

# DIOCESAN NEWS



James Fennessy prostrates himself during his June 22 ordination at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Karin von Volgtlander/Staff photographer

## Ordination brings joy to new priest

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Early in his ordination Mass on June 22, Father James Fennessy faced the Sacred Heart Cathedral altar while applause thundered through the building. Then he turned toward the congregation, causing the clapping to grow louder.

"You're a popular guy, Jim," Bishop Matthew H. Clark quipped.

"You turn around and see all the people there. It gives you a lot of strength, a lot of encouragement," Father Fennessy later said of the near-capacity cathedral.

Another distinct memory for him occurred during the litany of the saints: "To lay there and hear all these people pray, it's just very profound," he said. Father Fennessy also noted that the many well-wishers who greeted him after Mass included "some people I've never even met before," including a woman who told him she has gone to ordinations for 50 years.

The liturgy was also attended by scores of Father Fennessy's family and friends. Rochester's newest diocesan priest said his path to ordination was walked "not on my own, but with the help of so many people."

Father Fennessy's mother, Jean, remarked that the Mass — complete with music by several instrumentalists as well as the Diocesan Festival Choir — "was just beautiful. You know how long he's been at it, and then the day is here."

"I walked up to him on the way out and said 'Congratulations, Father,'" added Father Fennessy's own father, Donald.

Father Fennessy, 44, was set to start his first assignment, as priest intern in the Roman Catholic Community of Geneva, just three days after the ordination. He'd had the option of taking some time off — but after waiting so long to become a priest, he said his attitude was, "Let's just do it."

He celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving on June 23 at Rochester's St. Ambrose Church, where he had served his pastoral year in 1999 and 2000 and performed his diaconal summer experience in 2001. On Sunday, June 30, he is due to celebrate the 10 a.m. Mass at his home parish, St. Alphonsus in Auburn.

Deacon Patrick Shanley, who served as deacon for the June 22 ordination, said that based on his ministry at St. Ambrose, Father Fennessy will make an excellent priest.

"He was not the kind of person to just do something, but he led people to do it. He was very collaborative," said Deacon Shanley, the former youth minister at St. James and St. John the Evangelist.



Acolyte Matthew Ille laughs with Mercy Sister Mary Ann Binsack, diocesan vice chancellor and administrator of the bishop's office.



Bishop Matthew H. Clark imposes his hands on the head of Father Fennessy.

Deacon Shanley said he and Father Fennessy became friends after running a combined summer softball program involving teams from St. James, St. John the Evangelist and St. Ambrose. "The kids just loved him, he was so warm and friendly," said Deacon Shanley, now the pastoral associate at St. Boniface in Rochester.

He described Father Fennessy as an easy-going person — which might explain the new priest's emotional state on his ordina-

tion day.

"I thought I'd be nervous, and I wasn't. Which is a good sign, because it showed I was ready for this," Father Fennessy remarked.

The celebratory atmosphere surrounding Father Fennessy's ordination stood in stark contrast to the national and local attention of recent months regarding sexual abuse by priests. "There's just so much support, that's all I've received," Father Fennessy stated, adding that media people have been the only ones asking skeptical questions about his plans to become a priest.

His ordination was the third attended by Ken Shelton, a participant in Becket Hall, the diocesan pre-theology program. Shelton said this marked the first religious event in quite some time at which he has been able to set aside hurtful feelings about the sexual-abuse controversy.

"If you come here with a prayerful heart, a joyful heart, you come away with a peace that there are still people as awesome as Jim (becoming priests)," said Shelton, who hails from St. Pius X Parish in Van Etten, Chernung County.

Shelton, 21, has just completed his junior year at St. John Fisher College. He said the ordination liturgy "energized me to want to continue" toward a priestly vocation.

Whereas Shelton still has a way to go before becoming a priest, the ordination marked a major milestone for Father Fennessy, the only priest to be ordained in the diocese this year. He worked more than 10 years for a lumber company before beginning studies for the priesthood in 1996.

### Appointments

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following appointments to pastoral leadership. All but two are effective Tuesday, June 25.

• **Father Daniel Holland** to pastor, St. Pius Tenth, Chili, effective July 23, from pastor, St. Theodore Parish, Gates.

• **Father Stanley G. Kacprzak** to pastor, St. Paul Parish, Webster, from pastor, Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Greece.

• **Father Christopher E. Linsler** to pastor, St. Mary Our Mother Parish, Horseheads, from pastor, St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Elmira Heights, and St. Casimir Parish, Elmira.

• **Father Robert L. Beligotti** to pastor, Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Greece, from chaplain at Monroe Community Hospital with concurrent duties as sacramental minister at St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Scottsville.

• **Father Bernard L. Carges** to retire from the pastorates of St. Anthony Parish, Groton, and Holy Cross Parish, Freeville (Dryden).

• **Father Scott Kubinski** to priest administrator, All Saints Parish, Lansing, with concurrent duties as chaplain at Ithaca College.

• **Father Frank E. Lioi** to pastor, St. Anthony Parish, Groton, and Holy Cross, Freeville (Dryden), from pastor, St. Anne Parish, Rochester.

• **Father Eugene Dobosz** to priest administrator, St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Elmira Heights, and St. Casimir Parish, Elmira, from sacramental minister, St. Margaret Mary Parish, Apalachin, and assisting in the Tioga Catholic Community.

• **Father Malachy Nwosu** to pastor, Northern Cayuga Cluster (Weedsport, Port Byron and Cato), from parochial vicar, St. Rita Parish, Webster.

• **Father Peter Mandina** to sacramental minister, St. Bridget/St. Joseph Parish, Bloomfield, and St. Patrick Parish, Victor.

• **Father Dennis Bonsignore** to chaplain, Monroe Community Hospital, and part-time chaplain, Strong Health System, with Latin Mass duties at St. Stanislaus Parish, Rochester.

• **Father William Endres** to sacramental minister, St. Mary of the Assumption, Scottsville, concurrent with his chaplain duties at Strong Health System.

• **Father Christopher Ezech** to parochial vicar, St. Lawrence Parish, Greece, effective July 2.

The following have been appointed to second terms at their current parishes:

• **Father John Firpo**, pastor, St. Helen Parish, Gates.

• **Father Kevin Murphy**, pastor, St. Joseph Parish, Penfield.

• **Father William Spilly**, pastor, St. John the Evangelist Parish (Humboldt Street), Rochester.

• **Father Paul Tomasso**, pastor, St. Anthony of Padua, Holy Apostles and Holy Family parishes, Rochester.

• **Father Michael Schramel**, pastor, St. Ambrose Parish, Rochester.

• **Father Robert Bourcy**, pastor, St. Patrick Parish, Macedon.

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