

DIOCESAN NEWS

Sister of St. Joseph professes her final vows

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

PITTSFORD — After the unexpected death of her mother Aug. 24, Sister Liz Leonard said, she strongly considered postponing a milestone day in her life.

But when Sept. 8 arrived, Sister Leonard was beaming as she made her final profession of vows as a Sister of St. Joseph. The 90-minute liturgy took place on its originally scheduled date, before a gathering of approximately 250 in the sisters' motherhouse chapel.

Sister Leonard's mother, Anne, died of kidney failure at age 82. Sister Leonard remarked that because her mother was so supportive of her becoming a nun, she wouldn't have wanted the big day to be delayed.

"I know my mom. Everything fell into place," Sister Leonard said. She added, laughing, that her mother may well have used her influence in heaven to avert the rain that was predicted for Sept. 8. The afternoon instead turned out sunny and hot.

"I really felt her presence. It was a bittersweet moment, but I was at peace," Sister Leonard said after the liturgy. "This feels so right."

Msgr. William Shannon, who resides at the SSJ motherhouse, served as celebrant. Midway through the Mass, Sister Leonard professed her final vows of chastity, poverty and obedience to God, with Sister Janice Morgan, president of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester, receiving them.

Sister Leonard said that for her, one of the day's most profound moments occurred as the liturgy began. "When I was walking down the aisle and 'Sing A New Song' was playing, I started filling up. I was starting this whole new life," she said.

Her final profession of vows adds an-



Karin von Voigtlander/Photo intern

Sister of St. Joseph Donna Del Santo (center) embraces Sister Elizabeth Leonard, who made her final profession at the order's motherhouse in Pittsford Sept. 8. Looking on (from extreme left) are Sister Dianne Crowley, SSJ; Sister Elaine Englert, SSJ; and Brother Brian Walsh, CFC.



Sister Janice Morgan (left), SSJ congregational president, receives the vows as Sister Leonard professes them to God.

other chapter to a life that's taken some interesting turns in recent years. After serving for a quarter-century as a social worker, Sister Leonard returned to college in the 1990s and became a registered nurse.

Also during this period, Sister Leonard entered the Rochester Sisters of St. Joseph. "If you had told me 10 years ago I would be doing this, I would say forget it," remarked Sister Leonard, 53. "I had my own home; I really was happy. And yet something was missing, I didn't know exactly what.

"Without sounding hokey, I had this religious experience," she said. "I was going through a difficult time and had this spiritual awakening. Part of it was this religious life, which was frightening at the time because I had never thought about it. I needed to pursue it, and I did. I came to know

Christ deeper, and part of that was this deep desire to know the religious life."

Sister Leonard grew up in Rochester, attending her parish school, St. Ambrose. She was also a member of the first graduating class at Bishop Kearney High School, in 1966. She credits the Sisters of St. Joseph who staffed St. Ambrose, as well as the School Sisters of Notre Dame at Bishop Kearney, for positively modeling the religious life she eventually adopted for herself.

She went on to attend Monroe Community College and SUNY College at Stony Brook before starting her 25-year stint with the Monroe County Department of Social Services. She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph as an associate in 1992, joined the novitiate in 1994, and professed her temporary vows in 1996. She became attracted to nursing, she said, after serving at Calcutta, a hospital for men with AIDS, in Philadelphia.

Sister Leonard entered SUNY Brockport's nursing program in 1996 and graduated in May 2000. She has worked at Strong Memorial Hospital for one year as a psychiatric nurse.

"I just love it, and it sort of goes hand-in-hand with my work in social services," she said.

As a fully professed Sister of St. Joseph, Sister Leonard will continue working at Strong Memorial and residing at the Nazareth Academy convent.

"It's been such a beautiful experience; my spiritual life is deepening in such a way. I don't think I ever would have gone to school, pursuing the things I have, if I hadn't entered (the order)," Sister Leonard said. "I was amazing how things started changing for the better, and everything fell into place. I never wavered, and so many doors opened in the process."

Veteran minister named to new support-ministries position

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

The Diocese of Rochester has appointed Bernard Grizard to serve in the newly created position of associate director in the Parish Support Ministries office. The appointment was effective Aug. 27.

Grizard is responsible for developing and directing ecumenical and interreligious affairs and urban services, as well as the diocese's black, Asian and Hispanic ministries.

Kathy Cannon, outgoing diocesan director of parish support ministries, said Grizard's new position coordinates the services of such offices as the currently vacant Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs with the services provided by the various apostolates, including the Office of Black Ministries, which is also vacant.

Grizard added that he plans to explore over the next several months how to develop his new office. For example, he said, he plans to work with members of the African-American and Caribbean communities to identify people who may be tapped for leadership positions. However, he said he was unable to define at this point what those positions would take.

Grizard, 43, is a native of Burgundy, France, and has lived in the United States since 1987. From 1993-97, he served as director of religious education at the Community of Hope cluster, which comprises the parishes of Holy Redeemer/St. Francis Xavier, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Michael's in Rochester. From 1997-99, he served as director of religious education at Holy Family Parish, Rochester, and then served until August of this year as Holy Family's pastoral minister.

"I found it gave me a good grasp of the inner city," he said of his Rochester experiences. "We are moving from ethnic

churches to multicultural communities."

"I'm delighted with the experience that Bernard brings and also his spirituality," said Cannon, who leaves her position Oct. 1. "I think he'll be a wonderful match for this position and bring new insights and new directions."

No replacement has been named for Cannon as of yet.

In addition to his work here in the Diocese of Rochester, Grizard has also served as assistant director of campus ministry at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa., from 1989-91. It was there he met his wife, Jean, who is music director at Christ the King Parish in Irondequoit, and who also teaches music at St. Margaret Mary School in Irondequoit. The couple have two children, and moved to Rochester in 1991 where Grizard served as vice president and director of European tours for Jet America Inc. for two years.

Grizard holds a master's degree in urban studies from the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, as well as a master's degree in divinity from Centre Sevens in Paris. He also holds a bachelor's degree in business from La Colombiere in Chalon, France.

Grizard served as a professor at the Christian Formation Center in Diang in the Diocese of Bertoua, Cameroon, from 1979-82.

In fact, among the first activities which the associate director plans to promote is

a Sept. 25-27 course on multicultural ministry at St. Bernard's Institute, 1100 S. Goodman St., Rochester. The course is cosponsored by his office and the institute. The Rev. Eric H. F. Law, an Episcopal priest who is a nationally recognized expert on multicultural ministry, will be teaching from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. each day on "Building Effective Multicultural Leadership and Communities."

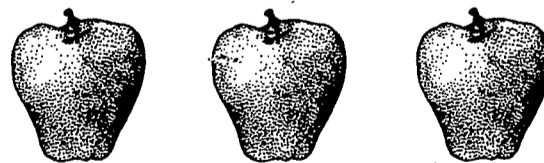
Grizard is also promoting a two-part seminar on the "Significance of Jerusalem to Muslims and Christians" at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School

Auditorium in Rochester (same location as St. Bernard's) at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 26, and Wednesday, Oct. 3.

The seminar is sponsored by the Commission on Muslim Christian Relations, which the diocese supports, and will feature Catholic, Protestant and Muslim speakers, including Father Edward Dillon, pastor of St. Felix Parish in Clifton Springs.

The seminar is free and open to the public. For information on either Rev. Law's course or the Jerusalem seminar, call 716/328-3210, ext. 328.

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