

## DIOCESAN NEWS

## Hospital slates reunion of St. Mary's babies

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

On Jan. 16, 1975, St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester was the site of Amanda Voorheis' entrance into the world — an entrance documented by the *Courier-Journal*, which is now the *Catholic Courier*.

For a Jan. 22 story on St. Mary's obstetric services, *Courier-Journal* writer Bonita Baldwin covered the birth of Amanda, the third daughter of Elaine and Michael Voorheis of Spencerport.

"She weighed 7 pounds, 1 ounce; measured 19 1/2 inches long, and blinked at her new world with blue eyes," Baldwin wrote of the new baby. "Her mother predicts that her dark hair will fall out and come in blonde, like (her sisters') Sarah, 4, and Jessica, 2."

Twenty-four years later, Amanda Voorheis — whose hair is still dark — is a parishioner at Blessed Sacrament Church in Rochester, and employment supervisor at Kaufmann's Department Store at Eastview Mall in Victor. She plans to attend a reunion of people born at St. Mary's, tentatively slated for sometime in September.

"I think it will be a neat experience for all the people who were born at St. Mary's to come together and meet each other," Voorheis said.

Voorheis has responded to Unity Health System's public call to all people born at St. Mary's to come to the reunion, according to Patti Quinn, director of corporate communications for Unity.



Greg Francis/Staff photographer  
Amanda Voorheis, 24, left, jokes with mother Elaine May 21 in Penfield. Amanda is holding a photo of herself at birth that appeared in the *Courier-Journal*, now the *Catholic Courier*.

Formed in 1997, Unity is an alliance of St. Mary's and Park Ridge Hospital in Greece.

The reunion was planned to celebrate the opening of WellStream, a women's health center being constructed at Park

Ridge, Quinn said.

The one-story center will consist of a new addition to Park Ridge's main floor, as well as renovated space in the hospital. The center will provide a variety of women's health services as well as feature

the new St. Mary's Family Birth Place, a facility with 21 private suites for women in labor, delivery and recovery, Quinn added.

The reunion is a way of letting people know that St. Mary's will continue to provide services to pregnant women at Park Ridge, even though obstetric services were discontinued at St. Mary's Hospital last December, Quinn said.

Unity announced the reunion via press releases and also plans to publicize it through church bulletins in the Monroe County area, Quinn said.

"Without spending any money, we got over 1,000 responses," Quinn said of the reunion announcement.

She added that everyone who responds to the announcement is asked for information that will be used to create invitations when the reunion's date is finalized. Unity has also asked that people send any memorabilia associated with their births or their relatives' births at St. Mary's to Unity, so that they can be displayed at the event.

Voorheis said her grandfather, Bernard Voorheis of Spencerport, sent Unity information on her, including a copy of the diocesan newspaper's article on her birth.

"I think it's a really neat thing that they've got going," Voorheis concluded about the reunion.

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To learn more about the upcoming reunion of St. Mary's babies and their families, call 716/723-6757.

## Obituaries

## Father Matthew Swizdor, known for healing ministry, at 81

Father Matthew Swizdor, OFM Conv., internationally known for his healing ministry, died May 19, 1999, at Auburn Memorial Hospital after several years of battling heart and kidney problems.

Born Jan. 9, 1918, in Fleming, Father Swizdor was the son of Stanley and Katherine Swizdor. He grew up on the family farm, which gave him a love of nature, observed Father Xavier Nawrocki, pastor of Auburn's St. Hyacinth Church, where Father Swizdor had lived since the mid-1980s.

Father Swizdor entered the Franciscans in 1935, and was ordained June 20, 1943. He taught at Bishop Ryan High School in Buffalo, then at St. Hyacinth College and



Seminary in Granby, Mass., where he was master of clerics. He also served as acting principal at St. Michael School, Bridgeport, Conn.; taught at the Friary of St. Joseph Cupertino in Ellicott City, Md., and St. Francis High School in Athol Springs, N.Y.; was parochial vicar at St. Hyacinth Church, Auburn and Corpus Christi Church, Buffalo; and pastor of St. Anthony's Church in Ranshaw, Pa., and St. Anthony Church in Chicopee, Mass.

