

Milestones

SPECIAL PULL-OUT SECTION

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Inside Milestones

Sisters of St. Joseph celebrate years of service



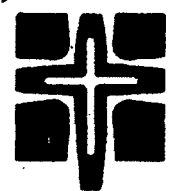
Mark 50, 60, 70, 75 years in local congregation — Pages 15-19

2003 is jubilee year for SSNDs with local ties



Four School Sisters of Notre Dame taught here — Page 19

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Anniversary couples celebrate their vocations

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Moving toward retirement

EDITOR'S NOTE: Five diocesan priests — Fathers Edward Dillon, Ronald Gaesser, Robert Kreckel, George Wiant and Edward Zenkel — will retire this June. Their stories appear on this page as well as pages 10 and 11.

Father Edward Dillon ends 10-year pastorate

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

Theology professor. Social activist. Prison and hospital chaplain. Urban pastor. Country pastor.

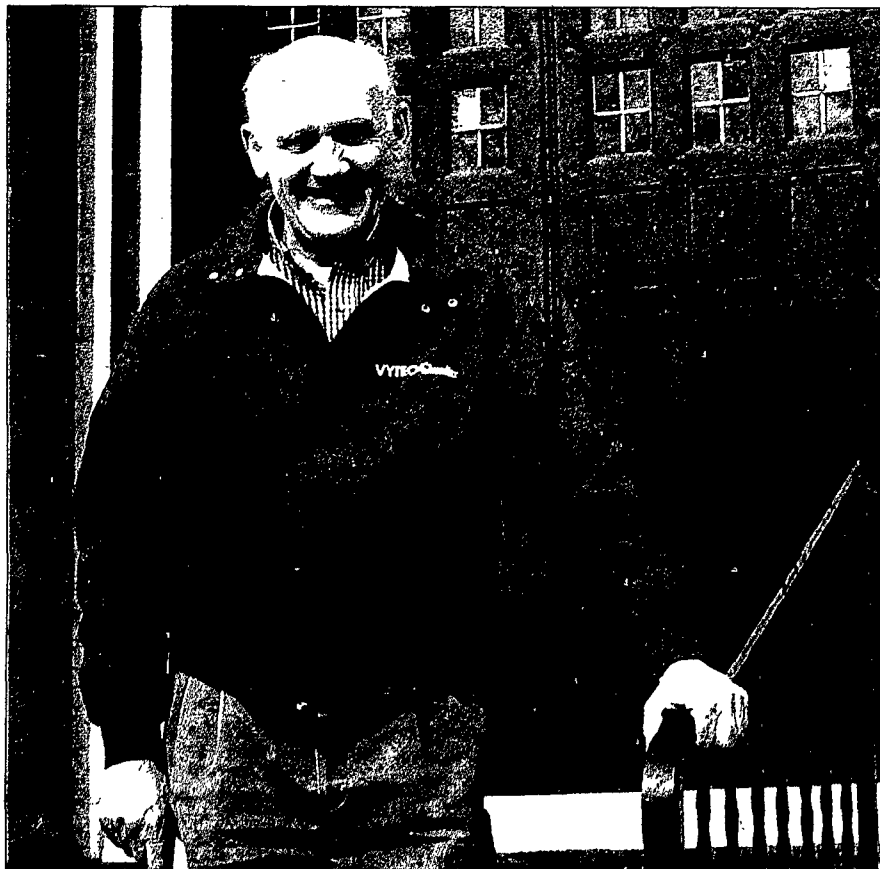
These diverse job titles have all been ascribed to Father Edward J. Dillon at various times over the past four decades.

Another label — retiree — will be added to the list next month. Father Dillon's retirement will take effect June 24, marking the end of a 10-year pastorate at St. Felix Parish in Clifton Springs and St. Francis Parish in Phelps.

The cluster in northeastern Ontario County has been a comparatively low-key environment for a priest who, for many years, had dedicated himself to numerous social-justice concerns. Despite obtaining master's and doctoral degrees in theology followed by a few years of teaching, it wasn't long into his priesthood before Father Dillon began a 14-year leave of absence from priestly ministry to become an antiwar advocate and to work with prisoners, ex-prisoners and the poor.

"The activist life demands an intellectual rigor. I found it the most stimulating environment to be in. Mere academia is dull, and too safe an environment to be in — at least for me," he stated.

Father Dillon, 67, grew up in St. Patrick's Parish in Macedon. He graduated from Palmyra-Macedon High School and then attended St. John Fisher College as well as St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries. He went on to attend the North American College in Rome, and was ordained in that city on Dec. 18, 1960.



Rebecca Gosselin/Catholic Courier

Father Edward J. Dillon, pastor of St. Felix Parish in Clifton Springs and St. Francis Parish in Phelps, will retire June 24.

He studied in Rome until 1965 and, over the next three years, taught biblical theology and sacred Scripture in the Rochester Diocese, as well as in Boston.

In 1968 Father Dillon went on leave. He spend most of the next 14 years in the inner city of Philadelphia working with the impoverished as well as the Catholic Peace Fellowship, an antiwar coalition that grew out of the Catholic Worker movement. Father Dillon did not return to priestly ministry until 1982, three years after his longtime friend, Bishop Matthew H. Clark, had become Bishop of Rochester.

"I just had a need to slow down and become more conventional and respectable. And, Matt Clark would continue to let me do what I had been doing," Father Dillon said.

In the mid-1980s he served as chaplain at the Monroe County Jail

and at Strong Memorial Hospital, while continuing his ministry to ex-prisoners and the inner-city poor. Father Dillon has also assisted at numerous diocesan parishes over the years, yet it wasn't until 1987 that he became a pastor — at Rochester's Immaculate Conception Parish. After five years in that pastorate he moved to Clifton Springs and Phelps, only a few miles south of his native Macedon.

"It was like going home," he said.

Father Dillon's retirement will be acknowledged during the annual Mass and picnic at the village park in Clifton Springs on Sunday, June 22. "We're going to have an outdoor Mass. It's going to be my last hurrah, in the pavilion," he said.

Father Dillon plans to then move to St. Michael's Church in Lyons, where he will serve as a priest in residence.