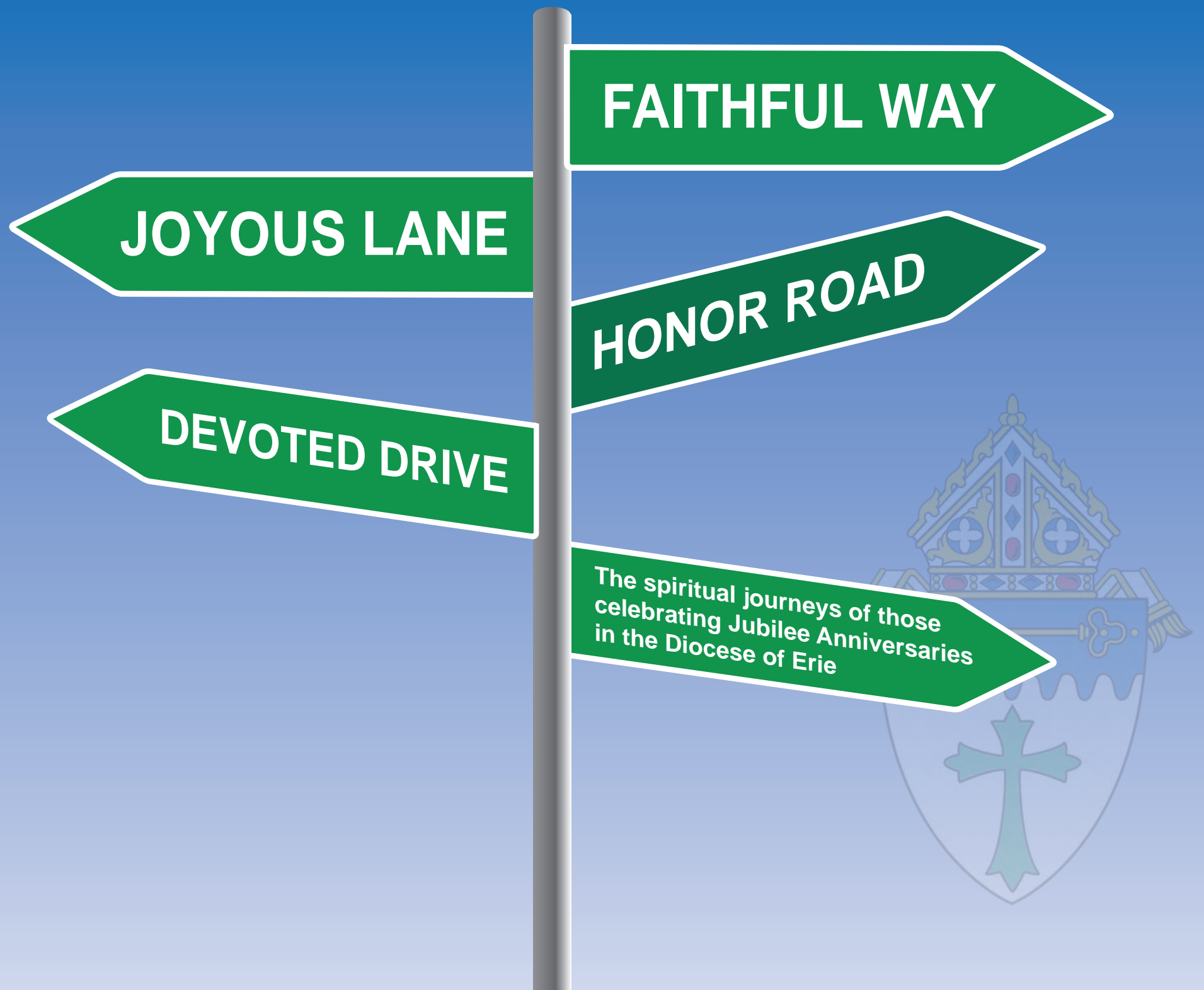


# *Faithful Servants*

A Special Edition of *FaithLife* News Bulletin

August 14, 2011



**FAITHFUL WAY**

**JOYOUS LANE**

**HONOR ROAD**

**DEVOTED DRIVE**

The spiritual journeys of those  
celebrating Jubilee Anniversaries  
in the Diocese of Erie

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## Faithful Servants:

The Diocese of Erie is grateful to the men and women featured in this publication for their inspiration, dedication and ongoing service. May God continue to bless you.

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GARY LONCKI

The staff of the  
*Lake Shore Visitor* on whose  
hard work we relied to report  
on some of our jubilarians.

## You have followed with joy

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, our esteemed Jubilarians,

In your solemn profession 10, 25, 40, 50, 60 or more years ago, the Lord Jesus spoke to you. He called you by name to enter into a closer relationship with himself. He selected you to be his co-workers, asking for the gift of your heart.

He invited you, "Come, follow me. Share in my ministry and mission. Help to build up my church. Imitate me by being a servant of God." You answered the call of Christ and served the Lord and his people. You are God's gift to the church and to this diocese.

Jesus said to his disciples, and to you, our jubilarians, "You did not choose me, I chose you. Go forth, bear fruit that will remain."

What great words of love! What a wondrous gift to be called to the Lord's side and share his ministry and mission! There is no lasting satisfaction or joy that could rival the fact Christ has chosen you.

We celebrate and give thanks for the mysterious love of Christ in your lives. You are more than sisters, deacons and priests. You are *faithful* sisters, deacons and priests — faithful to your vocation, faithful to the church, faithful to your communities, faithful to Christ's words: "Come, follow me." And you have followed Christ with zeal and dedication for 10, 25, 40, 50, 60 years and more.

During those years, you have known both difficulty and triumph. You've carried crosses and fallen under them, but you have persevered. You have not always experienced the fruit of your ministry. But the Lord, to whom you've offered your person and your life, does not cease to be with you. You have the joy of knowing that you are loved by Christ. You have the honor of working directly for the Lord's kingdom.

Throughout your lives, you have been intimately connected with Christ in fulfilling his mission. As Christ's co-workers, you've brought the good news of salvation to God's people. Through various ministries, you have been Christ's voice, teaching Gospel truths. You have been prophetic voices. You have been Christ's hands, feeding the poor and caring for the sick. You have been Christ's feet, carrying the new life of Christ to young and old, poor and wealthy, to those in rural areas and small towns as well as the cities of our diocese.

You are rich in the Lord! Recall Jesus' words: "Store up for yourself a treasure in heaven." Those years given to God represent your eternal insurance policy, your eternal pension.

We celebrate your faithfulness to the Lord, your faithfulness to your vocation, to the Lord Jesus. A quality of true love is perseverance. Love demands constant giving.

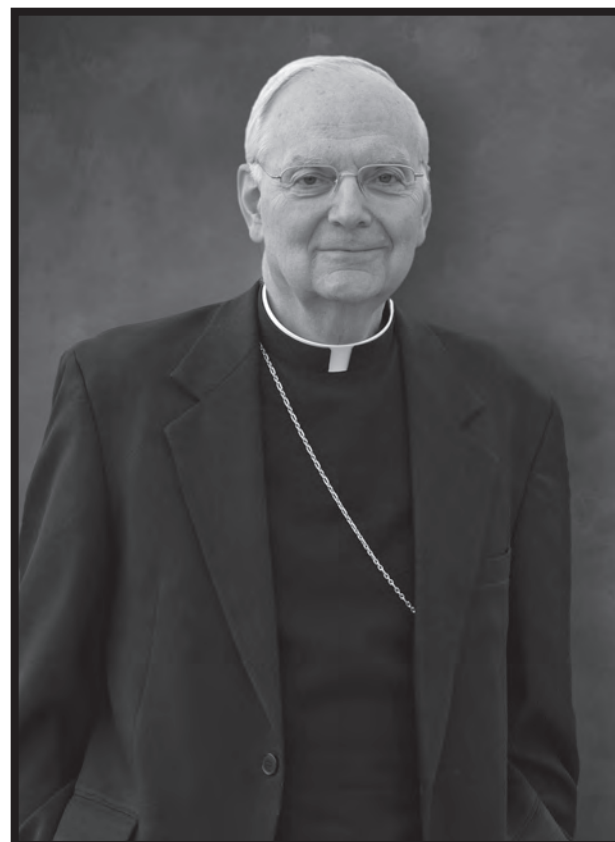
Love calls for giving without regret and with joy. This you have done and this is what we celebrate.

The church and this diocese are proud of you. May you live on in Christ's love.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Donald W. Trautman,  
Bishop of Erie



## Prayer for a new bishop

*Lord Jesus, Good Shepherd and pastor of the church, you have guided our Erie Diocese in 13 counties for 158 years. In your love and care for this flock, guide your vicar on earth, Pope Benedict XVI, in the selection of our new bishop. We pray that our diocese will be blessed with a holy shepherd and servant. May he be a courageous teacher of the faith and a humble, wise, prudent, collaborative leader.*

*May he be caring and compassionate and endowed with the gifts your church needs at this time. Lord Jesus, we trust in your providence and love. Help us to welcome with prayer and open hearts our new shepherd. This we ask in your name. Amen. — Composed by Bishop Donald Trautman*

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## *Sr. Bernardine Pais, S.S.J.*

A bit like the Energizer bunny, Sister Bernardine Pais, SSJ, keeps going ... and going ... and going ... when it comes to serving others through ministry.

At 93, she is the oldest member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania—a fact she seemed surprised to learn. She is still active in ministry and modest about the significance of that. Her quick wit and spirited personality lead you to believe she is much younger, but it's her faithful service through ministry that is uniquely inspiring.

Sister Bernardine lives independently at Saint Mary's East where she has ministered for 45 years, even while teaching full-time in area Catholic elementary schools. Each morning, she sees that the residents on her floor are awake and she assists in getting them where they need to be to get their medications before she joins many of them for Mass.

She has been called a “master decorator” and devotes her time and talent to decorating much of Saint Mary's for the various holidays, including adorning each resident's door.

“It's work I like to do,” she says when asked why she continues. “It's a pleasure to do and it makes it a little more like home for the residents. It makes them happy.”

A native of Nanty Glo in Cambria County, Sister Bernardine entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from St. Bernard Parish in Bradford in 1936. She made her final profession in 1942.

She attended St. Bernard School and received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Villa Maria College.

Sister Bernardine ministered in education for 34 years, teaching at Catholic schools throughout the diocese.



**Principal:**  
Sacred Heart, Erie  
**Teacher:**  
St. John, Erie  
St. Peter Cathedral, Erie  
St. Mary, Reynoldsville  
St. Bernard, Bradford  
Holy Rosary, Johnsonburg  
**Saint Mary's Home:**  
Resident floor supervisor

**My Inspiration:** “Saint Mary's Home has been my home for many happy years. I am grateful to God for the privilege of ‘Loving to Care.’” – *Sister Bernardine Pais, SSJ*

St. Agatha Parish in Meadville would like to congratulate the following jubilarians:

**Msgr. Henry Schauerman**

**Rev. Robert Fedor**

**Rev. Gregory Passauer**

**Sr. Mary Carol Hoke, SSJ**

**Sr. Moira Sullivan, SSJ**



## Sr. Ann Amen, S.S.J.

Sister Ann Amen's 60 years of religious life have been, as she says, "Beyond my dreams." Sister Ann used that phrase for the title of her autobiography, which she published in 2006.

A native of Quincy, Ill., Sister Ann was 33 when she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in Erie after having lived in Europe, served as the dean of women at Quincy College and attended summer school at Catholic University for her master's degree and working toward her doctorate degree.

During World War II, she was with the American Red Cross, stationed in England, France and Germany. While in Germany, the Catholic chaplain asked if she would like to see Therese Neumann experiencing the stigmata. That's when she first heard the call to religious life.

"A voice seemed to whisper that I should be a nun," Sister Ann recalls. "That was about 99th on a list of 100 things I thought I might be doing with my life. But I knew it was what God wanted me to do."

While teaching at Villa Maria College, she travelled with her students to Yucatan, Mexico as the Mission of Friendship between the Diocese of Erie and the Archdiocese of Yucatan was getting started.

During a sabbatical, she went to Australia to work with the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau where she co-founded the Parish Care and Concern program. It was a model of service in which members of a parish community volunteer for a year at a time to meet some of the social welfare needs of the parish and local community. Under the direction of volunteer coordinators, parishioners provide a variety of services to any needy person regardless of race, religion or ethnic affiliation.

When Sister Ann left Australia, there were 6,000 Care and Concern volunteers at 76 parishes. Upon returning to the Diocese of Erie, she became the director of Parish Social Ministry for Catholic Charities, where she helped to establish Care and Concern in 55 parishes and seven missions with a network of 6,000 volunteers throughout the diocese. She considers this her most important ministry.

In 1993, Sister Ann published a "Directory of Social Services in Twelve Counties" covering all of the diocese's counties except Erie and, in 1996, wrote "Jumpstart Your Parish Social Ministry with Parish Care and Concern," which has been sold in numerous countries and throughout the United States.

In her book, "Beyond My Dreams," she shares about her life in ministry. She details her encounters with Therese Neumann, Pope Paul VI in Rome, Pope John Paul II and Mother Theresa of Calcutta and chronicles her many travels and faith experiences.



