

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Vocations awareness efforts continue to expand

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

According to Father John DeSocio, an annual average of one or two men are due to be ordained diocesan priests over the next five years. However, Father DeSocio added, he knows of 40 young men who are interested in the priesthood — up from 25 or 30 a year ago.

Father DeSocio attributed the increase to strong promotion of priestly vocations over the past year. The effort has been spearheaded by himself, as diocesan assistant to the bishop for vocations and priestly formation; and Patricia Finnerty, diocesan director of vocations awareness.

Finnerty noted that her office is stepping up its focus on other vocations, as well, this year. For example, the diocese staged a vocations-awareness coffee hour at Greece's St. Charles Borromeo Church Jan. 7, the first day of National Vocations Awareness Week. Representatives from the Rochester Diocese clergy, as well as the Sisters of St. Joseph, Sisters of Mercy, Jesuits and School Sisters of Notre Dame, were on hand to provide information about religious and lay vocations.

Finnerty added that she is working with diocesan officials to increase the number of permanent deacons, youth ministers, directors of religious education, pastoral associates and pastoral administrators.

Publicity has played a key role in these efforts, Finnerty observed. She said that she's received numerous responses to "A Vocation View," a weekly reflection on vocations that runs in parish bulletins across the diocese. Another tool, recently launched, is the "Vocations" link on the diocesan Web site ([www.dor.org](http://www.dor.org)). The site enables people to receive information about vocations in a non-threatening manner, Finnerty said.

"A lot of people in the initial stage may wish to remain anonymous, and this is the perfect way," Finnerty explained. "People still aren't sure where God's leading them, so they're not willing to make a public statement yet."



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Sister Miriam Nugent, RSM, pastoral associate at St. Charles Borromeo Parish, looks through a folder with parishioner Caitlin Keyes, 13, during a National Vocations Awareness Week kickoff at the Greece church Jan. 7.

Personal appearances have also helped the vocations awareness effort, Father DeSocio said.

"The initiative of preaching on weekends in different parishes has sort of materialized," he remarked. "And we've been working really close with grammar schools as well as high school and special programs; that's worked

really well. We present the different aspects of religious life as well as priesthood and diaconate. We explain that it takes different types of people, personalities and talents, and how we develop them in this call."

At the same time, Father DeSocio said, the diocese wants to exercise caution in determining the potential of those interested in pursuing a religious vocation.

"We just have to be very careful, looking at the challenges and if a man or woman could handle those challenges for the future," Father DeSocio said.

Another new recruiting effort is the "Call by Name" program, in which people from parishes recommend young men and women with potential vocations. More than 50 parishes are involved in this effort.

"It's really important that the people in the pews, and the priests, take ownership in all this," Finnerty commented.

On Feb. 16, the second annual intercollegiate retreat for vocations awareness will take place at St. Ann's Church in Owasco. Finnerty said that 17 male and female college students attended this retreat last year. Registration is still open, she added.

In addition, the second annual "24 Hours with the Lord" is scheduled for late June, dovetailing with Deacon Joseph Marcoux's ordination to the priesthood. Last year's "24 Hours With the Lord," led by diocesan priests and including a lengthy question-and-answer session with Bishop Matthew H. Clark, drew 37 young men.

More recently, the diocese staged a retreat for priestly vocations Dec. 27-29 at Greece's Borromeo Prayer Center. Five young men attended the retreat.

"This one was more focused, more intense, more informative than "24 Hours With the Lord," which was a quick overview. This was a step further," Finnerty said.

Finnerty acknowledged that getting young men interested in the priesthood is still her office's top priority. "Priestly vocations will always be a dominant focus, based on that's where the largest need is right now," she said.

## Obituaries

### Fr. Edward 'E-Z' Zimmer; 'He welcomed all'

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

Nelson Zimmer said he "could talk for hours" about the virtues of his brother, Father Edward A. Zimmer, who died Jan. 7, 2001.

"Put it this way: He never met a person he didn't like," Nelson Zimmer said. "He welcomed all. Those who had worse problems, he welcomed quicker."

Father Anthony Calimeri, a member of Father Zimmer's 1947 ordination class, agreed.

"He was a great talker and an even better listener," Father Calimeri commented. "He was just a great guy, that's all you can say. He's done a lot for numberless people, although he was slow to admit it."

The diocesan priest, affectionately known to many as "E-Z," died at Rochester's St. Joseph Convent Infirmary due to complications from a chronic lung condition. He was 78.

Father Zimmer grew up in Rochester's Blessed Sacrament Parish and graduated from Blessed Sacrament School, St. Andrew's Seminary and St. Bernard's Seminary. He was ordained June 13, 1947, by Bishop James E. Kearney.

He went on to serve as assistant pastor at St. Bridget's, Rochester (1947); St. Boniface, Rochester (1947-49); and Immaculate



Conception, Rochester (1949-56). Guy Kevin Reed said he first met Father Zimmer while a youngster at Immaculate Conception.

"He always had a cigar in his mouth after Mass, with his cap

on. People remember him for his cigar smile," Reed said.

