



Courtesy of the Finger Lakes Times
Father Brian Jeffers in 1995.

Priest killed in crash with SUV

By Kathleen Schwar
Assistant editor

Father Brian Jeffers, 37, died July 23, 2001, after a motorcycle-SUV accident in Fayette, Seneca County, the previous day.

State police in Waterloo were continuing to investigate the accident Tuesday, but said charges are pending against the driver of the sport-utility vehicle. According to Trooper James Wilkinson, Father Jeffers was driving his motorcycle southbound on State Route 96A when a northbound SUV crossed the center line. Wilkinson said Father Jeffers' motorcycle struck the side of the SUV. The SUV's driver, Philip R. Johnson, 53, 4333 Route 96A, Geneva, was treated at Geneva General Hospital for an arm injury and re-

leased, the trooper said.

Father Jeffers was airlifted from the Geneva hospital to Rochester's Strong Memorial Hospital, where he died at 11:36 a.m. Monday.

Father Lee Chase, a good friend of Father Jeffers' from their priest formation years and common support groups, was able to speak with the dying priest at Strong, where he also animated him.

A priest for nearly nine years, Father Jeffers had served most recently as pastor of the Good Shepherd Catholic Community's six parishes in Cayuga County. He had received a leave of absence April 18, and was said to be discerning his future.

"Brian had a deep, deep spirituality, a deep, deep prayer life," Father Chase said. "I was always jealous of that. He had a

very deep connection to God. He really took seriously where God was calling him."

"I don't think his mind was made up about leaving the priesthood," he added.

Father Jeffers had served as parochial vicar at St. Stephen's Parish, Geneva, from 1995-98, under Msgr. Gerard Krieg. He succeeded Father Michael McHale, who had moved on to the chaplaincy at Rochester Institute of Technology. Father McHale, who had become Father Jeffers' closest friend, died after a one-car crash that occurred early Christmas Day 1995. He was 42.

"Mike's death hit me very very hard," Msgr. Krieg, now retired, said. "Brian's does, too. What's so hard is the fact he

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One year to Canada's 'largest event'

COUNTDOWN
ONE YEAR TO GO

WORLD YOUTH DAY
TORONTO

WWW.WYD2002.ORG

JULY 28, 2001
6:00 P.M. TO 10:30 P.M.
Nathan Phillips Square
TORONTO

STORY BY MIKE LATONA
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Even on a normal day, traffic can get thick on the Queen Elizabeth Way heading toward Toronto. One can only imagine the congestion a year from now, when young adults from all over the world respond to Pope John Paul II's call to unite in Canada's largest city.

World Youth Day 2002, set for next July 23-28, is expected to draw crowds of unprecedented magnitude, said Father Thomas Rosica, during an interview in downtown Toronto.

"It will be the largest event in the history of this country," stated Father Rosica, a Basilian and Rochester native who serves as World Youth Day 2002's national director and chief executive officer. He expects several hundred thousand people to attend from more than 150 countries.

Plans are already under way for the Rochester Diocese to be part of the festivities: Nora Bradbury-Haehl, diocesan program specialist for youth and young adults said that detailed registration information should be available in parishes by the end of August. With Toronto less than 200 miles away from Rochester, she predicts that more than 1,000 older teens and young adults (ages 16 to 35) from the diocese will attend.

This will be the second World Youth Day to be held in North America. Pope John Paul presided in Denver in 1993 when 600 people from the Rochester Diocese, including Bishop Matthew H. Clark, attended.

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