

# Four diocesan priests in 25th year of service

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

Four priests in the Diocese of Rochester are celebrating the 25th anniversary of their ordination this year.

It may important to practice what you preach, but **Father William G. Darling** wants to better preach what the church practices.



"I'm beginning to become more and more concerned about preaching," said Father Darling, pastor of St. Salome's Church in Irondequoit. "I'm becoming more aware of how central that is."

In the last year, Father Darling has studied preaching at St. Bernard's Institute in Rochester and boned up on reading materials related to homiletics, he said.

"It's just a matter of keeping up with the ideas of preaching," he said.

Preaching a church doctrine is a matter of presenting it to the people in the pews in an attractive manner. For example, he explained, there's a right way and a wrong way to preach on keeping the Sabbath holy.

"You wouldn't start in by telling people not to shop on Sunday," Father Darling said. "You start in by telling them that Sunday is a time to rest, to re-create."

Father Darling was ordained by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan on April 27, 1973, in St. Paul of the Cross Church, Honeoye Falls. He was subsequently assigned to St. Mary's Church in Dansville where he served until 1976 when he became associate pastor of St. Joseph's Church in Penfield.

In 1978, Father Darling was named spiritual director at St. Bernard's Seminary, Rochester. In 1981, he became associate pastor of St. Helen's Church, Gates, a position he held until 1983 when he became chaplain at the State University of New York at Geneseo.

Father Darling was named associate pas-

tor of St. Thomas More Parish in Rochester in 1984. His first pastorate came three years later at St. Patrick's Church, Owego. He joined St. Salome's as its pastor in 1994.

Father Darling will mark his 25th year as a priest with a 10:30 a.m. Mass at St. Salome's on April 26, followed by a reception in the school hall. As he reflected on his silver anniversary, the pastor noted that he particularly enjoyed being with people during their moments of joy and grief from baptisms to funerals.

"I saw this as a way of self-giving," he said of his vocation.

**Father Joseph A. Hart** has spent his career combining academic and administrative pursuits with practical pastoral work.

"You can't really do good theology unless it's rooted in people's real concerns," he said.

Father Hart is living out that credo. Until June 30, he'll continue to serve as pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace Church in Brighton as well as associate professor of systematic theology at St. Bernard's Institute. Then he will become a vicar general of the diocese as well as moderator of the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Gates (see story page 3).

Father Hart has also served as director of the 1990-1993 Diocesan Synod. The synod's effect on the diocese, he said, has been enormously gratifying to him.

"There's lots of changes that have taken place," he said. "The number of youth ministers has almost tripled in the diocese because of the parish (synodal) discussions."

He also praised the synod for making a priority of promoting the consistent life ethic — which opposes war, abortion, poverty, euthanasia and capital punishment.

Father Hart will celebrate his 25th year as a priest with a 2 p.m. Mass on June 7 at

Our Lady Queen of Peace, followed by a reception at the Rochester Marriott Thruway hotel.

The priest was ordained April 28, 1973, by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan at St. Mary's Church in Canandaigua. He served at St. Anne Church in Rochester from 1973 to 1976, and then went to Rome, Italy, for graduate studies. While there, he served as weekend chaplain to a U.S. naval detachment in Gaeta.

He continued his studies from 1979 to 1981 at St. Bernard's and subsequently began teaching there. In 1990, he was named synod director, and in 1995, took up his pastorate at Queen of Peace. His varied career has been a unending spiritual adventure, he noted.

"Each day is an unfolding of God's plan in how one will be used this day in a different way," Father Hart said. "Sometimes, of course, the vision changes and matures, but it's still an unfolding of that basic spending of oneself and being spent for the reign of God."



Since 1976, **Father Michael J. Mahler** has pretty much been a spiritual man on campus. Director of the Catholic Community at Cornell University in Ithaca, the priest said he enjoys how the students continually challenge him to explore the faith.

"I like ministering to young people who are asking questions about their life and the faith and the church," he said. "A lot of the students are trying to live out the moral demands of the Gospel in a secular and pluralistic world."

Each year, he must remind certain students that it's no sin to grapple with church teaching, and that, in fact, nothing could be healthier in terms of helping them grow as Catholics. He added that he is helped in his efforts by a six-member staff of priests, nuns and lay people who serve just under

3,000 Catholics at Cornell.

Father Mahler said he's witnessed several students graduate from Cornell and go on to serve the church either permanently or temporarily. A number of graduates have been ordained over the years, he said, while others have joined such groups as the Jesuit Volunteer Corps for two-year stints of service.

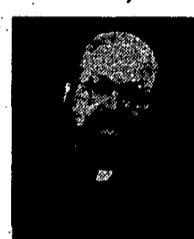
"They're right at the cusp of maturing," he said of his spiritual charges. "I feel we're blessed to help them with that."

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan ordained Father Mahler on March 30, 1973, at St. Margaret Mary's Church in Irondequoit. He subsequently served as parochial vicar at Holy Apostles Church in Rochester.

From 1976 to 1983, he worked in campus ministry at the State University of New York at Geneseo. He moved to Cornell in 1983. He has also served in such areas as volunteer jail ministry, as a member of the Diocesan Priests' Council and as chaplain of the Cornell University Police Department.

Father Mahler said he privately celebrated his 25th anniversary and has no plans for a public celebration. He plans to continue in campus ministry, he said.

"The ministry is constantly new," he said. "You're always dealing with new challenges and new members of the worship community."



**Father Paul J. Ryan** is an enthusiastic supporter of the Second Vatican Council's reforms, and thinks things are only going to get better for like-minded Catholics down the road.