Father Zimmer went on to assist at Immaculate Conception, Ithaca (1956-59); and Sacred Heart Cathedral (1959-67). He was named dean of students at St. Bernard's Seminary in 1967, and also served as business manager of King's Preparatory School in the late 1960s.

Father Zimmer's first pastorate began in 1970, at St. Monica's Parish in Rochester. He served at the inner-city parish until 1979, when he became pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Auburn. He stayed in that pastorate until retiring in 1992.

He resided at Rochester's St. John the Evangelist Church (Humboldt Street) throughout his retirement, and stayed active by assisting at area parishes and giving numerous children's Masses. According to his brother, Father Zimmer had a special love for young people and was often asked to preside at weddings.

"He had great insight on couples," Nelson Zimmer said.

"He was very upbeat, very upbeat — just a people lover. And he never said no to anything," remarked Father William V. Spilly, pastor of St. John the Evangelist.

Reed, currently a St. John the Evangelist parishioner, said he "can remember people actually clapping after E-Z did his homilies on rainbows, lessons in life, and loving one another."

Father Zimmer gave significant financial support to Native American causes, his brother noted. In addition, he maintained a garden at St. John the Evangelist that is dedicated to Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha.

Arrangements called for Father Zimmer to lie in state at Blessed Sacrament Church on Thursday, Jan. 11, from 2 to 7:30 p.m. A solemn vigil prayer service was to follow. His funeral Mass was set for Jan. 12 at 10:30 a.m., also at Blessed Sacrament. Interment was to be at St. Joseph's Cemetery in Auburn.

Father Zimmer was predeceased by his brothers, Robert and Eugene; and sisters, Sister Mary Agnes Zimmer, RSM, and Sister Barbara Ann Zimmer, RSM. He is survived by his brothers Nelson (Ellen) and Raymond (Murlyn); sister-in-law, Shirley; aunts, Ethel Rosse and Esther Hutchinson; 15 nieces and nephews; 26 grandnieces and grandnephews; and several cousins.

## Recognizing

★ The St. Stephen's Diaconal Community Association presented its Fifth Annual Deacon Stan Zawacki Memorial Diaconal Service Award posthumously to Dolores "Lita" Gillette, the association's past treasurer. Mrs. Gillette, who died in August 2000, was the wife of the late Deacon Jim Gillette, who was ordained in 1988 and who died in 1991 after serving at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, Brockport. Mrs. Gillette was music director at the parish until her death. The association presented the award to members of Mrs. Gillette's family at a lunch during its retreat in October in Skaneateles. The award recognized Mrs. Gillette's "selfless dedication to the permanent diaconate. The association is made up of members of the permanent diaconate and men in formation for the diaconate, and their wives."

★ The New York Province of the Society of Jesus presented its 2000 Xavier Award to Franklin L. Kamp, principal of McQuaid Jesuit High School from 1991-2000, and the school's assistant principal for curriculum and instruction from 1971-91. The award, presented at the province's 58th annual dinner in November, honors Kamp for his work and leadership in fostering the Ignatian ideology and pedagogy that characterize a Jesuit school.

## Father William McCusker, SJ; had served at McQuaid since 1969

Father William C. McCusker, SJ, longtime teacher, counselor, administrator and spiritual director at McQuaid Jesuit High School, died Jan. 6, 2001, at Strong Memorial Hospital from heart failure. He was 79.

Father McCusker, a native of Bayonne, N.J., entered the Society of Jesus in 1938. He taught at Xavier High School in New York City from 1945-48, and at Woodstock College, Md., from 1948-52. He was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1951.

He taught at his alma mater, St. Peter's

Prep in Jersey City, from 1953-57. For the next seven years, he served as principal of Regis High School in New York City. That was followed by a five-year stint as guidance director at Brooklyn Prep.

Father McCusker came to McQuaid Jesuit in 1969 and never left. He served as a guidance counselor at McQuaid, as well as adjunct professor at SUNY Brockport and St. John Fisher College. He also taught the Higher Achievement Program for McQuaid students who struggle academically but cannot afford special programs.

"That meant so much to him. He worked summers, voluntarily, in that program for 25 years," said Father Leon Hogenkamp, SJ, McQuaid vice-president.

The Jesuit priest served on several local and national boards and helped coordinate the Jesuit Senior Volunteer Corp in the Rochester and Syracuse areas. He had also been a weekend assistant at Mendon's St. Catherine of Siena Parish since 1978. In addition, he was an avid golfer and cross-country skier, and was well-known at the Genesee Valley and

Churchville golf courses.

"I never knew him not to like anybody — students, parents, alumni, people at the parish," Father Hogenkamp said.

Father McCusker is survived by a brother, George (Dolores) McCusker; sister-in-law, Patricia McCusker; several nieces and nephews; and the McQuaid community.

Father McCusker's funeral Mass was slated for Jan. 10 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Brighton. Interment was to be at the Jesuit Cemetery in Auriesville.

— Mike Latona