

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Br. Vercruysse to vacate Kearney president's post

By Mike Latona  
Staff Writer

Brother Raymond Vercruysse, CFC, president of Bishop Kearney High School for nearly a decade, has announced that he will not return to his position after the 1999-2000 school year.

Brother Vercruysse, a Bishop Kearney graduate, has been president at his alma mater since the 1992-93 school year. He also served as principal in 1991-92.

Brother Vercruysse said he has anticipated his departure from Bishop Kearney after June. He explained that he originally been assigned in 1991 to a six-year term as a Bishop Kearney administrator, but he "pushed the envelope a little bit" to get a three-year extension in 1997 from the Christian Brothers order.

"I was hoping that Year Nine was further ahead. They've been nine short years," Brother Vercruysse remarked.

A search committee for Brother Vercruysse's replacement was to be formed this month. Brother Vercruysse noted that Bishop Kearney's board of trustees will request that person to be another member of the Christian Brothers.

Ownership of Bishop Kearney was transferred from the Christian Brothers to a lay board of trustees last summer. Four Christian Brothers — including Brother Vercruysse — currently serve at Kearney.

The school plans to maintain its current president/principal model. Louis D'Angelo has served as principal of Bishop Kearney since 1996.

As for his own future, Brother Vercruysse said he hopes to remain in school administration, or perhaps return to either a guidance department or a classroom. In all likelihood, he said, he will be reassigned outside the Rochester area.

Brother Vercruysse, who grew up in St. Joseph's Parish in Penfield, graduated from Bishop Kearney in 1973. He joined the Christian Brothers order upon graduation.

For the next 18 years, Brother Vercruysse served his order in the New York City area. Midway through this stretch, in 1981, he professed his final vows as a Christian Brother.

Brother Vercruysse received his bachelor's degree in economics from Iona College in New Rochelle in 1977, and his master's degree in counseling from Catholic University of America in 1985. He taught at Power Memorial High School in New York from 1977-80, and at Bergen Catholic High in Oradell, N.J., from 1980-81.

He served as director of guidance at All Hallows Institute in New York from 1981-87, followed by a stint as director of vocations for the Christian Brothers' Eastern American province in New Rochelle from 1987-91. He then settled in for his nine-



Mike Mergen/Photo Intern

Brother Raymond Vercruysse will leave his president's post at Bishop Kearney High School at the end of this school year.

year stay at Bishop Kearney.

Among the school's highlights during Brother Vercruysse's tenure have been completion of a five-year strategic plan; the addition of a state-of-the-art computer center; an auditorium renovation; and a gymnasium renovation project that is still in progress.

Brother Vercruysse is also actively involved in community affairs, serving as University of Rochester Catholic Leadership Program advisory board member; Sisters of St. Joseph Spirituality Center board member; Rochester Downtown Ro-

tary member; and National Catholic Education Association Region 2 (western New York) regional associate.

Reflecting on his time at Kearney, Brother Vercruysse said, "I have given my all, which is the vocation of a brother. I've had some parents tell me that if I cut myself, I'd probably bleed Columbia blue and white (the school colors)."

Brother Vercruysse celebrated his silver jubilee as a Christian Brother in 1998.

"What I do is not a job or career. Rather, it is a ministry and a calling," he remarked.

## Basilian order: No more priests at Aquinas as of July 1

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff Writer

As of July 1, Basilians will no longer teach at Aquinas Institute in Rochester, according to Father George T. Smith, CSB, a member of the general council of the men's religious order, which is based in Toronto.

However, Basilians may continue to serve on the school's board of trustees.

The decision, announced Dec. 6, ends a 63-year tradition at Aquinas, and was greeted with sadness by the school's president, Patrick A. Hanley.

"The students, faculty and alumni of Aquinas owe a debt of gratitude to the Basilian Fathers," Hanley said in a press statement issued Jan. 6. Aquinas was founded by the diocese in 1922, and the Basilians joined the faculty six years later.

