

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Ordained to serve



The six deacon candidates lie prostrate during their ordination ceremony at Sacred Heart Cathedral June 9. (At right) Deacon James Fennessy (left), a transitional deacon embraces another deacon; Mary Germano embraces her husband, Deacon Donald J. Germano. (Far right) Bishop Matthew H. Clark lays his hands on the head of George J. Spezzano. Also ordained were Jay E. Brown, Dean F. Condon and Phillip H. Yawman.



Photos by Karin von Voiglander.

## Sisters volunteer to help Alzheimer's researchers

By Kathleen Schwar  
Assistant editor

ROCHESTER — It's not exactly the famed "Nun Study," (featured on this week's cover) but a study for which Sister Edwina Butler, RSM, 85, volunteered this year is described as the first large-scale Alzheimer's disease prevention study. Conducted at four national sites, it will involve 700 participants, who will take either naproxen or a placebo daily.

"I read about it. I thought it was worthy of my attention," Sister Butler said. "It is a seven-year commitment, which is the height of optimism, isn't it."

Sister Butler has taught at Notre Dame High School, Elmira, nearly every year since it was started in 1955. She still teaches French part-time.

Sister Butler will meet twice a year with researchers associated with the University of Rochester Medical Center. Her tests include being given a list of words to remember while other subjects are introduced as distractions, and quoting up to eight numbers said to her, but backwards.

She read of the study in the Alzheimer's Association Rochester newsletter received by sisters in her order. "I am very much interested in any kind of research having to do with dementia, because I know we are going to have more and more people suffering from that because we're living so much longer," she said.

"This won't have an awful effect on the present generation of elderly people, but certainly for the next generation."

Sister Butler is the only woman religious so far in the study, which is open for hun-

dreds more participants, according to Dr. J. Michael Ryan, associate field site director, a member of St. John of Rochester Parish.

"It has nothing to do with the sisters," Ryan said. "Essentially this is a prevention trial for people with normal memory function but with a family member with Alzheimer's disease. So they're at risk."

In fact, study coordinators are sending letters inviting Rochester-area residents age 69 or older. The first 45,000-piece mailing went out May 30. Criteria to participate include having a parent or sibling who has or had serious age-related memory loss, dementia, or Alzheimer's. The participant must not have such a diagnosis, however.

Colleen McCallum, project coordinator, asked that anyone interested call her at 716/760-6574 or 866/278-6723.

Called ADAPT, for Alzheimer's Disease Anti-Inflammatory Prevention Trial, the study will further explore apparent links between the taking of anti-inflammatory medicine and the lessened risk of Alzheimer's. It also will closely monitor side effects.

Ryan cautioned that until it is shown to be safe and valuable, taking anti-inflammatory drugs in attempts to prevent Alzheimer's is not advisable.

Another significant study is being conducted by the Alzheimer's Disease Center, at the University of Rochester and Monroe Community Hospital. It is funded by the National Institute on Aging, as is ADAPT. The study aims at a better understanding of the disease, and earlier diagnosis before the onset of symptoms.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester asked for a presentation on the local studies and programs, recalled Eileen Johnson. A parishioner at Fairport's Church of the Resurrection, she is senior nurse coordinator with the Alzheimer's Disease Center.

"Sixteen nuns volunteered right off the bat," she recalled. "We enrolled them as

control subjects." Their conditions will be monitored alongside those of people with Alzheimer's symptoms, she explained.

"Certainly for them to be an interested, enthusiastic group, and that many may have uniform lifestyle or backgrounds, is always helpful for research," Johnson said.

A brain donation is requested, she said, and can only be taken if a family member gives consent at the time of death. The brains are used to confirm diagnoses, as well as for further study.

Participants in this study are asked for a blood sample, and some, for a skin sample.

Rochester is fortunate to have had numerous Alzheimer's studies, Ryan noted, and also to have experimental Alzheimer's medicines available.

According to the Alzheimer's Association Rochester Chapter, 4 million Americans have Alzheimer's, and 14 million could have the disease by mid-century. Projections are for 431,000 New York state residents to have the disease by 2050.

Memory problems are not a normal part of growing older, Ryan stated, and treatment is available.

He and McCallum said significant clues of memory problems can include:

- Inability to recall a conversation, or the

fact you had it, from two hours ago.

- Inability to recall names of relatives you should know.

- Getting lost driving in an area you should know.

- Missing doctor appointments if this previously hasn't been a practice.

- Making checkbook mistakes, and becoming unable to handle finances as well as previously.

- Displaying depression.

- Being unable to put together a grocery list, or a meal, as usual.

Ryan suggested that a family member accompany the patient to physician visits to help communicate with the doctor and affirm the patient's concerns.

"So we really urge people to speak with a doctor if even they have mild memory problems, and get a doctor's opinion," Ryan said. "Why wait till you are completely sure you have dementia?"

## dining guide

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## dining guide

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### Sr. Micciche notes 50th

Rochester native Sister Julia Micciche, RSCJ, 73, will celebrate her 50th jubilee as a religious of the Society of the Sacred Heart June 16.

A busload of friends and family plan to visit her that day, according to her sister, Josephine Caschetta of St. Theodore's Parish, Gates. "We're going to celebrate with her," she said.

Sister Micciche entered the order at the age of 17 from St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Rochester, and has lived at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Kenwood, in the Diocese of Albany. She works in the convent's dining room.

**Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580)**  
Vol. 112 No. 36, June 14, 2001  
Published weekly except the last Thursday in December.  
Subscription rates: single copy, 75¢; one-year subscription in U.S., \$20.00; Canada and foreign \$20.00 plus postage.  
Offices: 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, 716/328-4340. Periodicals postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.