### Villa Maria College:

Professor  
Guidance director  
Sociology Department, head  
Division of Human Behavior,  
chairperson

### Teacher:

Villa Maria Academy, Erie

### Diocese of Erie:

Director of Parish Social Ministry for  
Catholic Charities

### Board member:

Marriage Counseling Service of Erie, Inc.  
Catholic Social Services, Erie  
United Community Services of Erie  
County  
White House Conference on the Aging

**My Inspiration:** "Daily Mass inspires me the most because it helps me to feel closer to God at the beginning and throughout the day." – *Sister Ann Amen, SSJ*

CONGRATULATIONS  
REV. B. LAMOUNTE SAYERS  
Celebrating 25 years of selfless dedication to  
the priesthood.  
Your friends at Immaculate Conception  
Church and School

Congratulations and best wishes to all jubilarians.  
We especially pay tribute to the following:

50th - Sr. Michele Healy, SSJ  
50th - Sr. Margoretta Judy, OSB  
40th - Rev. Walter E. Packard  
25th - Rev. Paul S. Siebert  
10th - Deacon William Gibson



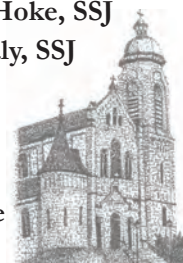
Elk County Catholic School System

## Congratulations Jubilarians!

We are grateful you have served our parishes and our school!

Sr. Bernardine Pais, SSJ  
Sr. Ann Amen, SSJ  
Sr. Leonella Gingenbach, SSJ  
Sr. Mary Carol Hoke, SSJ  
Sr. Michele Healy, SSJ  
Sr. Barbara Zakutney, SSJ  
Sr. Maria O'Connor, RSM  
Msgr. Henry Schauerman – native son!  
Msgr. Thomas McSweeney – both!  
Fr. Jeff Noble

St. John  
the Baptist, Erie



Holy Rosary,  
Erie





## Sr. Marlene Bertke, O.S.B.

Working for peace has been one of the hallmarks of Sister Marlene Bertke's ministry during her 60 years of monastic life.

In 1980, Sister Marlene was one of the many Benedictine sisters from across the United States who spent a week at the Pentagon praying for peace and asking that all nuclear weapons be dismantled and no longer manufactured.

"That was very life-giving for me—to be united with my Benedictine sisters in a common action for peace," she says. "There were about 60 of us there, but we were supported in so many ways by the sisters unable to make the trip. We felt their solidarity."

Sister Marlene has been active in Benedictines for Peace (BFP), which addresses social justice and peace issues that are of local, state, national and international concern. She also writes the Erie Benedictines for Peace blog ([www.eriebfp.org](http://www.eriebfp.org)).

As the peace and justice outreach of the Erie Benedictine community, BFP members advocate for nonviolence, social change and justice by direct action, prayer and bearing witness.

Among the activities that Sister Marlene has been involved with are the Take Back the Site vigils which are held at the site of any death in the city of Erie that resulted from an act of violence.

"We hold the vigils with the purpose of reclaiming the site for nonviolence with our prayerful presence," Sister Marlene says.

She never misses an opportunity to promote truth at any cost. Her zeal for peace and justice, right order and fairness is unmatched.

Sister Marlene currently serves as associate director of the Alliance for International Monasticism, an international mission organization that assists Benedictine and Cistercian communities in Asia, Africa and Latin America.



### Teacher:

St. Benedict Academy, Erie  
St. Therese, Southgate, Ky.  
St. Henry High School, Erlanger, Ky.  
Holy Cross High School, Latonia, Ky.  
Villa Madonna Academy, Villa Hills, Ky.

### Pax Christi, USA:

Central American contact  
Publications coordinator

### Benedictine Sisters of Erie:

Pax Center, staff  
Benet Press, manager and staff  
Development Office staff  
Alliance for International Monasticism,  
associate director

A native of Covington, Ky., Sister Marlene earned her bachelor's degree in mathematics from Thomas More College in Crestview, Ky., and her master's in mathematics from the University of Notre Dame. She entered the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery in Covington, Ky., in 1949. She professed her first vows in June 1951. Her final incorporation into the Benedictine Sisters of Erie was in August 1980.

**My Inspiration:** "Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the souls you can, in every place you can, at all the times you can, with all the zeal you can, as long as ever you can." – *John Wesley*

## Sr. Leonella Gingenbach, S.S.J.

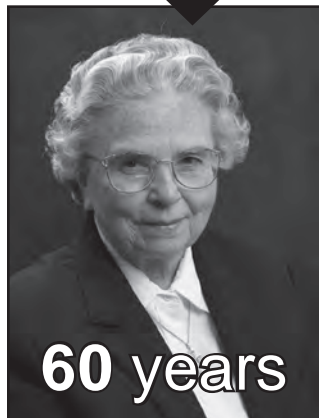
Sister Leonella Gingenbach, SSJ, credits her loving family and the example of the Sisters of St. Joseph during her 16 years of education with enabling her to make the decision to freely and joyfully respond to God's call to religious life.

It was early on in grade school, Sister Leonella says, that she first thought about her vocation to religious life. The thought remained and even after working a year after graduation from college, she still desired to become a religious.

A native of Erie, she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1951 from St. Patrick Parish and professed her final vows in 1957.

She attended Villa Maria Elementary School and Villa Maria Academy in Erie and received her bachelor's degree in business education from Villa Maria College. She completed additional studies at Georgetown University.

Following graduation from Villa Maria



### Teacher:

Holy Rosary, Erie  
St. Bernard, Bradford  
Villa Maria Elementary, Erie  
**Saint Vincent Health Center:**

Office manager  
Director of patient accounts

**Spencer Hospital:**  
Administrative assistant  
Personnel director

**Sisters of St. Joseph:**  
General superior  
Director of finance  
Prayer ministry

College, Sister Leonella worked in the treasurer's office at Gannon University.

Sister Leonella served two terms as general superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph. She also served two terms as secretary-treasurer of the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, which represents more than 5,900 Sisters of St. Joseph in the United States and Canada.

Sister Leonella taught at several schools in the Diocese of Erie before spending 20 years at Saint Vincent Health Center in Erie. She also served for seven years at Spencer Hospital in Meadville. Prior to her retirement, she also served as director of finance and in prayer ministry for her congregation.

CONGRATULATIONS TO  
**Sr. Rita Marie Hettish, RSM**  
**Sr. Joan McCabe, RSM**  
**Rev. V. David Foradori**  
**Rev. Gregory P. Passauer**  
**Rev. Walter E. Packard**  
FROM THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY  
OF TITUSVILLE

## Sr. Rita Marie Hettish, R.S.M.

Early years of living in a “God-centered family” and the example of the Sisters of Mercy who taught her influenced Sister Rita Marie Hettish, RSM, to enter religious life.

She was taught in grades 1-12 by the Sisters of Mercy at St. Adrian in Delancey. Through the years, she says, their influence permeated her life.

“The Sisters of Mercy have always been an integral part of my life,” Sister Rita Marie says. “Having been educated by them, I witnessed their devotion and dedication to education and the ministry of spreading God’s word and doing his work among us.”

In celebrating her 60th jubilee, she also recalls the love and inspiration of her parents.

“Days began with Mass and ended with a nightly parental blessing,” she recalls. “They always encouraged us to acknowledge God’s call and strive to become our best in whatever our future vocations might be.”

When she was a junior in high school, she realized that God’s call would lead her to the Sisters of Mercy and to teaching.

She taught at a number of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie as well as the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Sister Rita Marie and Sister Mary Louis Oslick, RSM, were the last Sisters of Mercy in full-time Catholic elementary school work in the diocese. Sister Rita Marie retired in 2006 from St. George School in Erie after nearly 50 years of teaching at various Catholic elementary schools, bringing to an end the long history of the Sisters of Mercy in diocesan parochial schools.

However, she didn’t stay retired for long. Later that year, she joined

**My Inspiration:** “As our foundress, Catherine McAuley would often say, ‘You must give glory to God not only by sanctifying your own soul but also by attracting others by word and example.’” – *Sister Rita Marie Hettish, RSM*



### Teacher:

St. George, Erie  
St. Catherine of Siena, DuBois  
St. Patrick, Franklin  
St. Michael, Greenville  
Our Lady of Fatima, Farrell  
Immaculate Conception,  
Brookville  
St. Titus, Titusville

### Faculty:

Mercy Center of the Arts, Erie

the faculty of Mercy Center of the Arts in Erie where she facilitates the creative exploration of the program.

Also in 2006, Pope Benedict XVI named her as a recipient of the Papal Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice (For Church and Pope).

She calls her 60 years of preparing children for the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist her greatest privilege.

“The rewards of this ministry are immeasurable,” she says.

She considers the call of Christ in the Gospel to “Come, follow me,” to be her call, too.

“This is a personal call for me to strive daily, take up the challenge, put aside worldly interests, choose to live for him and build up his church in our world,” Sister Rita Marie says. “Lord, thank you for calling me.”

Looking back on her years as a Sister of Mercy, she says, “I appreciate being afforded the time to possess the inner peace of knowing that I can devote myself to the service of God and others without outside distractions, and the joy of living out and passing on the legacy of our foundress, Catherine McAuley.”

## Sr. Mary Carol Hoke, S.S.J.

In her ministry as a teacher throughout the Diocese of Erie, Sister Mary Carol Hoke, SSJ, has passed on what she has learned.

“My mother’s prayers and the example of love and caring interest I experienced from the Sisters of St. Joseph and the dedicated parish priests during my time as a student at St. Brigid led me to the religious life,” Sister Mary Carol says.

A native of St. Brigid Parish in Meadville, she is a graduate of Meadville High School and St. Brigid School.

She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1951 after working as a secretary for the Pennsylvania Department of



### Principal:

St. Joseph, Erie  
St. Brigid, Meadville

### Teacher:

St. John, Erie  
St. Andrew, Erie  
St. Patrick, Erie  
St. Joseph, Erie  
St. Leo, Ridgway  
St. Francis, Clearfield  
St. Bernard, Bradford  
St. Mary, Reynoldsville  
Seton School, Meadville  
St. Agatha, Meadville

### Librarian:

Seton School, Meadville  
Sisters of St. Joseph

### Rectory clerk:

St. Agatha, Meadville

### Clerk:

Saint Vincent Hospital, Erie

Highways for more than four years.

“During those years, I went to Mass and received Communion daily and I believe it was during this time that I heard the call,” Sister Mary Carol says.

She received her bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Villa Maria College in Erie and was certified in elementary library science at Edinboro University.

“My early ministry took me to several parishes outside of the city of Erie where I met many dedicated parents and children who were a delight to work with,” Sister Mary Carol recalls.

She returned to Erie where she served as principal of St. Joseph School for many years.

“I was then fortunate to minister to my home parishes in Meadville,” she says.

After serving as teacher and librarian for 24 years at Seton Catholic School in Meadville, Sister Carol retired to the Sisters of St. Joseph Community Living Center in Erie where she ministers as the congregation’s librarian.

In her office at the library, Sister Mary Carol meets and greets everyone with her pleasant smile and her willingness to serve. She loves being surrounded by books of all genres and readily says, “It’s a delightful place in which to minister.”

**My Inspiration:** “Psalm 27 is one of my favorite psalms because it teaches me how to trust in God entirely, regardless of what happens.” – *Sister Mary Carol Hoke, SSJ*



# Sr. Miriam Mashank, O.S.B.

For Sister Miriam Mashank, OSB, reaching for the impossible gives meaning to life, especially when trying to help the poor.

She says her ministry at St. Benedict Education Center (SBEC) in Erie provides her with moment after moment of opportunity which she tries hard to seize.

"Each day I see men and women at the center struggling to find a way out of poverty for themselves and their children," Sister Miriam says. "Witnessing their struggle and knowing that my way of life has far fewer challenges than that of many people keeps me centered on the thought that maybe only the impossible is worth trying."

Remembering this, she says, gives meaning to her life.

Sister Miriam has served as the executive director of St. Benedict Education Center since 1995.

SBEC, located in the former St. Benedict Academy in downtown Erie, assists 2,900 people each year with intensive case management, academic remediation, job readiness preparation, job development and job placement assistance. Under the auspices of Pennsylvania's Department of Welfare, SBEC's programs help move families toward economic self-sufficiency.

She stepped back from the center's executive director position as of June 30, but she is not stepping back from work. Sister Miriam remains committed to making life better for the "invisible poor" of Erie, helping parents, children and immigrants at SBEC through a variety of special projects.

"It's an inspiration for me to hear of their struggles and then to see them succeed," she says.



60 years

#### Teacher:

St. Gregory, North East  
St. Mary, Erie  
St. Joseph, Oil City  
St. Stephen, Oil City  
St. Benedict Academy, Erie  
Venango Catholic High School,  
Oil City

Mercyhurst College, Erie

#### Benedictine Sisters of Erie:

Monastic Council  
Director of development  
St. Benedict Education Center,  
executive director

**My Inspiration:** "I am inspired by the strong social justice message from the prophet Micah, 'To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8).' I also enjoy the canticles of Isaiah, which we sing often in our morning praise."

— Sister Miriam Mashank, OSB

Sister Miriam received her bachelor's degree in biology and mathematics from Mercyhurst College and her master's in college counseling from Boston University. A native of St. Joseph Parish in Sharon, she entered the Benedictine Sisters of Erie in 1949 and professed her first vows in July 1951. She took her final

vows in August 1954.

Before beginning her ministry at St. Benedict Education Center, Sister Miriam was primarily engaged in secondary education and various directorships, both at Mercyhurst College and with the Benedictine Sisters of Erie.

In March, Sister Miriam was recognized by the *Erie Times-News* as one of Erie's "Extraordinary Women" as part of Women's History Month.

"We've got to lead with heart, not just with our heads," Sister Miriam says. "We've got to have the courage and empathy to follow our dreams. An extraordinary woman is one who can lead and sees leadership as an opportunity to serve and to make dreams come true."