Their teachings and presence over the past 63 years are the cornerstone of Aquinas. Though the Basilian Fathers will

not be involved on a daily basis here, the Basilian motto, 'Teach me Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge' will continue to guide our students' education well into the 21st century."

Currently, only one Basilian, Father Dennis J. Kauffman, works at the school. A 1966 Aquinas graduate, he works in the guidance office. Father Kauffman — who doesn't know yet where he will go July 1 — said the decision to leave Aquinas was painful but necessary.

"It's sad, but it is also sadly realistic," he said. "We just don't have the manpower to do all the wonderful things we need to do."

The order will also no longer send new Basilians to work at St. John Fisher College in Rochester. Father Smith said in a phone interview from his Toronto office. However, he added that the eight priests currently affiliated with the school will continue to work there until they leave on an individual basis.

The Basilians plan to continue to pro-

vide the college with campus ministers, he said, and, like at Aquinas, Basilians may still serve on the college's board of trustees.

The Basilians will continue to serve Christ the King Church in Irondequoit, which is currently home to a Basilian pastor, Father Norman C. Tanck, CSB, and a Basilian parochial vicar, Father Joseph A. Trovato. Christ the King has been an effective training ground for Basilian priests, Father Smith said, pointing out that 10 Basilians have taken up their first assignments as priests there since the late 1970s.

Father Kauffman lives with three other retired Basilians in a residence behind Aquinas. He noted that although no final decisions have been made by the order, it is likely that the house will no longer be a Basilian residence as of July 1. He added that the priests residing there may go to Christ the King or Fisher.

The decision to withdraw from Aquinas is part of an overall plan to disengage the Basilians from several institutions around the country in the next several years, he said, noting the order's declining membership as the impetus behind the move. In addition to leaving Aquinas, the Basilians will leave 13 of the 37 institutions they

serve in the United States and Canada either this year, or in the next several years, he said.

Father Smith said his order made the decision after conducting a two-year assessment of the Basilian mission. The order decided to keep its priests in the institutions where they were most needed, he said, and Aquinas wasn't one of them.

"When we looked at Aquinas, we saw that this is a vibrant, active Catholic high school," Father Smith said. "It's reasonable to think that without a daily Basilian presence, Aquinas will continue to function as a vibrant, valuable Catholic high school."

He added that there are currently 325 Basilians in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Colombia and France. However, he added, of that number, about half are retired or semi-retired, and only 12 men are currently in formation to become priests. Because of their shrinking numbers, Father Smith said, when Basilians have left Aquinas, they have not been replaced by new ones.

"In the last five to 10 years, we have been unable to replace those men who left for one reason or another," he said. "It was nothing conscious or deliberate on either our part or the board's part."

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### Obituary

#### Sister Evelyn Connolly, SSJ; 84; teacher

Sister Evelyn Connolly, SSJ, died Nov. 26, 1999, at the St. Joseph Convent Infirmary. She was 84.

Sister Evelyn was a native of Dansville and entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from St. Patrick's Parish in 1935. She earned her baccalaureate degree and her master's degree from Nazareth College, where she majored in speech and drama. She also attended sessions at Fordham University and Catholic University.

Sister Evelyn taught English, speech and drama at Nazareth Academy for 14 years and at St. Agnes High School for 14 years. She earned a master's degree in hospital administration at Xavier Univer-

sity, Cincinnati, in 1965-66, and did her residency at St. Francis General Hospital, Pittsburgh.

She was administrator of Good Samaritan Hospital, Selma, Ala., from 1967-72. She came to St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira, as administrative assistant and director of the department of education for 12 years.

She lived at the motherhouse for 11 years and retired to the infirmary in 1997.

Sister Evelyn's funeral liturgy was celebrated Dec. 1 in the motherhouse chapel by Msgr. William Shannon. She is survived by her sister, Celia (Alan) Baum, nephews, a niece, cousins and her congregational sisters.