

DIOCESAN NEWS

Father John S. Hayes, war hero, at 82

By Lee Strong
Associate editor

In January, Father John S. Hayes wrote a letter to friends telling them about his losing battle with cancer.

According to Father Peter Clifford, in the letter Father Hayes joked, "It's good to die while the market's high."

"It was his kind of irreverent way to say, 'I'm ready. Be at peace about me,'" said Father Clifford, pastor of St. Michael's Parish, Newark, and part of Father Hayes' priest support group since 1979.

Father Hayes died in the early hours of May 20, 1997, at the St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary. He was 82.

The former rector of Sacred Heart Cathedral and decorated World War II chaplain was noted for his sense of humor, observed his nephew, Father John H. Hayes, administrator of Holy Cross Church, Dryden-Freeville.

"As he was dying, he fell asleep at one point," the Dryden pastor recalled. "He woke and said to my sister, 'You know, if this is dying, it's not that bad.'"

Father Hayes was born June 18, 1914, in Rochester to the late Francis Patrick and Ida Fitzgerald Hayes. He had one brother, the late Brian F. Hayes.

A graduate of St. Augustine's School, and St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's semi-

naries, Father Hayes was ordained by Bishop James E. Kearney May 18, 1940, at Sacred Heart Cathedral. He later pursued graduate studies in literature at the University of Rochester, and Oxford University, England.

After ordination, Father Hayes served as assistant pastor at St. Anthony's Church, Rochester, (1940-42), then at Sacred Heart Cathedral (1942-43).

Father Hayes became a chaplain in the U.S. Army in 1943, rising to the rank of major as part of Gen. George Patton's Third Army in Europe.

During the war, Father Hayes was credited with liberating a French village — though he always explained he'd simply been the first Allied soldier to enter the village. He also regularly ministered to wounded soldiers, risking his own life. On Dec. 31, 1944, he was awarded a Bronze Star for heroic service.

In light of his military record, he was awarded the New York State Conspicuous Service Cross Sept. 22, 1996.

In an Oct. 10, 1996, interview with the *Catholic Courier*, Father Hayes downplayed any mention of heroism on his part.

"What I did was what any priest would have done under the circumstances," he said. "I don't see it as extraordinary. Offering Mass on the hood of a car in a barn meant more to me in terms of the priest-

hood."

After the war, he was named assistant pastor of St. Augustine's Parish, Rochester (1946-50) and Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Brighton (1950-53), then the chaplain at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Bath (1953-58). He served as pastor of St. Patrick's Parish, Elmira, from 1956 to 1966.

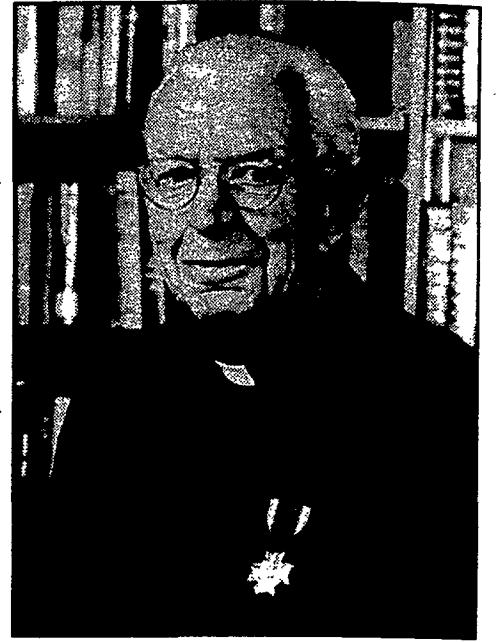
From 1966 to 1972, Father Hayes was rector of Sacred Heart Cathedral. He was named pastor of St. Patrick's Parish, Aurora, and St. Michael's Parish, Union Springs, in 1972, and as chaplain at Wells College in Aurora. He retired in 1984.

After retiring, he wrote articles for periodicals, and parish histories of St. Vincent's, Corning, St. John the Evangelist, Rochester, and Holy Cross, Dryden.

One of his last writing efforts was an article about the diocese's patron saint, St. John Fisher. His article was part of an informational packet the diocese sent parishes May 20 — the day he died — to promote celebration of the saint's feast day June 22.

"In many ways, that typifies the vitality of the man," noted Father Clifford, who served as the homilist at Father Hayes' funeral Mass May 22 at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse chapel. Bishop Clark was the principal celebrant at the service.

"I believe him to be a Renaissance man," Father Clifford added. "He had a hunger for knowledge and a hunger for learning."



He had a wonderful capacity to incorporate that into his ministry."

He also loved the priesthood, Father John H. Hayes said.

"When I was thinking about becoming a priest, I talked to him about it," Father Hayes recalled. "He said, 'I would never change a page of my priesthood.'"

In addition to his priest-nephew, Father Hayes was survived by his sister-in-law, Anne Hanna Hayes; three nieces; one other nephew; and 11 grandnieces and nephews.