## BEST WISHES TO THE FOLLOWING JUBILARIANS:

SR. BERNARDINE PAIS, SSJ  
SR. LEONELLA GINGENBACH, SSJ  
SR. MARY CAROL HOKE, SSJ  
SR. MARIE ONUFFER, SSJ  
REV. ELDON K. SOMERS  
REV. ROBERT P. FEDOR  
REV. MSGR. H. DESMOND MCGEE  
REV. V. DAVID FORADORI

ST. BERNARD, BRADFORD

ST. JULIA PARISH IN ERIE WISHES  
TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE

SR. MARIA O'CONNOR, RSM  
(R.C.I.A. DIRECTOR)  
AND DEACON  
JERRY PETERSON

THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
DEDICATED SERVICE!

Fr. Justin Pino and the people of  
St. Joseph Parish in Oil City  
would like to congratulate the following:

Fr. Walter Packard  
Sr. Carol Hoke, SSJ  
Msgr. Henry Schauerman  
Sr. Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB



## Sr. Joan McCabe, R.S.M.

Sister Joan McCabe, RSM, considers herself a “walking nun.”

The term is how Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, looked at her sisters as they ministered to the poor, sick and uneducated.

“It tells us that Catherine centered her ministry uplifting the human person, a goal that is achieved where mercy is found feeding the hungry, educating those who want to learn and offering comfort to the sick and dying,” Sister Joan says.

Sister Joan, who is celebrating her 60th jubilee, experienced the charisma of the Sisters of Mercy as a high school student at Mercyhurst Seminary, Erie, now Mercyhurst Prep.

She remembers the care the sisters had for her and her five siblings after her parents’ death.

“Because of the untimely death of my parents, I, with my sisters and brother, had a support system and was surrounded by sisters who offered understanding, education and direction,” Sister Joan recalls.

She said life for her and her siblings may have turned out differently had the sisters not supported her family. They provided direction and their

**My Inspiration:** “Getting to know Catherine McAuley through her writings, I came to believe in her approach to ministry and to prayer.” – *Sister Joan McCabe, RSM*



### Teacher:

Ss. Cosmas and Damian,  
Punxsutawney  
Immaculate Conception, Brookville  
St. Titus, Titusville  
St. Michael, Greenville  
St. Walburga, Titusville  
St. Catherine of Siena, DuBois  
St. George, Erie  
Mercyhurst Prep, Erie

### Religious education:

St. Luke, Erie

### Theology professor:

Gannon University, Erie

### Sisters of Mercy:

Infirmiry nurse and administrator

education at Mercyhurst Seminary was not interrupted.

“I am sure it was this influence on me and on my life that I sought to ‘walk the talk’ of mercy,” she says.

As a Sister of Mercy, she taught in elementary schools in the dioceses of Erie and Pittsburgh for more than 30 years. Also, she taught theology at Gannon University in Erie and religion at Mercyhurst Prep.

Earning her registered nurse diploma in 1988, she worked as a nurse at several Erie area nursing homes. In 1992, she earned a nursing degree from Gannon University.

Today, she is a nurse and administrator at the Sisters of Mercy Health Care Center, the infirmary at the motherhouse in Erie, where she has served since 1994.

Sister Joan says she has strong hope for the future of the Sisters of Mercy.

“Confidently, I say, together we will continue to witness to God’s plan of mercy as ‘walking nuns’ in the ministry of caring for the infirmed and those who find God’s love in Houses of Mercy (homes for women and children) and in our call to justice for all,” she says.

## Sr. Mary Gertrude McElhinny, S.C.

Sister Mary Gertrude McElhinny, SC, has been a fixture at St. Michael Parish and School in Greenville for the past 33 years.

She enjoyed teaching for 13 years at St. Michael School. Then in 1992, she began her second ministry as a pastoral minister in the parish’s Care and Concern program at both St. Michael and its mission church of St. Margaret in Jamestown.

“My years here at St. Michael and St. Margaret have made me a big part of this wonderful parish family,” Sister Mary Gertrude says.

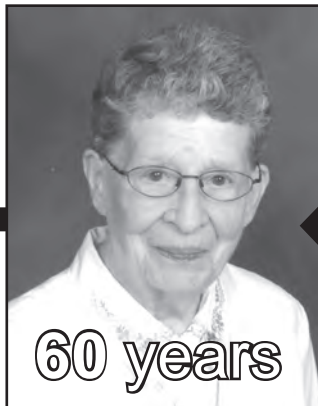
She says she has been inspired by the faith of the priests who have served in Greenville over the years.

“Our priests here at St. Michael faithfully continue each day to teach and instill the great love of God, the Blessed Mother and all the saints in our people,” she says.

As Sister Mary Gertrude looks back over her 60 years as a Mother Seton Sister of Charity, she can’t believe where the years have gone.

“Teaching for 38 years in the Catholic schools of Greensburg, Pittsburgh, Johnstown, South Greensburg and Greenville kept me busy just keeping up with the many large classes,” Sister Mary Gertrude says. “Each class different, each class a joy—most of the time,” she says with a smile.

Her first full teaching assignment began in 1953 with 74 first graders at St. John the Baptist School in Pittsburgh. There



### Pastoral minister:

St. Michael, Greenville  
St. Margaret, Jamestown

### Teacher:

St. Michael, Greenville  
St. John the Baptist, Pittsburgh  
Immaculate Conception, Irwin  
St. Paul, Greensburg  
St. Bruno, South Greensburg  
Our Lady of Mercy, Johnstown

### Principal:

St. Bruno, South Greensburg  
Our Lady of Mercy, Johnstown

were four sets of twins in the class, and two of the sets, although not related, had the same names—Loretta and Lorraine Szymanski and Loretta and Lorraine Szymanski.

Sister Mary Gertrude’s vocation was fostered mostly by her parents and family, especially by her mother’s daily prayers. Like so many large families in those days—she is one of 10 children—she says fostering religious vocations was foremost in her family’s faith-filled lives.

A native of Pittsburgh, her family moved into the Diocese of Erie in 1945 where she was a member of St. Philip Parish in Linesville. She was encouraged to attend retreats at Seton Hill where she says, “I fell in love with the sisters.”

Her sister, Sister Mary Joseph McElhinny, SC, from very early childhood wanted to be a Sister of Charity. She already had two aunts and a number of cousins in the community. They were also taught by the Sisters of Charity at St. Mary Magdalen School in Homestead.

Sister Mary Gertrude says her vocation became apparent in 1951 when she entered the convent, just a year after her sister.

“God knew my heart’s desire when he gave me my Sister of Charity vocation,” she says.

In 1978, she asked for permission to minister in Greenville.

“And I’ve been here since,” she says.

**My Inspiration:** “The charity of Christ urges us.” – *From the inscription around the Sisters of Charity emblem*

## Sr. Patricia McGreevy, O.S.B.

Sister Patricia McGreevy, OSB, first encountered the Benedictine Sisters of Erie when she studied music under them. They helped open the school at St. Stephen Parish in Oil City, and Sister Jean Lavin was her music teacher.

“My vocation was nurtured by my family and through my association with the sisters,” Sister Patricia says. “We were very close and attached to the sisters. They were good role models for young girls.”

Sister Patricia entered the Benedictine Sisters of Erie in 1949 and took her first vows in 1951. She professed her final vows in August 1954. She received her bachelor’s degree in history from Mercyhurst College and a master’s in church administration and licentiate in canon law from the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

In her early ministry, she taught at several diocesan schools but spent most of her years at St. Benedict Academy in Erie. Among the subjects she focused on were American history, political science, world cultures, social studies and contemporary issues.

“As a teacher, it was my goal to help the students to think independently and become critical thinkers,” Sister Patricia says. “For me, teaching is about letting them come to a process of discernment and discrimination and find where the truth lay.”

Sister Maria O’Connor, RSM, says the example of the Sisters of Mercy at Mercyhurst College in Erie, where she was a student, and her love for the church led her to choose religious life.

As a college junior, Sister Maria thought about a vocation to religious life. After graduation, she left uncertain and taught in Pittsburgh for one year before calling the Sisters of Mercy in Titusville.

“I said, ‘I think I want to come,’” she recalls.

Over the years, she says she has come to understand Christ’s words in John’s Gospel, “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you ...” (John 15:16)

As Sister Maria celebrates her 60th jubilee, she looks back on a career that includes education and parish ministry.

Sister Maria has a doctorate in theology from St. Mary’s School of Theology, South Bend, Ind., and spent a term in the post-doctoral program at Yale Divinity School.

Her religious life has included teaching theology at Mercyhurst College for 18 years. Other teaching assignments have been at Catholic high schools throughout the Diocese of Erie. She has also served in parish life as a director of religious education and pastoral minister.



### Teacher:

St. Benedict Academy, Erie  
Sacred Heart, Sharon  
St. Michael, Fryburg  
Venango Catholic High School,  
Oil City

### Diocese of Erie:

Marriage Tribunal, judge  
Defender of the Bond

### Diocese of Richmond:

Marriage Tribunal, administrator

### Diocese of Colorado Springs:

Marriage Tribunal, administrator  
Chancellor

Office of Planning, director

### Diocese of Dodge City:

Chancellor

Marriage Tribunal, administrator

### Canon Law Society:

Active member

Board of governors, member

### Benedictine Sisters of Erie:

Prioress’ Council, member

General Chapter of the Federation

of St. Scholastica, delegate

Canonical consultant

Administrative assistant to

the prioress

She was elected to represent her religious community in the general chapter of St. Scholastica, a federation of monasteries of Benedictine women, where she was involved in the revision of a number of documents.

“That’s when I decided to get the credentials,” Sister Patricia says, referring to her canon law degree. “It gave me more confidence to be involved in that process and it opened up a whole new world for me in the future.”

She interviewed for chancery positions in several states. The newly-created Diocese of Colorado Springs appealed to her. There she could use her experience in long-range planning, administrative skills and archival training.

“We were a small diocese,” she recalls. “There were four people in the administration.”

The Diocese of Colorado Springs celebrated its 25th anniversary last year.

In addition to serving Colorado Springs, Sister Patricia has also served in the administrations of the dioceses of Erie, Richmond, Va., and Dodge City, Kan.

Sister Patricia is currently an administrative assistant to the prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie and serves as a consultant on canonical issues. She is also responsible for internal policy development in her religious community.

**My Inspiration:** “Every time we read Chapter 53 in the Rule of Benedict, I have a little prayer that I wrote and say myself about what Benedict was telling us. It’s at the heart of our Benedictine charism: ‘We pray that in a culture in which poverty is perceived as failure, self sufficiency as a virtue, where fear and violence create distrust of the stranger and the pilgrim, we pray for the grace to accept those who come into our lives in the person of the guest as we would Christ himself.’”

– Sister Patricia McGreevy, OSB

## Sr. Maria O’Connor, R.S.M.



### Mercyhurst College:

Theology professor  
Guadalupe Ministry director

### Teacher:

Mercyhurst Prep, Erie  
St. Catherine of Siena, DuBois  
St. Joseph Academy, Titusville

### Director of religious education:

St. Teresa of Avila, Union City

### Pastoral minister:

St. George, Erie

### Campus minister:

Penn State Erie, The Behrend  
College

### Diocese of Erie:

Marriage Tribunal

### Sisters of Mercy:

Leadership team

Vocation director

### Administrative board:

Pennsylvania Catholic Conference

### Volunteer:

Refugee ministry

“I really enjoyed teaching in college and pastoral ministry because both have the potential to stir up faith in others,” Sister Maria says.

She also worked in the Marriage Tribunal for the diocese and was campus minister at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College.

Currently, she is director of the Guadalupe Ministry, which offers a unique opportunity to sisters from developing countries to receive an education at Mercyhurst College in Erie. The Sisters of Mercy provide these sisters with housing and community. Sisters from Kenya, Uganda and Liberia then take back home what they learned to their ministries.

Sister Maria is also a volunteer in refugee ministry in Erie.

In 2005, the Serra Club of Erie named her “Outstanding Religious of the Year.”

Being a Sister of Mercy has been a rewarding experience for her.

“Being able to open the Gospel to others and have the companionship of others with the same intent has been a joy,” she says.

**My Inspiration:** “I have gained strength and inspiration from Romans 8:28, ‘We know that all things work for good for those who love God.’” – Sister Maria O’Connor, RSM



## Sr. Maria Onuffer, S.S.J.

Sister Maria Onuffer, SSJ, thanks God each day for sharing with her the joy of the little ones and the wisdom of the elderly that she has graciously received through her 60 years of ministry in the Diocese of Erie.

A native of Lewis Run, Sister Maria received the highest commercial honors when she graduated from St. Bernard High School in Bradford. She earned her bachelor's degree in business education from Villa Maria College.

"The inspiration and dedication of the sisters who ministered at St. Bernard High School motivated me to listen to the call of the Spirit, even though there was much resistance at times," Sister Maria says.

In her parish catechism classes and in the classrooms at St. Bernard, Sister Maria says she witnessed the teaching ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph at its best.

She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1951 from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Lewis Run and professed her final vows in 1957.



### Teacher:

Sacred Heart, Erie  
Blessed Sacrament, Erie

### Teacher aide:

Villa Maria Elementary, Erie

### St. Mary's Home:

Secretary  
Payroll clerk  
Business manager  
Assistant administrator  
Administrator

### Saint Vincent Health Center:

Secretarial/clerical  
Behavioral services, clerical  
Women's Diagnostic Center

### Eucharistic minister:

St. Francis Xavier, McKean

Sister Maria's ministries in her religious congregation began with teaching in several diocesan schools and then moving into the study of services and health care for the geriatric population at Saint Mary's Home in Erie, where she served for 29 years. She was licensed as a nursing home administrator by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

After retiring from Saint Mary's Home and completing a year of study in St. Louis, she joined the staff at Saint Vincent Health Center in the Outpatient Behavioral Services Department and presently ministers at Saint Vincent Women's Diagnostic Center.

