

FEATURE

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After a year of sabbatical study, she served as the assistant superintendent for urban education at the diocesan office. From 1989 to 1993, Sister Virginia was the campus minister at Notre Dame High School in Batavia, principal at Holy Family School in Leroy, and supervisor for student teachers at Nazareth College of Rochester.

From her teaching and administration days, to interviewing young teaching candidates, Sister Virginia has experienced many rewards as a Sister of St. Joseph.

"I chose religious life for the peace in following God's will," she said.

What would she tell someone interested in following in her footsteps? "Make a difference in your life. The best is yet to come."



Children have always been at the center of Sister Jean Catherine Welch's life as a Sister of St. Joseph. Three years after entering the congregation in 1948, she began teaching at St. Mary, Elmira. In 1957 she earned a B.A. in education from Nazareth College.

Sister Jean Catherine has taught at such

schools as St. Anne, St. Stephen, Geneva, Most Precious Blood, St. Thomas More, and St. John the Evangelist in Greece. Since 1971 she has been teaching fourth- and fifth-graders at St. Pius X.

She reflected on her 50 years as a Sister of St. Joseph with much gratification.

"My ministry as an educator has been challenging, rewarding and energizing," she said. "Laying the foundation for Christian thinking and life choices in children is a great honor and privilege. It is truly God's grace at work within children as I encourage them to bring forth their best gifts."

"Children have enriched my life and helped me realize the great mystery of God in our creation," she continued. "Their candor and simplicity keeps me on my toes and I am awed by their insight. The new millennium is at hand and I look back on 50 years of service, in gratitude for being chosen as a teacher with its rewards, heartaches and challenges, all gifts from a loving God."



St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira has been "home" for Sister Marie Michael Miller for 48 years.

"I was a registered nurse when I entered the Sisters of St. Joseph and have served all of those

years in hospital ministries," she said. "Each has been a challenge and opportunity to serve others."

During her career, Sister Marie Michael earned a master's degree in nursing education from Catholic University. In 1978 she became licensed as a nursing home administrator. Through the years, she has served in just about every nursing capacity. She also assisted as the vice president of administration and general services of the hospital. Presently, Sister Marie Michael is the nursing home administrator at St. Joseph's Hospital.

Of all of her ministry experiences, Sister Marie Michael holds two especially close to her heart.

"My seven years as a pediatric instructor and supervisor were very special because I've always had a great love for children," she said. "Then these past 20 years as nursing home administrator have also been a blessing as I work with staff who are so kind to the elderly."

"Looking back at these 50 years, I am grateful for God's great love in calling me to be a Sister of St. Joseph. He has given me the peace, physical health and spiritual graces needed to do whatever he asked of me."

25 years

Sister Donna Marie Cucci has been making music ever since she entered the



Sisters of St. Joseph 25 years ago.

Sister Donna Marie earned a bachelor's in music from Nazareth College in 1973, and a master's in music education from the Eastman School of Music in 1974. Sister spent 13 years as a teacher at Nazareth Academy. While there, from 1975 to 1988, she was a theology teacher, director of the Perosian choir, and vocal music teacher.

"My greatest pleasure was helping students achieve their potential," she said.

In 1988 Sister Donna Marie took her talents to the Eastman School of Music where she was not only a student, but also served as a receptionist and teacher. Today, as an associate professor of piano at the Eastman School of Music, she continues to help students achieve their potential.

She looks back on her 25 years as a Sister of St. Joseph with great gratitude.

"Few teachers have the opportunity to work one-on-one with a child for up to 12 years!" she said. "It's a tremendous chance to minister. One of my recent pleasures came last winter when a former student of mine from Nazareth Academy called and said, 'I have a little girl of my own now, and I want you to be her teacher.' I felt like I'd come full circle!"

Priests

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Francis Xavier Church, and Father Leone was pastor of Holy Redeemer/St. Francis Xavier from 1985 to 1988.

Prior to assuming his pastorate in northern Cayuga County, Father Leone was temporary administrator at St. Augustine's Church in Rochester (1989) and St. Mary's Church in Geneseo (1989) as well as temporary chaplain at Ithaca College (1990).



