

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## 'Merton' takes to the stage in Basilian's play

By Jeanne Kidera  
Editorial intern

Basilian Father Ed Heidt, a 54-year-old Rochester native and citizen of Canada, is bringing his one-man drama on Thomas Merton to his hometown.

Rochester is a center of learning about the famed Trappist monk and author, with such International Thomas Merton Society leaders and writers as Msgr. William H. Shannon and Christine Bochen of Nazareth College. But that doesn't intimidate the actor-priest.

A member of the society himself, Father Heidt said he welcomes comments on his work, "Holding a Mirror to the Mountain."

In it he reads excerpts from Merton's autobiographical *Seven Storey Mountain*.

Father Heidt will perform his play in a benefit at Our Lady of Mercy High School in Brighton Friday, June 22, at 8 p.m. During his visit, he also will celebrate the 25th anniversary of his June 17 ordination, which took place at his home parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Rochester. Father Heidt attended Aquinas Institute and joined the Basilians at St. John Fisher College. He now lives in Saskatoon and teaches English at St. Thomas More College.

"I'm very involved in the world, but I'm not a monk," Father Heidt said, referring to Merton as an irony or paradox. He said the aspect that "(Merton) was contemplative in



Photo courtesy of Bobbi Jeffery

a world of action," interests him most, as does Merton's social and peace activism. "His voice was very loud," he added.

Father Heidt came up with the idea for his play at a time in his life when he was reading a lot of Merton. He, too, had become more interested in being contemplative and monk-like.

He wrote the one-man drama, in which Merton reflects on his life, his writings, inner doubts and published views about him. Father Heidt uses slides, audio tape and lighting effects to evoke mood and feelings.

People often have difficulty distinguishing Merton the man from his work, Father

Heidt said. "People read the work and go 'Oh, this man is wonderful,' but I would rather separate and say 'This is a wonderful work, but I don't know about the man,'" he stated.

"Personally, I think he was arrogant, and he could be very sexist. People don't want to hear that," Father Heidt said.

He portrays Merton as viewing his work as his personal journey and encouraging that others follow their own paths.

In the play Merton expresses, as he was known to, that he does not want to be idolized. Father Heidt added the line "And now Ed Heidt wants to do a play about me" with a slide of himself smiling. Father Heidt said he respects Merton and his feelings, but that if other areas are open for discussing Merton, he does not see why the stage can not be as well.

"If Merton saw it, he might say that it isn't him at all. This is my interpretation. It's my view of him. I say more about myself in it really because it's my vision," said Father Heidt. "I know there is a strong Merton following in Rochester, and it will be interesting to see what they think," he commented.

Tickets are available for \$10 through the Mercy Alumnae Office at 716/288-2610.

## Obituaries

### Sr. M. Patrick Kennedy, 80

Sister Mary Patrick Kennedy, RSM, a former teacher and retired clinical nutritionist, died April 22, 2001. Born Ruth Kennedy, she was 80.

Sister Patrick grew up attending St. Cecilia's Church, Irondequoit, and graduated from Our Lady of Mercy High School, Brighton. She earned a bachelor's degree in home economics from Cornell University, Ithaca, and completed her dietetic internship at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

Sister Patrick entered the Sisters of Mercy in September 1939, and took her perpetual vows Aug. 25, 1945.

She taught at St. Mary's School, Corning, from 1942-45, and then taught home economics at Mercy High School. She also taught at Notre Dame High School, Elmira, from 1955-63.

She then worked in the field of nutrition for 27 years, and was admitted to the American Dietetic Association and was selected to conduct research studies. She served as chief dietician at St. James Mer-

cy Hospital, Hornell, from 1964-76, and then briefly at St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira. Sister Patrick served as a clinical nutritionist and certified diabetes educator for Group Health in Rochester, dividing her time between the Wilson Health Center and the Greece Health Center.

After retiring in 1991, Sister Patrick assisted with finances and served as a shopkeeper for the Sisters of Mercy's Kate's Tea and Gift Shop. She also volunteered at her order's motherhouse in Brighton, working the switchboard, teaching weight classes and providing diet counseling.

Sister Patrick is survived by a sister, Mary Jane Aiello, and a brother, John (Fran) Kennedy; nieces and nephews and the Sisters of Mercy.

A funeral Mass was celebrated April 25 at the Motherhouse Chapel. Interment was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Rochester.

Memorial donations may be made to the Sisters of Mercy, 1437 Blossom Road, Rochester, NY 14610.