"The faith of my parents laid the foundation for my gift of faith which over the years has been nurtured by the sisters in my congregation with whom I share ministry and life," Sister Maria says. "Prayer became a constant as I learned everything is possible with God."

Sister Maria is most grateful to God for letting her be a lifetime member of "Who the SSJs are—women of spirit, courage and vision."

**My Inspiration:** "Stimulated by the Holy Spirit of Love and receptive to His inspirations, the Sister of St. Joseph moves always toward profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction...in sincere charity—the manner of St. Joseph whose name she bears..." – *from the Consensus Statement of the Sisters of St. Joseph*

## Rev. Msgr. Henry J. Schauerman

Being a priest was the only job Msgr. Henry Schauerman ever wanted.

"There was never a time when I didn't want to be a priest," Msgr. Schauerman says. "The desire was there from my earliest age."

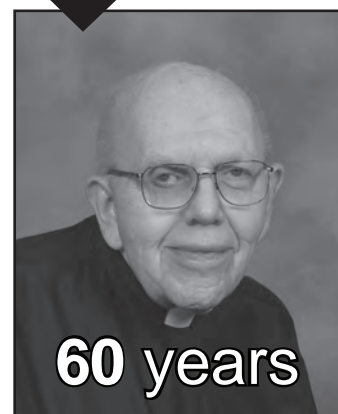
His parents helped and encouraged him to make his desire a reality.

"My mother made vestments for me to play priest and my father worked a second job at night to pay for the first two years of college," Msgr. Schauerman recalls.

He even had a childhood friend make him an altar out of cardboard, from which he could play priest.

Sixty years later, Msgr. Schauerman has found that ministering to those who are sick and shut in is the most rewarding aspect of his priestly calling. Administering the sacrament of anointing of the sick is the most important part of his work, he says.

Msgr. Schauerman, whose home parish is St. John the Baptist in Erie, graduated as valedictorian of his class at Cathedral Prep in 1944. He studied for two years at St. Charles College in Catonsville, Md., before moving on to St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore for six years. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 3, 1951 by Archbishop John Mark Gannon.



### Pastor:

St. Philip, Crossingville  
St. Agatha, Meadville

### Parochial vicar:

Blessed Sacrament, Erie  
St. Joseph, Oil City

### Parochial administrator:

St. Bernadette, Saegertown  
St. Philip, Crossingville

### Diocesan offices:

Meadville Deanery, dean  
Clergy Personnel Board  
Presbyteral Council  
Marriage Tribunal  
Rural Life Ministry, director  
Diocesan consultor  
Erie District Sodality Union, assistant director

He served as pastor at St. Agatha Parish in Meadville for 28 years (1978-2001) before retiring from active ministry in 2001. He was also the longtime parochial administrator at St. Bernadette in Saegertown and pastor of St. Philip in Crossingville.

In 1984, Pope John Paul II named him a Chaplain of His Holiness with the title of monsignor. In 1994, the pope again recognized him as a Prelate of Honor. For his commitment to the spiritual development of Catholic Boy Scouts, the diocese and National Catholic Committee on Scouting awarded Msgr. Schauerman with the St. George Emblem.

While he is concerned about the lack of people in the pews on Sunday, Msgr. Schauerman thinks his time as a priest should help those figuring out their own vocations.

"I should hope my own life of 60 years as a priest to be helpful to a young man trying to discern a calling to the priesthood," he says.

**My Inspiration:** "It is encouraging to know that it is Jesus who gives us the call to serve him and spread his kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven (John 15:16)." – *Msgr. Henry Schauerman*

## Rev. Eldon K. Somers, Ph.D.

Father Eldon Somers, Ph.D., a long-time educator, marks his 60th anniversary as a priest this year.

Father Somers spent 24 years at Clarion University as a faculty member. He also worked at Mercyhurst College in Erie from 1991-92. He taught at Gannon University in Erie in the 1950s and '60s.

Father Somers is a native of Kenmore, N.Y., a suburb of Buffalo, and is a convert to Catholicism.

He studied at Kenmore junior and senior high schools.

Before he studied for the priesthood, he taught for several years at schools in Western New York.

He was ordained a priest on May 3, 1951 at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie.

A graduate of Canisius College in Buffalo, Father Somers earned a bachelor's degree in social studies. He earned a master of education degree in educational administration from the University of Buffalo.

He earned a doctorate in education in 1963, becoming the first priest to receive a degree from the University of Buffalo after it became affiliated with the State University of New York. His doctoral thesis was on "Two Images of Jesuit Education."

After his ordination, Father Somers was on the faculty of Cathedral Preparatory School in Erie, with residence at St. Peter Cathedral's rectory from 1951-56.

In his diocesan assignments, he served as chaplain at the Erie County Tuberculosis Hospital in 1952 and for the Sisters of the Divine Spirit in 1957.



**Parochial vicar:**  
St. Bernard, Bradford

**Secondary education:**  
Cathedral Prep, Erie, faculty

**Gannon University:**  
Faculty  
Educational counselor  
Dean of students  
Director of personnel services

**Clarion University:**  
Faculty  
Newman Apostolate, chaplain

**Mercyhurst College:**  
Faculty  
Academic counselor  
Consultant

**Chaplain:**  
Erie County Tuberculosis Hospital  
Sisters of the Divine Spirit, Erie

From 1956-58, he studied with the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans) in Lafayette, N.J.

During the following two years, he served on the Gannon University faculty but briefly interrupted that to become the parochial vicar at St. Bernard Parish in Bradford.

While at Gannon from 1958-60 and 1962-67, Father Somers was a professor of social sciences and an educational counselor in the Department of Guidance and Placement. He also served as dean of students and was director of personnel services.

For the first eight months of 1962, he taught at Mercyhurst College and then was appointed to the faculty at Gannon where he stayed until leaving for Clarion in 1967.

In 1967, Father Somers spoke at a session of the National Catholic Guidance Conference in Dallas on "Student Freedom with Implications for Guidance."

In 1967-69, he was chaplain at Clarion University, serving the Newman Apostolate. In July 1968, he attended Newman Chaplains'

Training School being held by Stanford University in Stanford, Calif., on a scholarship. The school was designed to prepare priests and sisters who worked on a secular college campus.

Father Somers became a faculty member at Clarion in 1969, retiring from there in 1991. He joined the faculty as an associate professor of sociology.

In 1991, he was appointed to the faculty of Mercyhurst College. He retired from there in 1992. He currently serves Mercyhurst College as an academic counselor and a consultant on special projects.

## Sr. Barbara Zakutney, S.S.J.

Much of Sister Barbara Ann Zakutney's ministry has been dedicated to children at the former St. Joseph Home in Erie and through her musical gifts as a piano and organ teacher.

"My life as a Sister of St. Joseph has been blessed with many personal contacts throughout the years in keeping with our mission," Sister Barbara Ann says.

The seed of her vocation was watered by a dear friend of her mother who frequently visited the home.

"When I decided to enter the Sisters of St. Joseph, she was a great support," Sister Barbara Ann says.

She says she heard the call to religious life through prayer and the example of her mother.

A native of Christ the King Parish (formerly Sacred Heart) in Houtzdale, she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1951 and made her final vows in 1957. She attended Houtzdale Woodward School and graduated from Villa Maria College with a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She also studied at the University of Dayton and Edinboro University.

Over the years, she says she has been inspired by many people, including Sister Michelle Pillar who helped her since her early days entering the community.

"Sister Michelle was full of love and life and I have tried to imitate her example," Sister Barbara Ann says.

In addition, she notes that Father Joseph Kacprowicz recognized her ability, encouraged and supported her and trusted in her judgment and administrative decisions.



**Principal:**  
Spirit of Christ School  
St. Ann, Erie

**Teacher:**  
St. Ann, Erie  
St. John the Baptist, Erie  
St. Patrick, Erie  
St. Andrew, Erie  
St. Leo, Ridgway

**Saint Vincent HealthCenter:**  
Registered nurse

**Housemother:**  
St. Joseph Home for Children,  
Erie

**Diocese of Erie:**  
Medical/moral advisory  
committee

**My Inspiration:** "The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack."  
— Psalm 23

Following her academic career, she became a registered nurse and worked at Saint Vincent Health Center in the surgical unit. She says it has been her privilege to serve as Father Kacprowicz's personal caregiver since his retirement.



## Rev. Robert P. Fedor

All signs pointed to Father Robert Fedor joining the priesthood, but he wasn't sure whether that was his calling. He recalls a series of events that eventually led to his ordination on May 11, 1961.

According to this mother, the Hungarian pastor who baptized him dedicated him to the Lord. While growing up in Cleveland, his family would frequently visit the Carmelite sisters. They came to know the sisters very well and were deeply inspired by them.

"Actually, my first Mass was offered for them," Father Fedor recalls.

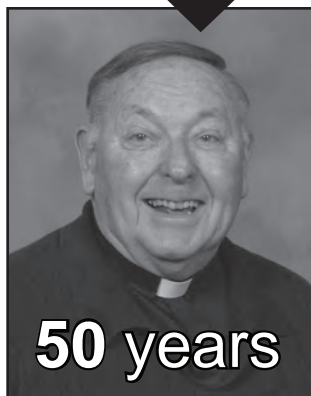
In second grade, he was the ring bearer at his aunt and uncle's wedding.

"That Sunday morning after their wedding, I got up myself, put on my little tuxedo and walked the distance to the church, alone, to attend Mass while everyone slept," says Father Fedor.

After graduating from Cleveland's Benedictine High School, he was going to enter the abbey.

"But I called the abbot the day before and told him I wasn't ready yet," he says. "I chickened out."

Father Fedor served with the U.S. Marine Corps



### Pastor:

St. Mary of the Assumption,  
Frenchville

St. Timothy, Curwensville

St. Peter, Conneautville

### Parochial vicar:

St. Bernard, Bradford

St. Bartholomew, Sharpsville

Blessed Sacrament, Erie

### Senior associate:

St. Agatha, Meadville

### Chaplain:

SCI Albion

Erie County Prison

Crawford County Correctional  
Facility

Drug and Alcohol Rehab at  
then-Spencer Hospital

(now Meadville Medical Center),  
Meadville

### Secondary education:

Kennedy Catholic High School,  
Hermitage

at Quantico, Va., and it was there that he decided to investigate the priesthood a little more.

"While I was in the Marine Corps, I occasionally helped out the chaplain," he says. "I decided in my last months before release from the Marines that I at least had to give it a try – because I'd never know if that's where I belonged."

Before entering St. Mark Seminary in Erie, he attended John Carroll University in Cleveland, Gannon University in Erie, St. Bonaventure University in Olean, N.Y., and Catholic University in Washington, D.C.

The faith of two priests in particular has touched Father Fedor during his priesthood. He is inspired by Msgr. Henry Schauerman's "dedication to the people's needs at all times – day and night." Msgr. Schauerman is also celebrating a jubilee this year. Father Fedor was also guided by the "humility and simplicity" of the late Msgr. Les Enright.

Father Fedor believes that his relationship with Christ is better because he loves the people he meets, no matter who they are.

"I am joyful being with people and more willing to accept them as they are," he says. "We all have a battle going on, and we have to fight that battle as imperfect, sinful beings. We can only try – and keep trying – to better ourselves and make this imperfect world a more amenable place to be in."

**My Inspiration:** "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." – *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*; "You have been told, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do the right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God." – *Micah 6:8*

## Sr. Michele Healy, S.S.J.

Sister Michele Healy, SSJ, first heard the call to religious life when she was on a bus.

"I was a student at Clarion University, and I would ride the bus from school to Ridgway," Sister Michele recalls. "I met Sister Teresina Onofrio on the bus as she was traveling to her home in Bradford. She told me about the Sisters of St. Joseph. She impressed me very much as she explained religious life to me."

A native of St. Leo Parish in Ridgway, Sister Michele entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1961 and made her final profession in 1969. She attended West Ridgway and Ridgway Area Joint High School. She received her bachelor's degree in education from Villa Maria College, her master's in theology from St. Bonaventure University and her master's in sacred Scripture from St. Michael College in Winooski, Vt. She also studied at Rutgers University, Penn State, the University of Notre Dame and St. John's University.

Over the years, Sister Michele says she has been touched by the faith of many people but none more so than Sister Virginia Ann Gardner, SSJ.

"Sister Virginia Ann always was such an inspiration to me," Sister Michele says. "She had a gift with words and wrote beautifully. This wisdom figure for me embodied the theme of our 150th year—'Women of Spirit, Courage and Vision.' She lived the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph and inspired all who knew her or were taught by her."

Sister Michele taught elementary and secondary education at a number of Catholic schools in the diocese. She spent a year as religious education coordinator at St. Jude the Apostle Parish in Erie after which she became a theology professor at Villa Maria College.

In the early days of the SSJ Associate program, she served as its director for three years. Currently, Sister Michele ministers as a theology professor at Gannon University and for the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program. She also serves in a presence ministry with seniors at Villa Maria Apartments and is on the board of Housing and Neighborhood Development Service (HANDS), a non-profit agency that helps people with housing needs.



### Teacher:

St. Andrew, Erie

St. John, Erie

Villa Maria Elementary, Erie

Villa Maria Academy, Erie

Notre Dame, Hermitage

Elk County Catholic, St. Marys

### Religious education coordinator:

St. Jude the Apostle, Erie

### Professor:

Villa Maria College, Erie

Gannon University, Erie

Erie Diaconate Program

### Presence ministry:

Villa Maria Apartments, service coordinator

### Sisters of St. Joseph:

Associates Program, director

### Board member:

Housing and Neighborhood Development  
Service (HANDS)

**My Inspiration:** "Psalm 23. 'The Lord is my shepherd' has always been a favorite of mine, especially the lines, 'You guide me along the right path' and 'I will dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come.' Also, Psalm 8 on creation, since nature has always appealed to me as one who grew up around the hills of Ridgway and the small trout streams of Glen Hazel where our family had a camp near the East Branch Dam. 'When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars that you set in place—What are humans that you are mindful of them? How awesome is your name.'"

