

## Obituary

### Msgr. Whalen, 86; WWII vet

Msgr. Leslie G. Whalen, who recently celebrated his 60th jubilee, died Oct. 16, 1998. He was 86.

Born in Rochester, he grew up in St. Andrew's Parish. He attended St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries and was ordained June 11, 1938, by Bishop James E. Kearney at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

He first served as assistant pastor at St. Mary's Church, Auburn, 1938-41, and then as assistant pastor, at St. Peter and Paul Church, Elmira, 1941-43.

From 1943 to 1946, Msgr. Whalen was a chaplain in the U.S. Navy. At Camp Elliott, Cal., he began and edited a weekly bulletin listing Catholic services held at the Marine base and containing articles about the faith.

While serving in the Pacific area with the 4th Division of the 25th Marines in 1945, Msgr. Whalen supervised the building of a chapel for Masses.

In 1949 the Fourth Marine Division Association named him national chaplain.

When the priest returned to the diocese, he served as assistant pastor, St. Mary's Church, Rochester, 1946-58; pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes, Brighton, 1958-80; and was a diocesan consultant, 1959-67.

He also served as assistant chancellor 1950-58.

Pope Pius XII named him a papal chamberlain in 1956, and Pope John XXIII elevated him to domestic prelate in 1959.

After retiring in 1980 Msgr. Whalen spent many years at Lourdes and in Florida.

The monsignor had cancer and also suffered from Lou Gehrig's disease — amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), according to Father David Gramke, Father Gramke, who was assistant pastor at Lourdes in the 1970s and was homilist at the Oct. 20 funeral Mass for Msgr. Whalen at Lourdes.

"He was amazing. He was just inspirational to me. I never heard him complaining about the disease, and yet he had loved being out and doing things. He had been confined at St. Ann's (Home) for a number of years," said Father Gramke, now pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Seneca Falls.

Father Gramke said that when they served together, "He was wonderful to me. A lot of people felt he was aloof and distant, but that was just because he was shy. ... I had the opportunity to crack the shell."

Msgr. Whalen is survived by his cousins, Teresa Rawlins, Mildred Diegnan, James Seymour, Lucille Menihan and James Rawlins.

Father Joseph A. Hart celebrated a Mass of Christ the High Priest Oct. 19 at Our Lady of Lourdes. Msgr. Gerard C. Krieg was the homilist. Bishop Dennis Hickey celebrated the Oct. 20 funeral Mass. Interment was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

—Kathleen Schuur

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## Firing ignites more parish protest

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Changes, as well as protests, continued at Corpus Christi Church as the parish's new pastor celebrated his first Masses at the church the weekend of Oct. 17-18.

• On Thursday, Oct. 15, Kathy Cannon and Charlotte Bruney, the diocesan-appointed transitional administrative team at Corpus Christi, announced that they had fired Mary Anne Ramerman from her post as pastoral associate at the church. Ramerman was well-known for regularly aiding former administrator Father James Callan in saying Mass at the church, wearing an alb emblazoned with a banner.

Cannon said Ramerman had refused to comply with Bishop Matthew H. Clark's directives for the parish, and also refused to resign. Both statements were confirmed by Ramerman.

• On Saturday, Oct. 17, Father Daniel McMullin celebrated his first Mass as the church's new pastor at 5 p.m. Just before the Mass, somebody displayed in the sanctuary the alb and banner, or half-stole, that Ramerman regularly wore at Mass.

Several parish liturgical volunteers boycotted the Mass to protest Ramerman's removal. Parishioners placed black ribbons on the church's facade, and several wept openly during the service.

• On Monday night, Oct. 19, about 400 parishioners attended a public meeting in the church. Among the issues discussed was the possibility of setting up an alternative worship service on Tuesday, Oct. 27, at a still-to-be-announced time and location off church property. Supporters stressed, however, that the service — and any future ones — would not replace parish liturgies, but merely supplement them.

Meanwhile, Father Enrique Cadena, Corpus' priest-in-residence, was slated to meet with Father Robert Ring, diocesan director of the Department of Priest Personnel, on Tuesday afternoon, Oct. 20. Father Cadena has resigned from the diocesan transition administrative team because he could not reconcile his support for the parish's values with his duties as a team member. When asked, Father Cadena declined to speculate about whether he, too, may be removed from the parish.

All these events were related to the fact that Bishop Clark announced in August that he was removing Father Callan because of the priest's ongoing defiance of church law on issues including: regularly and publicly inviting non-Catholics to Communion; allowing women to engage in liturgical roles reserved for the ordained; and ministering to gays in ways contrary to church law.

Father Callan is currently serving a temporary assignment at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Elmira.

Ramerman, pastoral associate for 15



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Father Daniel McMullin, new pastor at Corpus Christi Church, is congratulated on his reassignment by parishioner Nia Brosan, Oct. 17 after Mass. "As we dry our tears, we most welcome you," she said.

years at Corpus, has supported Father Callan's stances. Ramerman told the *Catholic Courier* that she had been told by Cannon and Bruney to stay away from the altar during Masses, and that she would have to sit down away from the altar before and after doing any readings or preaching.

"In conscience, I felt as a minister to the people of Corpus Christi, I could not agree with that because I think the history of the Catholic church with women and the altar is the attitude that women are unclean and unholy," Ramerman told the *Courier*.

Meanwhile, Father McMullin's first Mass Oct. 17 was a tense affair, marked both by various forms of protest from the congregation, as well as some scattered moments of support for the new pastor. In his homily, he acknowledged the feelings his arrival caused.

"Even my very presence — apart from any of the preaching I might do tonight — elicits the most uncomfortable feelings from you," he said, adding, "My presence here also elicits opposite feelings from some of you here."

At his homily's conclusion, a sizable number of worshipers present applauded. But during Communion, several parishioners showed they weren't ready to accept any changes at the parish.

Peter Militello got up from his seat and went up to the pulpit at the beginning of Communion.

"As always, everyone is welcome to Communion," he said, drawing a loud round of applause. Militello's statement referred to the parish's practice of inviting

non-Catholics to Communion, a practice Bishop Clark has asked the parish to stop.

After Mass, Bruney, who served as a eucharistic minister at the Mass, told the *Courier* that at least 20 people in her Communion line refused to move, bringing distribution to a standstill. She said a sympathetic parishioner then guided people behind those standing still to come up around the group and receive the Eucharist.

"I was also subject to steady assault of verbal abuse as I distributed the body of the Lord, and I was deeply, deeply offended," Bruney said.

After the Mass, worshipers offered a variety of reactions to the service, though most were critical of it.

Suzie Haglund-Carney said she wanted to give Father McMullin "a chance," but added that, "I'm really outraged that Mary (Ramerman) was fired, and for me, the Mass was very sad without her. It's like we have to go back to the old male-dominated church."

Mary Ellen Forszt, an usher at the Mass, said collections in her offertory basket were way down from previous weeks she'd collected.

"About 70 percent of the people wouldn't make eye contact with me or just gave a penny or gave nothing," she said.

On the other hand, Dan McBride, a parishioner for 22 years, criticized the way parishioners acted at Father McMullin's first Mass.

"It's not his fault, it's not his problem," he said. "I think he should be welcomed, not with a funeral march and black ribbons at Communion."

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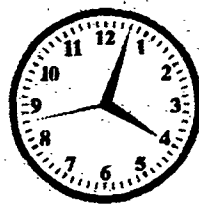
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