

Msgr. Cirrincione; began radio show

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

Msgr. Joseph Cirrincione, longtime pastor of Rochester's St. Francis of Assisi Parish who was best known for starting the Family Rosary for Peace radio show more than a half-century ago, died Nov. 21, 2002, at Park Ridge Hospital in Greece after a brief illness. He was 92 years old.

A Rochester native, Msgr. Cirrincione attended Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, St. Andrew's Seminary and St. Bernard's Seminary. Upon his 1934 ordination, he was assigned to St. Francis of Assisi. As it turned out, he never left St. Francis. He was named administrator in 1935, and two years later — at only 27 years of age — became pastor of the small Italian parish. He remained in that position until his 1977 retirement, and continued living next to the church even after it closed in 2000.

Early in his 40-year pastorate, a top priority for Msgr. Cirrincione was to acquire buildings around the church and put them to good use, said Jean Santangelo, a native of St. Francis Parish.

"It was always a poor parish, and people were amazed at how well he kept the property," said Santangelo, who began working in the St. Francis rectory as a teenager and had been Msgr. Cirrincione's full-time



File photo

Then-Father Joseph Cirrincione receives a citation from the Monroe County Chapter of the Catholic War Veterans.

housekeeper and caretaker since 1960.

Msgr. Cirrincione oversaw establishment of a boys' center that celebrated its opening in 1941 with Father Edward A. Flanagan, famed director of Boys' Town, in attendance. The pastor later founded a girls' center as well.

Richard Razzante, another long-

time St. Francis parishioner, said Msgr. Cirrincione "stuck to the rules and regulations, but he was also a very fair priest."

"He was Italian, he was devoted to the Blessed Mother and everybody loved him," added Razzante, who with his wife Marie provided transportation and other errands for Msgr. Cirrincione for many years.

Father Frank Lioi, who gave the homily at Msgr. Cirrincione's funeral Mass Nov. 25, noted that the pastor founded a Holy Name Society as well as a Third Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Msgr. Cirrincione also led pilgrimages to Fatima and often returned with statues to display on church grounds.

Msgr. Cirrincione hit the airwaves on March 4, 1950, when the first broadcast of Family Rosary for Peace was made from St. Francis of Assisi with Bishop James E. Kearney leading the recitation. The program, now using tape recordings of previous shows, is still carried daily on three Rochester stations — WWWG 1460 AM, at 6:30 p.m.; WL-GZ 990 AM, at 9:30 p.m.; and WDCZ 102.7 FM, at 5 a.m.

Msgr. Cirrincione was named a papal chamberlain, with the title of

Very Reverend Monsignor, by Pope Paul VI in 1966. He retired in 1977 and continued with the radio show; later that year its 10,000th broadcast aired. Despite several years of fragile health, Msgr. Cirrincione continued living next to St. Francis of Assisi Church in the former Whitney Street sisters' residence, which contains a small chapel.

"He wouldn't move for anything. He wouldn't move away from his chapel," Santangelo said, noting that Msgr. Cirrincione regularly celebrated daily Mass and Holy Hour until earlier this year.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark celebrated Msgr. Cirrincione's funeral Mass at Rochester's Holy Apostles Church. The bishop recalled Msgr. Cirrincione for "his kind ways, and deep devotion to prayer and our Blessed Lady."

Msgr. Cirrincione, who is survived by a nephew, nieces, cousins and friends, was interred at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to the Family Rosary for Peace, PO Box 11007, Rochester, NY, 14611.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The *Courier's* Dec. 12 issue will provide an in-depth look at the Family Rosary for Peace program founded by Msgr. Cirrincione.

ALFRED LEONE SR.; ST. HELEN'S USHER

Alfred A. Leone Sr., a member of St. Helen's Parish in Gates for 50 years where he was an usher and maintenance worker, died Oct. 20, 2002. He was 78.

Mr. Leone, a World War II veteran, was predeceased by his son, Jamie. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Lillian; sons, Father William Leone, pastor of Rochester's St. Anne Parish, and Stephen (Elizabeth), Marc, Alfred (Debi) and Michael (Lynn) Leone, brother, Michael (Genevieve) Leone, sister, Anna Nardone, brother-in-law, Nello Rinaldi, eight grandchildren, two great-children, nieces, nephews and cousins, including special cousins Robert and Florence DiLaura.

His funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Helen's Church on Oct. 23 with burial in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. Memorials may be made to St. Helen's Church, 310 Hinchey Road, Rochester, NY 14624.

Trappist Fr. Regis Tompkins, 93

Trappist Father Regis Tompkins, OCSO, died Oct. 11, 2002, at the Abbey of the Genesee in Piffard, N.Y. He was 93.

Born Charles R. Tompkins in Louisville, Ky., in 1908, he entered the Jesuits in 1927 following high school. He received degrees from St. Louis University, Xavier University in Cincinnati and pursued further studies at Loyola College in Cleveland while teaching high school.

Experiencing a call to a more contemplative life, he entered the novitiate at Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky in 1950 where he was named after St. John Francis Regis. Two years later he was sent to the newly formed Christ the King Monastery, now the Abbey of the Genesee. Following his ordination by Bishop James E. Kearney in 1954, he was appointed dean of students and prefect of studies.

Shortly after Father Regis was named second superior or prior in 1955, Abbot Gerard McGinley died

while attending General Chapter in France. Father Regis was then in charge of 70 monks at the monastery until a new abbot was appointed. He again served as acting superior in 1968, and served as prior and novice director at various times in the 1970s and '80s. He con-

tinued to serve the community as archivist and master of ceremonies after he entered the infirmary in 1997.

Father Regis' funeral Mass was celebrated on Oct. 14 followed by interment in the abbey cemetery.

Fr. Weltzer; native Rochesterian

Father Arthur A. Weltzer, a native of Rochester, died Oct. 27, 2002, at St. Francis Hospital in Columbus, Ga. He was 94.

Father Weltzer was ordained in Rochester in 1932. He then attended Niagara University where he received bachelor's and master's degrees in natural sciences and biochemistry. He served locally on the faculties of Aquinas Institute and St. Andrew's Seminary.

He moved to Georgia in 1947 and was incardinated (transferred) to the Diocese of Savannah/Atlanta in 1957. He served in several pastoral

assignments in that diocese until his retirement in 1973.

Father Weltzer is survived by a niece and six nephews, including Father Peter Deckman, pastor of St. Michael and Our Lady of Perpetual Help parishes in Rochester; Arthur (Nancy) and Bernard Deckman and William (Carol) Bishop, all of Rochester; Robert (Marie) Bishop of Mt. Morris; and several cousins, grandnieces and grandnephews.

His funeral Mass was celebrated on Oct. 30 at the Church of the Holy Family in Columbus, with burial at Catholic Cemetery in Savannah.