– Sister Michele Healy, SSJ

## Sr. M. Margoretta Judy, O.S.B.

The Benedictine Sisters of Elk County made quite an impression on Sister Margoretta Judy, OSB, during her 12 years of elementary and high school education at St. Joseph in Lucinda.

One day one of the sisters asked her if she ever thought of becoming a sister.

"Yes, I had," Sister Margoretta recalls. "But that was further confirmation."

Sister Margoretta entered the Benedictine Sisters of Elk County and professed her vows on Nov. 4, 1961. She received her bachelor's degree in elementary education and master's in advanced teacher education from St. Bonaventure University.

She has served throughout the Diocese of Erie as a longtime Catholic elementary school teacher and teacher of religious education. Currently, she serves as manager of the Trifles and Treasures gift shop at St. Joseph Monastery in St. Marys.

Sister Margoretta says her mother considered entering religious life during her teenage years.

"Apparently God had other plans," Sister Margoretta says.

She says she was raised in a very religious home, with daily recitation of the rosary and evening services in church. When Sister Margoretta was in high school, her mother and other members of the Rosary Society decided each to pick a day of the month to at-

**My Inspiration:** "The Last Supper when Jesus gave us his body and blood in the form of bread and wine. Each day during the consecration of the Mass, we relive and share in that and his crucifixion." – *Sister Margoretta Judy, OSB*



### Teacher:

St. Boniface, Kersey  
St. Joseph, Lucinda  
Sacred Heart, St. Marys  
Queen of the World, St. Marys  
St. Mary, St. Marys  
St. Titus, Titusville  
St. Michael's at Greycliff, Derby, N.Y.

### Religious education:

St. Eulalia, Coudersport  
St. Augustine, Austin  
St. Benedict, Daguscahonda  
St. Joseph, Force  
St. Mary, St. Marys  
Queen of the World, St. Marys  
St. Joseph, Lucinda  
St. Titus, Titusville

### Andrew Kaul Memorial Hospital (now Elk Regional Medical Center):

### Benedictine Sisters of Elk County:

Trifles and Treasures gift shop,  
manager

tend Mass and pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

"My mother chose the 24th because her birthday was on the 24th of October," Sister Margoretta says. "She felt that it would be easier to remember."

In those days, Sister Margoretta recalls that she attended daily Mass with her classmates, as did her mother. But each month on the 24th, she knew she was praying for a special intention.

A few years later, Sister Margoretta decided to visit the superior in St. Marys to make known her intention to enter the convent.

"She asked me when I wanted to come, and I answered, 'As soon as possible,'" Sister Margoretta says.

The superior then asked her if the Sunday after Easter would be alright. The date was April 24.

"I felt the effect of my mother's prayers," Sister Margoretta says.

## Sr. Rose Ann Kolbas, O.S.B.

For Sister Rose Ann Kolbas, OSB, living in a religious community where all its members share the same vision and mindfulness has created an environment where she says she is enabled and encouraged to become the best version of herself.

"When I first entered religious life, I was a very timid individual, but gradually I am growing in confidence and self-expression," Sister Rose Ann says. "I have become aware that each morning is a new day of grace; a new opportunity to begin again to live consciously in God's presence."

In Sister Rose Ann's 50 years as a Benedictine sister, her ministry experiences have been varied. She was an elementary school teacher for a brief time before spending several years teaching at the secondary level in both Erie and Oil City. She also used her secretarial skills, serving as a school secretary as well as the community secretary for the Benedictine sisters. She is currently the office manager at Second Harvest Food Bank in Erie.

Within her religious community she is often seen sharing her gift of music by cantoring or playing guitar at liturgy and prayer.

Sister Rose Ann offers a four-part piece of wisdom she learned in her

**My Inspiration:** "The annual liturgical cycle has immersed me in Scripture where I encounter God in history; and I have been led to transform my childhood image of God as an exacting judge to a more loving friend who addresses me as the beloved. The contemplative dimension of monastic life has especially enriched my soul and continues to shape me into who I am becoming."

– *Sister Rose Ann Kolbas, OSB*



### Teacher:

St. Stephen, Oil City  
St. Benedict Academy, Erie  
Venango Catholic High School,  
Oil City (and secretary)  
St. Gregory, North East

### Erie Community Food Bank:

Bookkeeper

### Second Harvest Food Bank:

Office manager

Office staff

### Benedictine Sisters of Erie:

Community secretary

Glinodo Center bookkeeper/  
secretary

Development Office assistant

### Service coordinator:

Benetwood Apartments

novitiate 50 years ago that continues to guide her life: "Be yourself. Accept reality. Let go. Live in the present moment." Her steady, quiet presence reflects that she has lived into this wisdom and the spark of the divine shines within her.

Sister Rose Ann entered the Benedictine Sisters of Erie on Feb. 2, 1960.

She professed her first vows on Aug. 14, 1961 and final vows on Aug. 19, 1966. She received her bachelor's degree in education from Mercyhurst College.

"As I reflect on my 50 years as a Benedictine Sister of Erie, I am filled with gratitude for the monastic formation I received," Sister Rose Ann says. "The ongoing community rhythm of prayer, Eucharist, lectio, ministry and work have grounded me in my search for God, and these monastic practices have given me stability and strengthened my bond with community."

She notes that the older sisters who model faithfulness, perseverance, generosity, holiness, gentleness and selflessness have motivated her desire to follow in their footsteps.

"They have given me a glimpse of God; community has been my lifeline," she says.



# Sr. Mary Lou Kownacki, O.S.B.

Sister Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB, is a woman of creative vision with a sensitive heart who never fails to encourage members of her religious community, her family, co-workers and friends to dream big.

She believes that the soul is shaped by beauty and the arts. Over the years, she has dedicated part of her ministry to imparting that belief to children, bringing them a sense of beauty and hope.

"It touches them at their deepest point," Sister Mary Lou says. "All art does that. It tells us what it is to be human."

Sister Mary Lou is the founder and former executive director of the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House in Erie, where she is currently a teacher and writer-in-residence. The art house provides classes in the visual, performing and literary arts to at-risk children at no cost and is run by the Benedictine Sisters of Erie. Their innocence makes children natural poets and artists, she says.

Sister Mary Lou believes art is very healing.

"I know they change inside because it happens to me. I know I'm different when I write a poem or listen to music."

Sister Mary Lou entered the Benedictine Sisters of Erie on June 6, 1959. She professed her first vows on Feb. 11, 1961 and her final vows on Aug. 18, 1965. She received her bachelor's degree in education and master's in peace studies from Antioch College.

Sister Mary Lou is also a published author and poet and is currently the director of Benetvision Publishing. In addition, she serves on the Monastic Council. During her 50 years of religious life, she has been both an elementary and high school teacher throughout the Diocese of Erie.

In 1985, Sister Mary Lou became the national coordinator of Pax Christi USA, the U.S. branch of the international Catholic peace movement. She agreed under one condition: That the national movement would move its headquarters from Chicago to Erie.

"We were able to stabilize the movement," Sister Mary Lou recalls. "The Benedictine sisters have a charism of peace and have worked for peace."

She notes that the word "pax," which means peace, is on all monasteries.

**My Inspiration:** "In my office I have a beautiful photo on the wall above my desk with this quote by the Japanese poet, Ryokan:

*Oh, that my  
Monk's robe  
Were wide enough  
To gather up all  
The suffering people  
In this floating world.*

"I have lived my monastic life trying to live into that poem. I believe that at the end of the day all the years of prayer, of work, of community building and relationships will be measured by one standard — how wide is my monk's robe, how compassionate is my heart? So I pray it every day."

— Sister Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB



Congratulations  
and God's  
Blessings to all  
of our  
Jubilarians  
especially...

*Rev. Msgr. Richard G. Mayer  
Sr. Mary Lou Kownacki, O.S.B.  
St. Patricia McGreevy, O.S.B.*

who faithfully  
served St.  
Michael Parish  
and School in  
Fryburg with  
such great love  
and dedication.



#### Teacher:

St. Mary, Erie  
St. Joseph, Sharon  
St. Joseph, Oil City  
St. Michael, Fryburg  
Venango County Catholic High School,  
Oil City  
St. Stephen, Oil City  
St. Gregory, North East

#### Inner City Neighborhood Art House:

Executive director  
Teacher

Writer in residence

#### Benedictine Sisters of Erie:

Pax Center, director  
Alliance for International Monasticism,  
executive director  
Director of development  
Director of communications

Benetvision Publishing, director

#### Erie Times-News:

Reporter

#### Pax Christi USA:

National coordinator

#### Benedictines for Peace:

National coordinator

A few of the sisters were added to the staff, she says, giving the group some stability by providing support and resources.

"The experience of the Benedictine sisters gave it a real spiritual foundation," Sister Mary Lou says. "It's not just action. The action comes out of prayer and the Gospel of Jesus."

In 1991, Sister Mary Lou stepped down as national coordinator.

"I felt it was in a good position to turn it over to someone else," she recalls.

In February, Pax Christi USA announced plans to move its national headquarters from Erie to Washington, D.C.

"They have a good staff in Washington, and I think this will give them new life," Sister Mary Lou says. "It puts them closer, for better or worse, to some of the issues."

## Rev. Meinrad Lawson, O.S.B.

Born and raised in St. Mary Parish (now St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception) in Erie, Father Meinrad Lawson, OSB, had his faith nurtured by Benedictines.

The parish priests were Benedictines from St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe (located in the Diocese of Greensburg) and the Benedictine sisters from the convent next door taught him from grades 1 through 8. It's no wonder he became a Benedictine monk and Benedictine priest.

"I came to know the priests especially since I was an altar boy through most of my grade school years," Father Lawson says.

His only early contact with priests from the Diocese of Erie was with Father Robert Levis and Father James Peterson who served as retreat masters for the local Boy Scout troops at Camp Sequoia.

"I'll never forget the two of them sitting in the driver's seat of their cars with the windows down and hearing our confessions," Father Lawson says.

While most of his male classmates went to Cathedral Prep, Father Lawson went across the corner to Erie Tech.

By his junior year at Tech, he was toying with the idea of studying architecture and someday marrying his high school sweetheart.

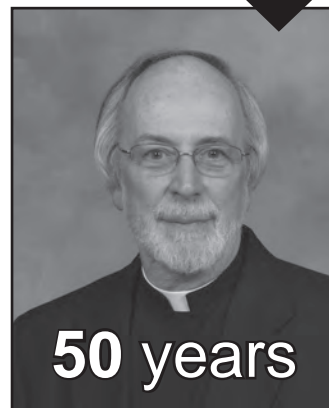
"Also tugging at me was the call to St. Vincent and the priesthood I was familiar with," Father Lawson says.

By mid-senior year, the die was cast and he applied for admission to the Scholasticate at St. Vincent Archabbey, where he began his college career in preparation for entering the monastery.

He says he is thankful for his dual vocation as a Benedictine monk and priest.

Father Lawson is celebrating the 50th anniversary of his profession of monastic vows. He entered the Benedictine monastic community of St. Vincent Archabbey in 1960 and made his simple profession of vows in 1961. He was ordained a priest in 1967.

Father Lawson spent his first 11 years as a priest serving Queen of the World Parish in St. Marys and the faithful of Elk County (1967-78). He has also ministered at St. Vincent Archabbey and Benedictine Priory and Military School in Savannah, Ga. He returned to ministry in the Diocese of Erie in 2007 where he serves as pastor of St. Mary Parish in St. Marys. He is also currently a board member of the Elk County Catholic School System.



### **Pastor:**

St. Mary, St. Marys

### **Associate pastor:**

Queen of the World, St. Marys  
Elk County Catholic High

### **School:**

Religion teacher  
Department chair

### **Chaplain:**

Knights of Columbus  
Bucktail Council, Boy Scouts of America

### **Confessor:**

Sisters of St. Joseph

### **Diocese of Erie:**

Erie Diocesan Priest Council  
Council of Aging  
Council for Human Dignity  
Presbyteral Council

### **Board member:**

Elk County Catholic School System  
Elk County Child Welfare  
Elk County Community Action Board  
St. Marys Child Day Care Center

**My Inspiration:** "My monastic vocation is in great part thanks to the sisters of the Order of St. Benedict (now residing at the Mount St. Benedict in Erie) and the example given by my parish priests at St. Mary Parish."

— Father Meinrad Lawson, OSB

Rev. Marc Stockton and the people of St. Bartholomew, Sharpsville congratulate Father Bob Fedor on his Golden Jubilee!

Sending our congratulations to  
**Msgr. Richard Mayer**  
**Msgr. Henry Schauerman**  
**Sr. Maria Onuffer, SSJ**  
**and Father Robert Fedor**

The priests and parishioners of Blessed Sacrament Church and School, Erie

God Bless the SSJ's and all the Jubilarians!

Villa Maria Elementary School, a boys and girls elementary school established in 1892 by the Sisters of Saint Joseph.



Leading the Way ... Doing it Right.  
That is the Difference!



# Rev. Msgr. Richard G. Mayer

For as long as Msgr. Richard Mayer can remember, he says he has always wanted to be a priest. He attributes much of his formation to his parents and the sisters who taught at Erie's Sacred Heart School. Reflecting on his 50 years of priesthood, Msgr. Mayer considers himself blessed.