After 16 years of priestly service in Hornell, Father Jeremiah P. Moynihan assumed his current role as pastor of Elmira's Our Lady of Lourdes Church in October 1998. Father Moynihan's home parish is St. Monica's,

Rochester. Auxiliary Bishop John E. McCafferty ordained him March 15, 1974, at St. Stephen's Church, Geneva.

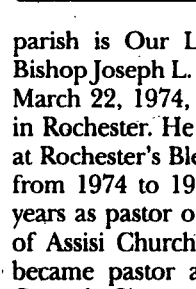
Father Moynihan assisted at St. Vincent de Paul in Corning (1974-77) and Holy Cross in Rochester (1977-82) before becoming full-time chaplain and director of pastoral care at St. James Mercy Hospital in Hornell in 1982.

In 1984, Father Moynihan began a lengthy pastorate at St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Hornell, and his position at St. James Mercy was reduced to part-time.

He remained in those dual capacities until moving to Our Lady of Lourdes in Elmira last fall.

"I was very, very happy in Hornell. I loved the people very much, but part of our (priests') lives is to come and go," Father Moynihan remarked.

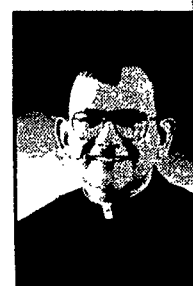
Father Dennis J. Shaw has been pastor of the Community of Hope since the cluster formed in 1993. Located in northeast Rochester, it encompasses St. Michael's, Holy Redeemer/St. Francis Xavier and Our Lady of Mount Carmel churches.



Father Shaw's home parish is Our Lady of Good Counsel. Bishop Joseph L. Hogan ordained him on March 22, 1974, at St. Andrew's Church in Rochester. He then served as assistant at Rochester's Blessed Sacrament Church from 1974 to 1977, and then logged 10 years as pastor of Rochester's St. Francis of Assisi Church. In 1987, Father Shaw became pastor at Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Six years later, he added St. Michael's and Holy Redeemer/St. Francis Xavier to his pastorate when the Community of Hope was created.

All 25 years of Father Shaw's priesthood have been spent at Rochester city parishes — which suits him just fine.

"It's a great place to experience and enjoy the great diversity that God has created," Father Shaw said.



Father Louis A. Sirianni is a key figure at the Diocesan Tribunal. He has served full-time in that office since 1995, first as a judge and currently as judicial vicar.

Father Sirianni's home parish is Holy Cross in Rochester. He was ordained by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan on April 19, 1974, at Holy Family Church in Rochester.

He assisted at Sacred Heart Parish, Auburn/St. Ann's, Owasco (1974-79); St. Ann's, Hornell (1979-82); and St. Louis, Pittsford (1982-85).

Father Sirianni was then pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Rochester from 1985 to 1992. He assisted at St. Boniface in Rochester in 1993 and has been sacramental minister at Guardian Angels in Henrietta since 1995. Father Sirianni noted that he has served the tribunal since 1983.

"Understanding relationships is a key part of it — what makes them work, what doesn't," he said. He added that in his work he blends scientific psychology "and its relationship with the church regarding marriage."

Father William V. Spilly is currently pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church on Floverton Street in Rochester.

Father Spilly grew up in Indiana and attended St. Bernard's Seminary. He was ordained by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan on

May 10, 1974, at St. Christopher's Church, North Chili.

Father Spilly was parochial vicar at St. Ann's Church, Hornell, from 1974 to 1976. He was then associate director of the diocesan Office of Human Development until 1978, and co-director of the Rural Office of Human Development until 1982.

Father Spilly was Justice and Peace coordinator for Finger Lakes Social Ministry from 1982 to 1984. During that time, he was also administrator of St. Michael's Church, Lyons, from September to December 1983.

The priest served as pastor of Cayuga Team Ministry, a cluster of four parishes, from 1984 to 1990, and also as pastor St. Bernard's, Scipio Center, and St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming, from August to December 1986.

Father Spilly was named pastor of the Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community in 1990, overseeing four churches. He stayed there until he took up his current position in 1996.

The priest said he had one wish after 25 years of priesthood.

"I would have hoped that the church would've changed more, to be more inclusive of women," Father Spilly commented. "I look forward to women being ordained."

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