### Sister M. Alocque Thomas, SSND

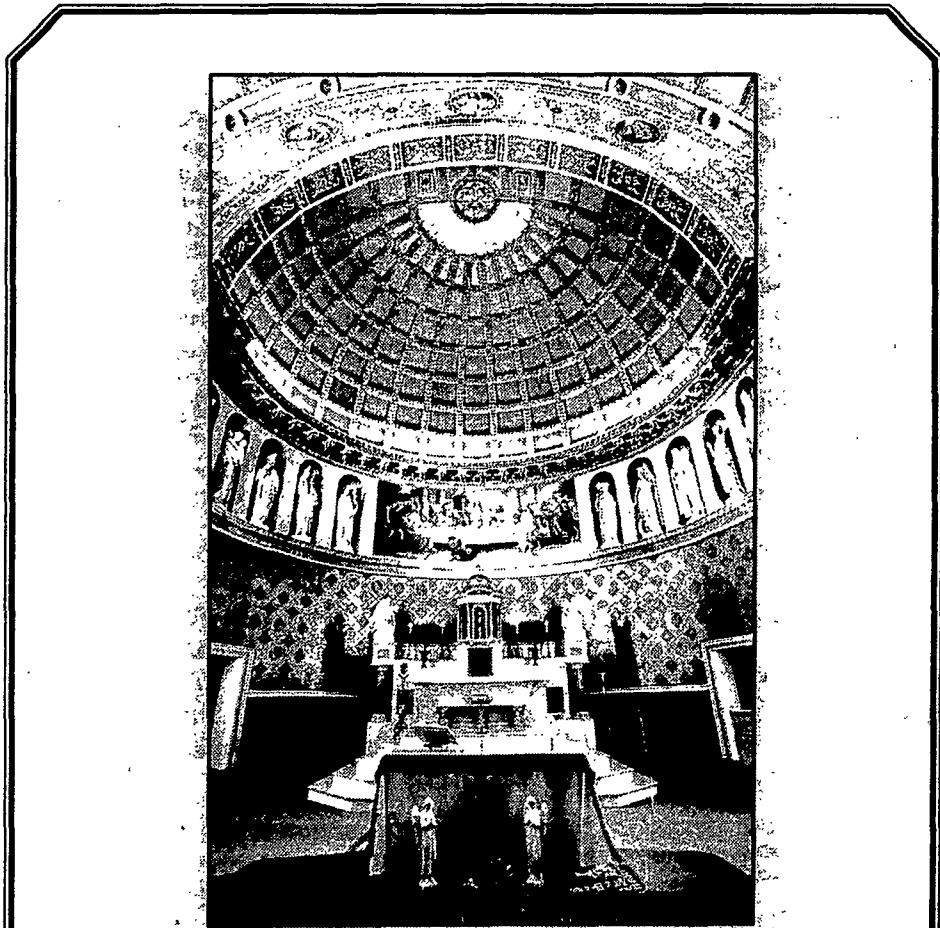
Sister Mary Alocque Thomas, SSND, 91, died April 28, 2001, in Wilton, Conn.

A native of Rochester, she taught at St. Michael's School (1959-63) and was principal of St. Peter and Paul School (1963-69), both in Rochester. Sister Thomas' 62 years as an educator included teaching elementary and middle school, and serving as an associate administrator and administrator in Massachusetts, New Jersey and Florida. She retired in 1994 after serving in New York City (1972-1994).

Survivors include a sister, Marie De-Vogelaere of Webster; a sister-in-law, Lorraine Thomas of Rochester; and several nieces and nephews, including Pam Thomas of Rochester.

Sister Thomas' funeral Mass was celebrated May 1 in the Provincial Motherhouse Chapel. Interment was in St. Mary's Cemetery, Bethel, Conn.

Memorial contributions may be made to the School Sisters of Notre Dame Development Fund, Wilton, CT 06897.



### God is alive and well at SS. PETER AND PAUL'S CHURCH

Join us on Friday, June 29th the feast day of Ss. Peter and Paul, for a celebration of our newly restored side altars, statues and murals. All parishioners, past and present, are invited to see what the Spirit is doing among us today.

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## Looking to improve your vocal technique?

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### ADULT VOCAL CAMP

June 27-30

Nazareth College of Rochester  
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4245 East Avenue

The Adult Vocal Camp will be held June 27, 28 and 29 beginning at 6:30 p.m., and at 8:30 a.m. June 30. The camp will feature large group activities, studio class, and prayer. Students will be assigned a teacher.

To register for the Adult Vocal Camp, contact the Diocese of Rochester's Office of Liturgy at (716) 328-3210, ext. 328 or (800) 388-7177, ext. 328 by June 21.