Interment was in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Aurora.

Elmira Knights council celebrates 100 years of service

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

His 100th birthday is still a few years off. In the meantime, Harry Seeback is channeling his efforts toward another centennial commemoration.

Seeback, 95, served as chairperson for the 100th-anniversary banquet of Knights of Columbus Elmira Council 229. The celebration, held May 24 at the Elks Lodge in Horseheads, drew more than 100 peo-

ple.

Over the past century, Seeback noted, Council 229 has played a vital role in promoting Catholic ideals among Chemung County residents. In addition, the council's volunteer efforts have supported a number of community charitable organizations.

"We've given money all across ethnic and religious lines," said Seeback, a parishioner in the Eastside Catholic Parish. "We cross the broad lines to do

whatever we can."

The Elmira council was granted its charter on May 23, 1897. At the time, Council 229 was one of the few Knights chapters in all of upstate New York. Its formation came 15 years after the international Knights of Columbus order was founded.

Once established, Council 229 helped to institute additional Knights councils across the Southern Tier, in such communities as Corning, Hornell, Waverly, Ithaca, Cortland, Horseheads, Watkins Glen and Elmira Heights.

The council moved in 1970 to its current location at the Hibernian Center, at 701 Kinyon St. Two years later, the council formed a relief fund for victims of the Hurricane Agnes flood that destroyed numerous homes and businesses in the Southern Tier.

Through its C&B (Charitable and Benevolent) fundraising program, Council 229 has also supported such community groups as the YMCA, Salvation

Army, Red Cross, ARC, Catholic Charities and Special Olympics. Last November, in honor of its 100th anniversary, the council donated \$1000 to the Southside Community Center.

In addition, the Knights of Columbus have offered ongoing financial support for Catholic schools in Chemung County. Members also make regular appearances at Catholic parishes through Council 229's honor guard, which serves at confirmations and first Eucharists. And, in 1994, the council dedicated a memorial at St. Peter and Paul Cemetery to unborn children. Council 229 member Robert Ryniker noted that such events are among the few instances in which the Knights of Columbus take the public spotlight.

"In some ways, that's the only way people know us. We don't get much recognition, but we're not looking for it," said Ryniker, an Eastside Catholic Parish parishioner who has served on the 183-member council's centennial committee. Ryniker has compiled a journal that chronicles the history of Council 229.

Seeback — who has lived in Elmira since 1966 — has been a member of various Knights of Columbus councils since 1921. He said that membership in the Knights of Columbus should be strongly considered by adult Catholic males everywhere.

"We follow all the teachings of the Catholic Church. We're based on Catholic doctrine," Seeback said.

JUNE BINGO CALENDAR

SPECIAL PAID ADVERTISEMENT ■ CALL FOR HOLIDAY CANCELLATIONS

BINGO

SUNDAY		
6:15 pm	St. Stanislaus Church	1150 Hudson Ave., Rochester 716-544-9951
7:30 pm	Holy Family Church	Water Tower Park, Rochester 716-235-0860
7:30 pm	St. Boniface Church	15 Whalin St., Rochester 716-271-1468
7:30 pm	St. Rita Church	New Location... Knights of Columbus, Barrett Dr., Webster 716-671-1100
MONDAY		
7:30 pm	St. Jude the Apostle Church	4100 Lyell Rd., Rochester 716-247-4322
7:30 pm	St. Michael's Church	Corner S. Main & Franklin, Newark 315-331-6753
TUESDAY		
10:00 am	Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church	Bingo Palace, Rochester 716-467-2725
7:30 pm	St. Stanislaus Church	1150 Hudson Ave., Rochester 716-544-9951
7:30 pm	St. Helens Church	Gates Center Bingo, Westmar Plaza 716-235-1210
7:30 pm	St. Francis Xavier	316 Bay St. (School Hall) (716) 288-9700 or 482-3211
WEDNESDAY		
7:30 pm	Holy Family Home School Assoc.	Water Tower Park, Rochester 716-235-0860
THURSDAY		
7:30 pm	St. Stanislaus Church	1150 Hudson Ave., Rochester 716-544-9951
FRIDAY		
7:30 pm	St. Margaret Mary Church	380 Empire Blvd., Rochester (716) 482-9770
SATURDAY		
12:30 pm	Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church	Bingo Palace, Rochester 716-467-2725
7:30 pm	Good Shepherd Church	3288 E. Henrietta Rd., Rochester 716-334-3518
8:00 pm	St. Thomas the Apostle Church	41 Colebrook Dr., Rochester 716-226-2943

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Upcoming Supplements

Graduation '97

Publication Date: June 12 - Deadline: May 29
(Bonus distribution to graduating students)

As the Class of '97 approaches life after high school, we present our annual listing of graduate profiles of selected graduates, and a look at their plans for the future.

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