"I think we've only seen the tip of the iceberg," he said. "I think there's going to be some exciting years ahead."

In particular, Father Ryan said he's glad that so many lay Catholics have taken on greater roles of responsibility in the

Continued on Page 12A

## SSJ

Continued from page 7A

Seraphine said. "The special, loving children and adults bring joy and happiness to me daily."

Prior to her work at Holy Childhood, Sister Seraphine served as a teacher at St. Mary in Elmira, and St. Monica and Sacred Heart Cathedral schools in Rochester.

Sister Seraphine grew up in Rochester and graduated from Nazareth Academy in 1947. She entered the congregation that same year. Sister Seraphine holds a bachelor of science degree in education from Nazareth College and a master's degree in special education from Cardinal Stritch College. She resides in the Holy Childhood Convent on Beach Avenue in Rochester.

**Sister Anne Michelle McGill, SSJ**, had not planned on becoming a pastoral administrator. She had served in education for 34 years, as a teacher and principal. In 1983, she made the transition into pastoral ministry as the pastoral assistant at St. Pius X in Rochester. Eleven years later, she became the pastoral administrator for St. Gabriel's Church in Hammondsport.



"I never thought of doing this," she said last summer. "But when the job opening came, there really wasn't anything else that interested me."

As the pastoral administrator, Sister Anne Michelle is responsible for the day-to-day administrative tasks as well as anything from sick calls to premarital counseling. One of the most visible

responsibilities is assisting at weekly Mass with a priest.

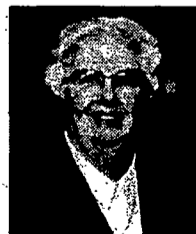
"I like seeing the growth in the people and in the parish," she said of her almost-four-year tenure at the parish. "It is just a wonderful sense of spirit."

Serving in this ministry has been one of Sister Anne Michelle's most rewarding experiences as she looks back.

"There have been many challenges and equally as many rewards," Sister Anne Michelle said. "God has guided me gently during these 50 years of ministry from teaching to administration and presently, pastoral work. I enjoyed my ministries to the children, the Diocese of Rochester and especially to the people of God. I am grateful to all those who have accompanied me on this memorable journey."

Sister Anne Michelle taught at St. Alphonsus in Auburn, St. Anne in Rochester, St. Jerome in East Rochester, and St. Thomas More. She also taught at St. Rose in Lima, where she later became a principal. For nine years she served as a principal at Holy Trinity in Webster.

**Sister Rosemary St. Peter, SSJ**, (formerly Sister William Mary) has had the opportunity to serve in a range of ministries. Her ministerial work began with teaching at St. Joseph School in Wayland, St. Mary in Canandaigua, Blessed



Sacrament, and St. John the Evangelist in Greece. She later served as a principal at St. Patrick in Seneca Falls, St. Ambrose and Holy Trinity.

"I loved teaching religion in the grade school," Sister Rosemary said. "The very youngest absorbed the story of God's love like little sponges. In the upper grades, I loved to teach the Christian values unit,

instilling a sense of generosity and service as the keys to personal happiness and building the human community. I also enjoyed being a school principal, working with teachers, families and school boards to offer the best learning opportunities possible for children."

In 1983, Sister Rosemary retired from education and became a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph's central administration. She has served as the congregational president since 1991.

"My years of service in leadership for the Sisters of St. Joseph have been invigorating," she said. "We have dedicated time to a study of Eucharist and its centrality in the life of our congregation."

"We have also engaged in a long-range planning process," she continued. "The result of our work is cause for great enthusiasm. Our goals and strategies will strengthen and extend our mission and ministry capabilities and help ensure the well-being of the Congregation into the 21st Century."

Teaching proved to be a wonderful experience for **Sister Terese Hanss, SSJ**, (formerly Sister Walter Therese).



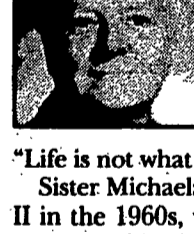
"I liked the children a lot," she said. "I felt they were learning, because I could see it on their faces. I would see them light up. If they had a hard time, let's say, in arithmetic, then they got it. They would be so happy. I really enjoyed that."

In 1950 Sister Terese began her teaching career, serving at Blessed Sacrament, St. Anne in Rochester, Immaculate Conception in Rochester, St. Mary in Elmira, Christ the King and St. Stanislaus. Although she retired from full-time teaching in 1971, she did not give up the job

entirely. For the next 20 years, she worked as a classroom assistant at St. Michael in Penn Yan, then at Sacred Heart Cathedral School in Rochester.

In 1993, Sister Terese went to work in Congregational Services at the motherhouse, where she still serves today. She also volunteers at least one day a week in the library at St. Ann's Home. Sister Terese resides at the motherhouse.

**Sister Michaela Tenny, SSJ**, felt almost surprised at reaching her 50-year milestone as a Sister of St. Joseph.



"I think back on when I first entered, and it's amazing how everything has changed," she said.

"Life is not what I had envisioned it." Sister Michaela entered before Vatican II in the 1960s, when major changes occurred within the church.

"I think the change has been for the better," she said. "Life when I entered was more regimented. We didn't make too many choices or decisions. The gradual changes with Vatican II allowed us to make more decisions about our work and life. We were also permitted to have more involvement with our families and the community."

From 1950 to 1973, Sister Michaela taught at Corpus Christi School, St. Augustine, St. Aloysius in Auburn, and St. Bridget. She later became a vice principal at Sacred Heart Cathedral School. For 15 years, she served as a driver for the St. Joseph Convent Infirmary and the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse. She is currently an assistant local coordinator at the motherhouse, where she cares for the needs of other sisters.