"My vocation has given me the opportunity to minister to people of all ages," he says. "As I look back, I feel I have been very blessed by the people I have known and the friendships I have been able to make."

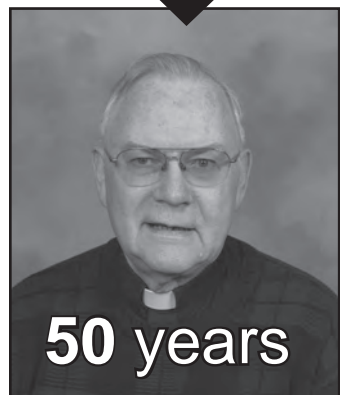
His assignments have taken him to a number of parishes throughout the diocese.

"I have met some wonderful people who have helped to form me into the person I am now," Msgr. Mayer says. "The priesthood is a very enriching way of life."

During his pastorates, Msgr. Mayer has overseen a number of construction and renovation projects.

As pastor of Church of the Good Shepherd in West Middlesex, he oversaw the construction of a new religious education building and the renovations to the church and social hall. He directed the renovation of St. Thomas School and the construction of a new parish center in Corry. At Our Lady of Lourdes in Cochranton, he headed the development of a new social hall, which was destroyed by a tornado in 1985.

He was named a Chaplain of His Holiness with the title of monsignor by Pope John Paul II in 1994. Shortly before his retirement in 2009, Bishop



**Pastor:**  
St. George, Erie  
Good Shepherd, West Middlesex  
St. Thomas, Corry  
St. Hippolyte, Frenchtown  
Our Lady of Lourdes, Cochranton  
Ss. Peter and Paul, Pettis  
**Parochial vicar:**  
St. Michael, Fryburg  
**Parochial administrator:**  
Holy Rosary, Erie  
St. Michael, Fryburg  
**Sacramental assistant:**  
Mount Calvary, Erie  
St. Julia, Erie

**Secondary education:**  
Cathedral Prep, Erie, faculty  
**Chaplain:**  
Serra Club of Mercer County  
**Board of directors:**  
Prince of Peace Center, Farrell  
**Member:**  
Corry Area Diversion Committee  
Ecumenical ministeriums in Corry,  
Cochranton and West Middlesex  
**Diocese of Erie:**  
Priests' Personnel Board  
Bishop's College of Consultors  
Presbyteral Council  
Warren Deanery, dean

Donald Trautman named him pastor emeritus of St. George Parish in Erie. He currently resides at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Erie.

Msgr. Mayer says that among the most vital issues facing Catholics today is the absence of God in society and culture.

"I would agree with Cardinal Robert Sarah, president of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum (the Vatican's charity promotion agency) who said, 'The most tragic hunger and the most terrible anguish is not lack of food. It's much more about the absence of God and the lack of love,'" Msgr. Mayer says.

**My Inspiration:** "The sixth chapter of the Gospel of John." – Msgr. Richard Mayer

# Rev. Chrysostom Schlimm, O.S.B.

Father Chrysostom Schlimm, OSB, never had to look very far to find examples of good priestly and religious vocations. All he had to do was check his family tree.

There are a number of priests, including several Benedictines, in his family. When he was in elementary school, he would play priest. His aunt, a religious at St. Bonaventure, even made him vestments. And his sisters were his altar servers.

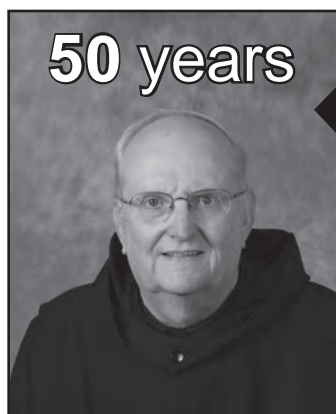
"It ran in the family, I guess," he says.

Father Schlimm, a monk of St. Vincent Archabbey and native of St. Marys, celebrates the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood this year.

He attended St. Mary's Parochial School and is a 1952 graduate of St. Vincent Preparatory School. He received a bachelor's degree in philosophy from St. Vincent College and earned a master of divinity degree from St. Vincent Seminary. He earned a master's degree in classical languages from the Catholic University of America and a master's degree in library science from the University of Pittsburgh.

Father Schlimm made simple profession of monastic vows on July 2, 1955 and solemn profession of vows on July 11, 1958. He was ordained a priest on June 3, 1961 by Bishop William Connare of Greensburg at the St. Vincent Archabbey Basilica.

Since ordination, he has regularly served as a weekend assistant in many parishes in the dioceses of Greensburg, Pittsburgh, Erie and Altoona-Johnstown in Pennsylvania; Youngstown, Ohio, and the archdioceses of Washington and Baltimore.



He has served his hometown's parishes—St. Mary, Sacred Heart and Queen of the World—as a sacramental assistant. He was parochial administrator of St. Mary Parish from 2005-06.

Much of Father Schlimm's ministry has been served in education. At St. Vincent College he served on the faculty of the Department of Foreign Languages. He taught Latin and Greek at St. Vincent Preparatory School and also taught at St. Vincent Seminary.

**Parochial administrator:**  
St. Mary, St. Marys  
**Sacramental assistant:**  
Queen of the World, St. Marys  
Sacred Heart, St. Marys

He became an assistant cataloger at St. Vincent Library from 1970 to 1983. In 1984 he was named director of libraries of St. Vincent Archabbey, Seminary and College, a position he held until 2001, when he was named special collections librarian.

In 2001, St. Vincent College awarded Father Schlimm the Boniface Wimmer Faculty Award for extraordinary achievements over the past 40 years on the faculty, and for his service to the library, which included automating the library in 1994.

He was named an Alumnus of Distinction in 2001 by the St. Vincent Alumni Association "in recognition of meritorious service and lifelong commitment to St. Vincent."

In June, Father Schlimm received the Prep Hall of Fame Faculty Award at the St. Vincent Preparatory School reunion.

**My Inspiration:** "I like to read St. John Chrysostom, my namesake. I also like St. Paul's letters, particularly to the Romans and Corinthians." – Father Chrysostom Schlimm, OSB

## Sr. Audrey Steff, O.S.B.

As Sister Audrey Steff, OSB, walks—“Sometimes stumbles,” she says—along the path of religious life, the Benedictine sister says she has learned a great deal about life.

“Probably most important is the power of prayer,” Sister Audrey says. “I value community prayer because it links every member to each other. We begin each day with morning prayer, and I try to take a nugget, a word, a sentence, a verse from prayer to recall during the day, a mantra of sorts.”

Sister Audrey entered the Benedictine Sisters of Erie on Feb. 2, 1960. She professed her first vows on Aug. 14, 1961 and her final vows on Aug. 19, 1966. She received a bachelor’s degree in education from Mercyhurst College and a master’s in education from Shippenburg University.

“When I entered the community in 1960, my mother felt badly about me living, as she called it, ‘a very boring life,’” Sister Audrey recalls. “How wrong she was! And to her credit, she later admitted that our life is anything but boring.”

Sister Audrey has spent 32 of her 50 years in religious life ministering in the field of elementary education, both as a teacher and an administrator. With the exception of one year, she has worked in education her entire community life.

Currently, Sister Audrey is on the staff of St. Benedict Education Center where she continues to use her teaching skills in adult education. She assists people who are on welfare. Among them are many refugees who have recently come to the United States, mainly from African and Asian countries.

## Sr. Moira Sullivan, S.S.J.

Sister Moira Sullivan, SSJ, initially resisted the call to religious life.

“But I came to a point in my life where I knew I could best use my gifts as part of a larger family, in this instance as a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph,” she says. “The connections in my first two years of college with Sister Lawrence Antoun and several other young women who were seeking to know God’s path for them resulted in my decision to enter.”

A native of Johnsonburg, Sister Moira entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from Holy Rosary Parish in 1961 and made her final profession in 1969.

She attended Holy Rosary School and Johnsonburg Area Joint School. She received her bachelor’s degree in English from Villa Maria College and her master’s in education from Boston College. She also studied at Gannon University and the University of Vermont.

Sister Moira says she has been guided by the faith of many people over the years. In the past, Sister Lawrence was one who influenced her greatly to become a Sister of St. Joseph.

“Her brilliance yet her gentleness and friendship encouraged me to be who God was calling me to be,” Sister Moira says.

Today, she says she is greatly influenced by the depth of prayer and spirituality of a number of people. They include her brother, Msgr. Richard Sullivan; Father Jerry Simmons, Father Richard Rohr and many of the sisters in her religious community.

“I am so blessed with my family and greatly appreciate their presence in my life also,” she notes. “Their acceptance—and God’s—of who I am means everything to me.”

Sister Moira’s distinguished ministry career in education includes teaching at a number of diocesan schools. She also taught and served as principal at Villa Maria Academy for 18 years. She ministered at the Regional Cancer Center in Erie for 19 years as chaplain, in social service and as a volunteer coordinator.



**Principal:**  
Immaculate Conception, Clarion  
St. Boniface, Erie  
**Teacher:**  
St. Stephen, Oil City  
Mount Calvary, Erie  
Sacred Heart, Sharon  
St. Joseph, Sharon  
**Second Harvest Food Bank:**  
Assistant director  
**Benedictine Sisters of Erie:**  
Benet Press, staff  
St. Benedict Education Center,  
teacher

“These people have taught me so many things about faith, kindness, gratefulness, generosity, humility and joy—and I thought I was the teacher!” Sister Audrey says.

An experienced wood turner, Sister Audrey shares her skill as a gifted artisan in her creation of classic candle holders, extraordinary bowls and beautiful boxes, among other things. Always interested in everyone and everything, Sister Audrey has an animated spirit that spills out of her generous heart with unwavering and deeply rooted joy.

Sister Audrey is stirred during evening prayer, when the sisters remember those who have died on that date from the very beginning of the community.

“And we also pray for the sister in our community who will next meet our Creator,” she

says. “It is a comforting thought.”

Throughout her faith journey, Sister Audrey says she is grateful to many people who have helped her along the way, particularly her family, her religious community and friends.

“Robert Frost said it so well,” Sister Audrey says:

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.*

**My Inspiration:** “During these 50 years when I faced difficulties, I would read Isaiah 41:10-13 which continues to give me strength: ‘Do not fear; I am with you. Do not be anxious; I am your God. I will strengthen you and uphold you in justice.’” — *Sister Audrey Steff, OSB*



Sister Moira presently serves as one of three members of the Sisters of St. Joseph Leadership Team. She also serves on the Board of Erie Catholic Preparatory High School (Villa-Prep).

**Principal:**  
Villa Maria Academy, Erie  
**Teacher:**  
Villa Maria Elementary, Erie  
Villa Maria Academy, Erie  
Our Lady’s Christian, Erie  
St. Patrick, Erie  
Sacred Heart, Erie  
St. Agatha, Meadville  
**Regional Cancer Center, Erie:**  
Chaplain  
Social service  
Volunteer coordinator  
**Sisters of St. Joseph:**  
Director of Communications  
Congregation leadership team  
Treasurer  
**Board member:**  
Erie Catholic Preparatory High  
School (Villa-Prep)

**My Inspiration:** “One of my favorite and guiding quotations is from St. Athanasius: ‘We are always becoming who we will be.’ This is especially meaningful because it challenges me daily to continue to grow. With God’s grace, I can always move to the ‘more’ ... more prayerful, more kind, more loving and especially more aware of being loved by God.” — *Sister Moira Sullivan, SSJ*



## Rev. Robert P. Susa

Father Robert Susa, who is celebrating his 50th anniversary as a priest of the Diocese of Erie, taught in the Economics Department at Gannon University for nearly 40 years and was also the founding director of the College of Humanities honors program.

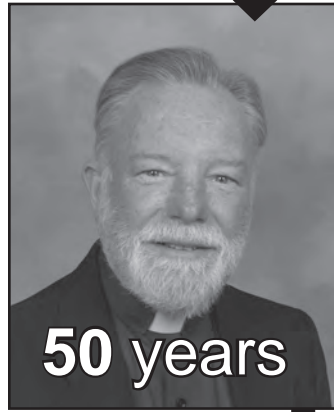
He began his career teaching economics at Gannon in 1961 immediately following ordination and served as the chairman of the department for six years. His term as a member of Gannon's Faculty Senate included a year as president of the organization.

While at Gannon, he was director of the New Faculty Mentoring Program, director of the Liberal Studies Committee, a member of the Provost Council, served as university ombudsman and for more than 40 years was resident chaplain for students living at Finegan Hall. He also served as adviser and chaplain to the Sheik fraternity.

His recent honors from Gannon University include the Archbishop Gannon Medal of Distinction, Gannon University Distinguished Faculty Award and the university's Student Government Association Teaching Excellence Award.

Father Susa was a member of the liturgy team at Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Erie for more than 25 years, and served as a weekend assistant at Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine-rite Catholic Church. He was elected the first dean of the Gannon University Deanery and was a member of Gannon Priests' Council.

He served as associate coordinator of Pax Christi USA, the Interna-



50 years

### Gannon University:

Faculty  
Chairman, economic department  
President, Faculty Senate  
Chaplain  
Founding director, College of Humanities honors programs  
Director, New Faculty Mentoring Program  
Director, Liberal Studies Committee  
Member, Provost Council

### Diocese of Erie:

Dean, Gannon University Deanery  
Gannon Priests' Council  
Chaplain, Fellowship of Divorced and Separated

### Weekend assistant:

Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church, Erie

### Pax Christi USA:

Associate coordinator  
Liaison, U.S. bishops

tional Catholic peace movement, and was the liaison between Pax Christi USA and the bishops in the United States. Among other ministries during his priesthood, he was chaplain for the Fellowship of Divorced and Separated Catholics for six years.

