ 12 PAGES

Prayer of Jesus



Eastern Christian devotion offers path to deeper intimacy with God

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

"By the grace of God I am a Christian, by my deeds a great sinner, and by my calling a homeless wanderer of humblest origin, roaming from place to place ..."

Thus begins *The Way of a Pilgrim*, a Russian tale which over the last century has helped to popularize the Eastern Christian devotion known as the "Jesus Prayer" or the "Prayer of the Heart."

The prayer, which goes, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner," but also has briefer and varied forms, is "a short invocation, designed for frequent repetition and addressed to the Savior," notes Kallistos Ware in Chapter 16 ("Ways of Prayer and Contemplation") of "Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century," vol. 16 of "World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest."

The chapter continues that the prayer "has been found especially valuable as an aid to inner silence," and its "aim is not simply the suspension of all thought, but an encounter with Someone."

That "Someone" is Jesus, observed Father George A. Maloney, SJ, who has written or edited several books on Eastern Christian spirituality and the Jesus Prayer itself, including "Centering on the Lord Jesus," "Prayer of the Heart" and "Pilgrimage of the Heart: A Treasury of Eastern Christian Spirituality."

"By saying the Jesus Prayer, we come into greater intimacy with Jesus, into that knowledge that Jesus lives in us," Father Maloney said in an interview last week. "By saying the Jesus Prayer, we find our true selves."

The prayer also helps to fill a need for intimacy in a time when Westerners live in a "frenetic world," Father Maloney added. People are hungry for spiritual nourishment and even mystical prayer, he continued, observing,

Continued on page 10