While in Ranshaw, Father Swizdor began

his healing ministry. He presided at hundreds of services in the United States and Europe.

"He gave credit to God for everything that happened through him," said his secretary, Josephine Stanko, who with her husband Frank often traveled with Father Swizdor. She noted that when people tried to thank him, "He would say 'You have to thank the Lord. I'm just his instrument.'"

Father Swizdor left parish work for full-time healing ministry, moving back to St. Hyacinth Parish. He also published books about his ministry: *Lay Hands on the Sick* (1983), *The Power of the Kingdom* (1987) and *See God and Live* (1996). He had also published *God in Me*.

Except for a brief time after a 1996 heart attack, he conducted healing services up until about eight weeks before his death.

Such commitment was typical of Father Swizdor, Father Nawrocki acknowledged.

"The biggest thing with him was practice what you preach," Father Nawrocki said. "If you're going to give a gift, give it completely. If you're going to serve God, serve

God completely. Be a full-time Christian."

"His life was working for the Lord," Stanko added. "He just worked for the Lord and now he's got his reward in heaven."

Father Swizdor was predeceased by his parents, his brothers Peter, John and Adolph, and by his sister Veronica Brewster. He is survived by his sisters Josephine Tkacz, Mary DiLallo, Rose Leja, all of Auburn, Stella Fronczek of Liverpool and Cecilia Swizdor of Port Chester; brothers-in-law Charles Brewster and Babe Leja; sisters-in-law Anne, Lotie and Stella Swizdor; and many nieces and nephews.

Father Swizdor had asked that any memorials in his name be sent to: Franciscan Educational Burse, St. Hyacinth Seminary, 66 School St., Granby, MA, 01033.

## Fr. Ronald P. Frederick, 58; retired

Father Ronald P. Frederick, a retired diocesan priest, died May 18, 1999, at 58. He had suffered various medical conditions and died after cardiac arrest.

Raised in Holy Rosary and St. Theodore's parishes, he was ordained June 7, 1969, by Bishop Fulton Sheen.

Father Frederick was assistant pastor, Good Shepherd, Henrietta (1969), and Church of the Assumption, Fairport (1973); associate pastor, St. Pius X, Chili (1975), St. Margaret Mary, Irondequoit (1979), St. Philip Neri, Rochester (1982), and St. Ambrose, Rochester (1983); and parochial vicar, St. Mary's, Canandaigua (1985). He took sabbatical in Dublin, Ireland, in 1990.

In January 1991 he became a temporary administrator at St. Francis de Sales, Geneva, and in June 1991, parochial vicar of the Northern Cayuga Cluster. In 1993 he began a medical leave of absence.

"He's at rest, I think, I pray, through with his sufferings," said Father William B. Leone, pastor of the Northern Cayuga Cluster. Recalling that Father Frederick enjoyed going to movies, he said, "Now he's got best seat in the house."

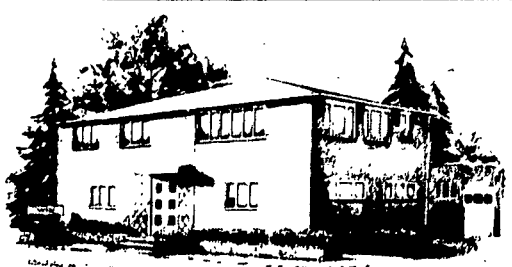
"He was convinced that God loved him. So many times we put emphases on what we do, but what we do is not new; the wonderful miracle of our faith is what God does for us and continues do for us. Even our celebration of the sacraments is coming to a deep realization that God loves us as we are."

Father Leone gave Father Frederick's funeral Mass homily at Holy Rosary Parish May 21. Bishop Matthew H. Clark presided at the Mass, concelebrated by several priests and classmates. Burial was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. Survivors include many cousins and friends.

— Kathleen Schwarz

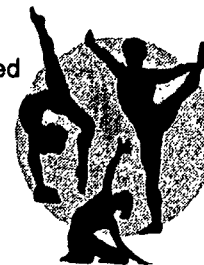
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