A native of Sharon, Father Susa was ordained May 11, 1961. Following his assignment to Gannon University after ordination, he earned a master's degree in economics from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and continued with doctoral work in economics at the university. Prior to that he had graduated from Erie's Cathedral Preparatory School and earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from St. Bonaventure University.

He is an avid reader, enjoys listening to classical music and likes to travel. Father Susa currently resides at the Bishop Michael J. Murphy Residence for Retired Priests in Erie.

**My Inspiration:** Thomas Merton, Gandhi and Henri Nouwen are among those who have had the most profound influence on Father Susa's life.

## Rev. Ronald E. Gmerek

Father Ronald Gmerek was a student at Gannon University in Erie when he first considered his priestly vocation.

Father James Peterson, known by many as Father Pete, was his spiritual director and regular confessor.

"I was impressed by the way he dealt with a multitude of different people who walked into his office," Father Gmerek remembers. "Many of them were people who were in need of much."

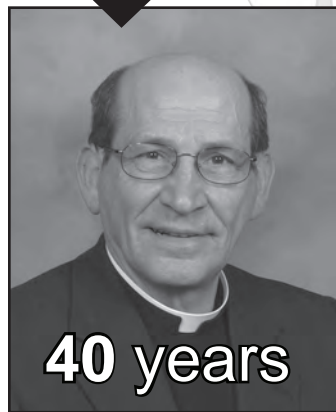
He recalls one winter day when he saw a man, who wasn't wearing a jacket, come in and sit in Father Pete's waiting room. After the man's visit, he came out of the office with Father Pete's own jacket.

"That led me to understand what priesthood is all about," Father Gmerek says. "One is ordained for the sake of helping people. Father Pete left the office with no jacket on. I came to realize how he responded to the needs of others and to the wishes of Christ."

He says he learned the true meaning of priesthood—following Christ's mission—through Father Pete's example.

Looking toward graduation, Father Gmerek says he saw opportunities for himself such as attending graduate school or

**My Inspiration:** "Understanding Scripture leads a person to growth in the spiritual life. It is a source of leading one to a deeper expression of prayer. It opens the soul to a prayer that is more than just words. Scripture helps in understanding that God is forgiving and loving truth. His truth is revealed in the Scriptures." — *Father Ronald Gmerek*



40 years

### Sacramental assistant:

St. Michael, Greenville  
St. Jude the Apostle, Erie  
Immaculate Conception,  
Brookville

St. Dominic, Sigel

St. Ann, Corsica

### Priest in residence:

Our Mother of Sorrows, Erie

St. Paul, Erie

St. Tobias, Brockway

Christ the King, Houtzdale

### Secondary education (faculty):

DuBois Central Catholic High School

Cathedral Prep, Erie

Kennedy Catholic High School,

Hermitage

### Higher education (faculty):

Gannon University, Erie

### Chaplain:

Harborcreek Youth Services

teaching biology and earth science in the public school system. But Father Pete's model of service helped him consider the priesthood.

Father Gmerek was ordained a priest on May 20, 1971.

During his 40 years of ministry, he has served parishes and taught at Catholic schools throughout the diocese. He is currently a priest in residence at Our Mother of Sorrows Parish in Erie, which includes the churches of St. Ann, St. Casimir and Holy Family.

As Catholics, Father Gmerek says, it is important to understand the Second Vatican Council's expression of the church's life in the context of the world.

To help further one's spirituality, Father Gmerek notes it is always good to look toward the writings of the saints. He uses St. Teresa of Avila's thoughts in "The Interior Castle," also known as "The Mansions," as an example.

"St. Teresa of Avila speaks to how we undermine ourselves in a multitude of ways, which can diminish the cleansing of

the soul," he explains. "She addresses the soul's needed vision to realize the depth of who we are."

He adds that reflective prayer is necessary to help us reform our lives.

"Our incompleteness is easily reformed so beautifully flowing from the depths of the Father's love truly offered through the Son," Father Gmerek says.

# Rev. Msgr. H. Desmond McGee

Msgr. Desmond McGee first thought about the priesthood when he was in eighth grade.

"I went to talk about it with my pastor, Father Robert Dempsey, at the end of my junior year in high school," Msgr. McGee recalls.

He then talked about it with his parents.

"They told me that whatever I wanted to do with my life, they would support me," he says. "They wanted me to understand that I would have to live the life I chose. My parents' faith and trust in God guided me every day."

The faith of many people has guided Msgr. McGee over the years.

"An elderly woman in our parish would walk to church every day for Mass," he says. "She was stooped over and walked with a cane. She came about three-quarters of a mile to church. She always told the kids, 'You're a good boy' or 'You're a good girl.'"

Sister Leocadia Myrter, SSJ, taught religious education classes and encouraged Msgr. McGee's vocation. And Father Robert Dempsey, who had great faith in spite of suffering health setbacks, was a big influence.

Msgr. McGee has ministered at many parish communities in his 40 years of priesthood. He has served as the pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Clearfield since 2002.

If he had just one more homily to give, Msgr. McGee says he would focus on recognizing the presence of God in our midst.

"He is always there," he says. "Our task is to recognize this presence. It connects us with the person God wants us to be—one who glorifies God and allows us to love and serve others. I believe



## Pastor:

St. Francis of Assisi, Clearfield  
Christ the King, Houtzdale  
**Parochial administrator:**  
St. Bonaventure, Grampian  
St. Timothy, Curwensville  
Holy Trinity, Ramey  
Christ the King, Houtzdale  
Immaculate Conception, Madera  
St. Francis of Assisi, Clearfield  
**Parochial vicar:**

St. Joseph, Warren  
St. Michael, Greenville  
St. Francis of Assisi, Clearfield

## Sacramental assistant:

St. Francis of Assisi, Bradford  
St. Bernard, Bradford

## Secondary education:

Headmaster, Bradford Central  
Christian High School

## Campus ministry:

Thiel College

## Diocese of Erie:

Presbyteral Council  
Priests' Personnel Board  
Clergy Continuing Education  
Dean, Clearfield Deanery  
Office of Matrimonial Concerns  
Pastoral Advisory Board

love is to give God to another."

Msgr. McGee says his most rewarding times as a priest are also the most humbling.

"Hearing confessions, you realize someone has just given you the deepest part of who they are," he says. "Hospital visits help me realize the great value of presence. And going to classrooms to little kids, you're touched by their sincerity, trust and value."

Taking time for our own personal spiritual development, Msgr. McGee says, gives depth and meaning to our lives.

"It brings us in touch with the person God made us to be, therefore it deserves our time and energy," he says.

He advises young people trying to discern their vocation that God calls everyone to make him present to others.

"We are to know him, love him and serve him by knowing, loving and serving others," Msgr. McGee says. "Each of us with prayer and reflection is to ask God how he wants us to fulfill this call. We must approach it with purity of heart, aware that we can do whatever God wants because he provides what we need. And we are to ask him that his will be done with our life."

**My Inspiration:** "Psalm 51 makes me aware of my faults but also generates hope in God's mercy and goodness."

— Msgr. Desmond McGee

**Congratulations on  
your 40th Jubilee,  
Rev. Msgr. Thomas  
J. McSweeney  
and Rev. Msgr. H.  
Desmond McGee!**



**Many blessings,  
St. Joseph, Warren**

*You have followed  
in God's footsteps  
through the years...*

*and we are  
very appreciative  
of your service.*



*Thank you, Sr. Barbara  
Zakutney, SSJ, (60 years) and  
Fr. Ron Gmerek (40 years).*

*Our Mother of Sorrows: Holy  
Family, St. Ann and St. Casimir  
Churches & Holy Family School*

*St. Michael, Greenville  
wishes to congratulate  
the following  
jubilarians:*

**Sr. Rita Marie Hettish, RSM**

60 years

**Sr. Mary Gertrude McElhinny, SC**

60 years

**Rev. Ronald E. Gmerek**

40 years

**Rev. Msgr. H. Desmond McGee**

40 years

**Rev. Walter E. Packard**

40 years

**Rev. V. David Foradori**

25 years

**Very Rev. Jeffrey J. Noble, VF**

25 years



# Rev. Msgr. Thomas J. McSweeney

“People are always surprised to learn that I was shy as a child,” says Msgr. Thomas McSweeney.

But it was due to that very trait that his parents encouraged him to get involved with the Erie Playhouse at about the age of 11.

“It was an equity company at that time,” he remembers, “so right away I had the chance to work with great professionals like Dom DeLuise. It captured my imagination immediately.”

Looking back, he acknowledges almost every aspect of his life has been informed by his experience with the theatre.

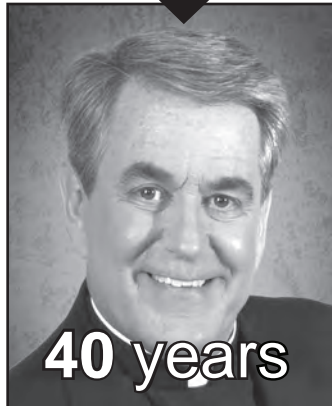
“It’s about presentation,” he says. “I remain so grateful to my parents for all they did to support my efforts.”

Msgr. McSweeney studied for the priesthood at the Catholic Theological College in Washington, D.C. During that time, he also worked as both voice and onscreen talent for WETA-TV, the PBS affiliate in the nation’s capital. As he entered his diaconate year prior to ordination, the station asked him to write, produce and host what became *Man Alive*, a 15-part anthropological series for high school students looking at how humanity is expressed in religion, art and politics.

“I had the entire resources of the Smithsonian Institute at my disposal,” he says, marveling at the long odds of such an experience.

It would impact the way he later taught his students in theatre and communication arts at Gannon University, always encouraging their best in a way that made his students want to achieve it.

While forever remaining deeply tied to the Erie region, Msgr. McSweeney has enjoyed a series of adventures outside of the diocese including a five-year assignment as director of the Christophers, a national Catholic media movement, and serving on the board of the Catholic Press Association, an organization which bestowed on him its highest honor, the President’s



40 years

## Pastor:

Holy Trinity, Erie

## Parochial administrator:

Holy Trinity, Erie

St. John the Baptist, Erie

## Sacramental assistant:

St. John the Evangelist, Girard

Holy Rosary, Erie

St. Jude the Apostle, Erie

## Coordinator of evangelization:

St. Joseph, Warren

## Diocese of Erie:

Founder, director, Diocesan Communications Center  
Director, Office of Evangelization/Communications  
and Public Relations

Administrative Cabinet member

## Gannon University:

Founder, chair and faculty, Department of Theatre  
and Communication Arts

Founding licensee and general manager; WETG-TV  
Director, TV Mass for shut-ins

## National work:

Director, The Christophers, New York City, NY

Weekend sacramental assistant, St. Patrick  
Cathedral, New York City, NY

Television commentator, MSNBC-TV

Liaison for Media Relations; board member of the  
Catholic Press Association and Catholic Academy  
for Communication Arts Professionals

## Higher education:

PhD studies at Catholic University of America and  
the University of Maryland

*God bless you!  
Thank you for your  
dedication and service  
to St. Andrew*

Msgr. Thomas McSweeney

Rev. Walter Packard

Sr. Barbara Zakutney, S.S.J.

Sr. Michele Healy, S.S.J.

Sr. Mary Carol Hoke, S.S.J.



Award. He remains under contract with MSNBC, having most recently served as commentator during Pope Benedict XVI’s 2007 visit to the United States.

As for the future, Msgr. McSweeney believes the bishops heralded a new age of tolerance and common ground through Vatican II.

“I see intolerance as being in darkness,” he says. “We have to stand for our principles, but it should never extend to persons. Tolerance for all people has to be part of our mission.”

He says the hope that came with Vatican II was one of the reasons he was so happy to become involved in the ministries of the church.

Today, he encourages men and women to pay attention to the truth when discerning their vocations, whether to the priesthood, religious life, single life or marriage. Where else would he look for inspiration in this area but in the theatre?

“I have to turn to Shakespeare,” he says. “In *Hamlet*, Polonius says, ‘To thine own self be true.’ It can never be about trying to meet other people’s expectations. Ultimately we can only make sure we are being honest and authentic with ourselves and with God.”

**My Inspiration:** “John 1:5 tells us that, ‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.’ This passage squares with my many years with the Christophers, whose motto is, ‘It is better to light one candle than curse the darkness.’ Light signals positive, joyful, productive action!” – Msgr. Thomas McSweeney

# Rev. Walter E. Packard

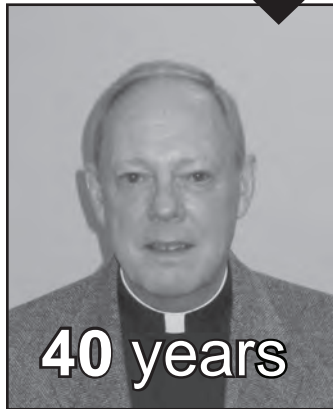
Father Walter Packard was first attracted to the priesthood when he was a grade school student at St. Peter Cathedral School in Erie.

"I was impressed with the priests of the parish and the way they demonstrated their priesthood to those of us in the school," Father Packard says.

As he grew older, he says he lost that attraction until his junior year at Cathedral Prep. He was inspired by several priest-teachers including Father James Sperry, Father Edmond Donovan, OSFS, Father John Potosnak, Father Steven Miaczynski and Father John Poux.

"I began giving serious thought to the possibility of entering the seminary upon graduation from high school," he says.

Other figures who were influential in Father Packard's vocation include Msgr. Bob Cohan, who was an assistant priest at St. James Parish in Erie, and Msgr. Charles Ward, who served as the pastor of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Lawrence Park, Father Packard's home parish.



## Pastor:

St. Titus, Titusville  
St. Walburga, Titusville  
Immaculate Conception,  
Mageetown

St. Joseph, Warren  
St. Andrew, Erie  
St. Joseph, Lucinda

## Parochial vicar:

St. Joseph, Oil City  
St. George, Erie  
St. Michael, Greenville

## Parochial administrator:

Our Mother of Perpetual Help,  
Lewis Run

St. Francis of Assisi, Bradford  
St. Michael, Greenville

## Priest in residence:

Holy Cross, Fairview

## Secondary education:

Elk County Catholic School,  
St. Marys, faculty

## Diocese of Erie:

Presbyteral Council

## Chaplain:

Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse,  
Erie

"When the diocese was not going to accept my request to enter the seminary because of my parents' marital status, Father Ward simply said, 'Don't worry about anything,'" Father Packard recalls. "A few days later, my rejection was rescinded by the diocese. I owe everything to Father Ward!"

He notes that he was taught by wonderful women religious during his education. He remembers fondly Sister Teresa Marie Bohren, SSJ, his second grade teacher, and Sister Jean Baptiste DiLuzio, SSJ, a teacher at Cathedral Prep. He is friends with both of his former teachers today.

There were many other women religious and laypersons who were his teachers, and they all had a positive influence on his response to his call to priesthood, Father Packard says.

"I can only hope that my ministry over the last 40 years has had as positive an effect as those men and women who played an important role during my formative years," he says.

Among the most important issues facing Catholics today, he notes, is the needed collaboration of ministry among priests, deacons, women religious and the laity.

"Ministry as collaboration seems to be vital to the present state of the church today," Father Packard says. "We are all baptized into the priesthood of Jesus Christ, each with our given gifts to share with the many (Romans 12:4-8)."

It is imperative for everyone, he says, to devote time and energy to our spiritual lives.

"Without being grounded in a life having a deep spirituality, it doesn't take long for ministry to seem like a 'job' where we simply go through the motions of what is expected of us," he says.

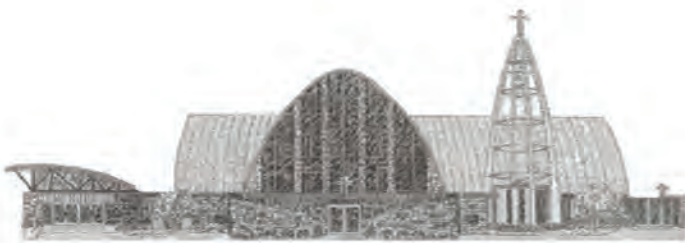
Having served parishes throughout the diocese, Father Packard was recently named the pastor of St. Titus and St. Walburga parishes in Titusville.

"If I have done anything to help bring God to others and having done so, positively affected their lives, it is a reward," he says.

**My Inspiration:** "I am drawn to the words of the prophet Isaiah 61:1-3, 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners.' I try to uphold the ideals of this passage in my ministry."

— Father Walter Packard

*The members of Saint George Church offer our congratulations and prayers to those who have served our parish on the occasion of their anniversaries.*



Msgr. Richard Mayer  
who served as our Pastor,  
a priest for 50 years

Sr. Maria O'Connor, RSM – 60 years

Sr. Joan McCabe, RSM – 60 years

Sr. Rita Marie Hettish, RSM – 60 years

Rev. Walter E. Packard – 40 years

**Congratulations to our friend,  
Father Walter E. Packard,  
on your fortieth anniversary of ordination.**

*We are grateful for your years of ministry to the people of the Erie Diocese. It is with great joy, love and gratitude that we join with those you have served in extending best wishes.*

*From: Your Greenville family*



# Rev. V. David Foradori

Father David Foradori's feelings about being a priest were a part of his childhood and beyond.

"I was raised in an extremely active and faithful Catholic family," Father Foradori says. "We always attended Mass, participated in church functions and prayed together."

He verbalized his interest when Msgr. Bernard Urbaniak, who was one of his teachers at DuBois Central Catholic High School, gave his class an assignment reflecting upon why they could not be a priest or religious.

"While working on that assignment I could only find flippant phrases like, 'I don't like black,' and I decided to admit my interest," Father Foradori recalls.

Once Msgr. Urbaniak and Msgr. Henry Krebs, his headmaster at DuBois Central Catholic, learned of his interest, their assistance and support had him visiting St. Mark Seminary in Erie very quickly.

"And as they say, the rest is history," he says.

Father Foradori was ordained to the priesthood on April 25, 1986 at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie by Bishop Michael Murphy.

He says there are many people over the years whose faith has inspired and guided him.

"I am the type of person who takes something positive from every person I meet," Father Foradori says.

His parents were truly his first teachers of the faith, he says. Other members of his family, especially his sister, brother-in-law, niece and nephew, have added to his faith in numerous ways.

"They have taught me the gift of love, support and appreciation," he says.

Father Foradori notes that he is also grateful for the many priests who have helped him over the years. They include Msgr. Louis Heberlein at his home parish of St. Tobias in Brockway and Father Michael Duffy at Sacred Heart Parish in Danville, Va., who served as his pastor during his childhood and young adult years.

He's also thankful for the influence of the priests who taught and encouraged him in high school, college and seminary and those with whom he has served over the past 25 years.

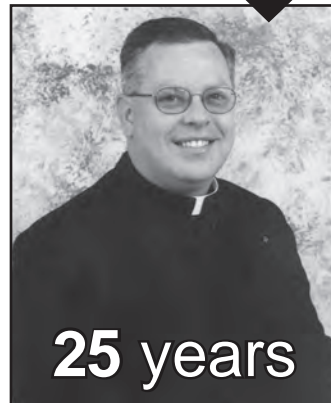
Father Foradori says among the most vital issues facing Catholics today is finding out where faith fits in during a very busy and distracted life.

"In our society there are many voices challenging each person to be involved, committed and invested," he says. "And I fear that the voice of the church is being categorized as just another option among equals and not the priority that it once was and should be."

Father Foradori, who currently serves as the pastor of St. Michael the Archangel and St. Joseph parishes in DuBois, says he often encourages his parish communities to spend time with God in quiet prayer and reflection. Every year he makes a retreat with the Trappist monks in Berryville, Va., where he spends time in absolute silence.

"That week is vital to me to keep me grounded and listening," he says. "I need that time to listen to God and remember that he's in charge and I'm just a humble part of his church's ministry. As the old phrase goes, 'God gave you two ears and only one mouth—listen more than you speak.'"

**My Inspiration:** "My favorite Scripture passage is the disciples on the road to Emmaus. In that reading, two disciples of Jesus are leaving Jerusalem moments after hearing of Jesus' resurrection from the dead—because they were disappointed that Jesus was not what they expected, and they were running away from discipleship. When Jesus walked with them, he did not condemn, chastise or criticize—rather he listened, taught and guided them to being the disciples of God they were called to be. After the 'breaking of the bread,' then they accepted discipleship, got off the chair and went back to Jerusalem and active participation in following Jesus Christ. I see that account as inviting humankind to being actively involved in being followers of Christ. What an invitation!" – *Father David Foradori*



25 years

## Pastor:

St. Michael the Archangel, DuBois

St. Joseph, DuBois

St. Titus, Titusville

St. Walburga, Titusville

St. John, Tidioute

## Parochial vicar:

St. Brigid, Meadville

St. Bernard, Bradford

Holy Redeemer, Warren

## Parochial administrator:

St. Anthony, Tionesta

St. John, Tidioute

Holy Trinity, Farrell

St. Adalbert, Sharon

## Priest in residence:

St. Michael, Greenville

Notre Dame, Hermitage

## Sacramental assistant:

Our Lady of Fatima, Farrell

Beloved Disciple, Grove City

## Campus ministry:

Kennedy Catholic High School, Hermitage

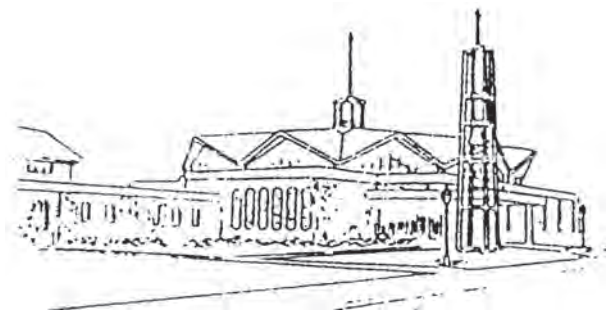
University of Pittsburgh at Bradford

## Diocese of Erie:

Presbyteral Council

CONGRATULATIONS  
to all our jubilarians

Special wishes to  
FR. V. DAVID FORADORI,  
one of our native sons.



St. Tobias Parish Family, Brockway

# Rev. John R. Neff

Before Father John Neff became a priest, the phrase “salt of the earth” had a different meaning to him.

As a shipping analyst for Morton Salt, Father Neff says he realized there was more to life than figuring out freight rates.

A former Episcopal priest, Father Neff was given permission by the Vatican to become a Roman Catholic priest. He was ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church in 1978 and served in parishes in Sharon and New Brighton, Pa.

Then he looked toward the Catholic Church where he says he felt more at home and a fullness of faith.

Father Neff was accepted into the Catholic Church in 1983 at St. Peter Cathedral. For the next three years he worked as a therapist for what was then known as Catholic Social Services and studied at night for his pastoral provision. Father Neff was then ordained to the diaconate during a ceremony at Holy Family Monastery in Erie, home of the Carmelite nuns.

He served internships at Saint Vincent Health Center in Erie and at Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Edinboro. He was ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood on Nov. 21, 1986 at St. Joseph Parish in Sharon by Bishop Michael Murphy. He began the Catholic priesthood as chaplain to DuBois Regional Medical Center.

He says his most rewarding time as a priest was as a hospital chaplain, bringing Christ and the pastoral care of the church to the sick and dying, their families and health care staff.

“Also, every time I celebrate Mass,” he adds.

Father Neff says the faith of many people has helped guide him over the years.

“Msgr. John Hagerty has been a role model of compassion, understanding and support for me for many years,” Father Neff says.

He also cites the influence and training of Msgr. Louis Heberlein, who was a priest mentor, Bishop Lawrence Brandt of Greensburg—originally a priest of the Diocese of Erie—for his support during and after his transition; and Father James Kennelley for his faith sharing and support during his initial years of Catholic priesthood.

Sister Stanislaus Keck, RSM, whom he says “manifested holiness,” showed him how to do hospital ministry from a Christ-centered perspective.

Josephine Meehan, a parishioner at Holy Cross Parish in Brandy Camp, supported his vocation through her prayers and devotion to the Blessed Mother.

“She gave of herself to all people,” Father Neff says. “She shared her

home, her meals and a listening ear. She was a saint to those who knew her.”

Father Neff says among the vital issues facing Catholics today are integrating the faith and its practice and seeing the relevance of Catholic values as they apply to family, community and the sanctity of life in a secularized society.

“We can embrace these issues by seeing the importance and being motivated to read and pray sacred Scripture, the Catechism and other resources that help us grow in faith and recognize the Word among us,” he says.

In the future, Father Neff hopes that the church will continue to be a strong voice for Christ in society, especially with regard to the poor, aged and unborn.

**My Inspiration:** “Psalm 23—‘The Lord is my shepherd’—tells us that Christ shepherds us in good times and in bad if we put our trust in him. I’m also inspired by the consecration at Mass. God-in-Christ comes to those who come to him—a miracle each time Mass is celebrated.”

– Father John Neff

## Pastor:

St. Luke, Youngsville

## Parochial vicar:

Blessed Sacrament, Erie

## Administrator:

St. Luke, Youngsville

## Priest in residence:

St. Venantius, Rouseville

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

Mary, Oil City

Holy Cross, Brandy Camp

## Sacramental assistant:

Immaculate Conception, Brookville

## Pastoral assistant:

St. Tobias, Brockway

St. Bernard, Falls Creek

## Chaplain:

DuBois Regional Medical Center

Christ the King Manor, DuBois

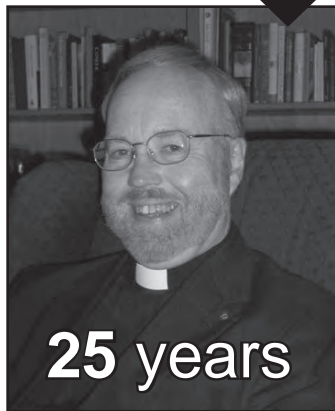
## Mental health therapist:

Clearfield-Jefferson Community

Mental Health Center

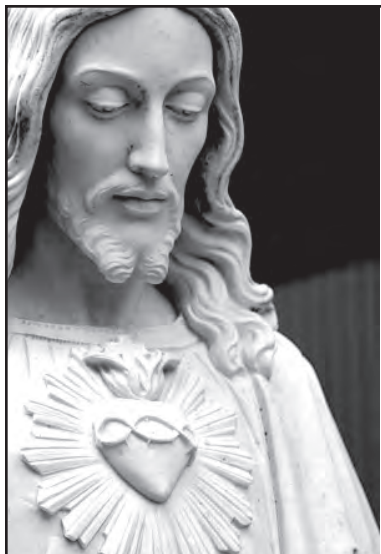
## Mobile therapist:

St. Anthony’s Point, Franklin



25 years

Notre Dame Parish family  
congratulates our pastor, *Father Jeff Noble*,  
and those who served us in past years  
including *Father V. David Foradori* and  
*Father Paul S. Siebert*,  
as they celebrate their 25th jubilees.



**Congratulations**  
**Father John Neff**  
from St. Luke Parish  
in Youngsville,  
the Knights of Columbus  
#13006  
and the Altar-Rosary  
Society



# Very Rev. Jeffrey J. Noble, V.F.

Father Jeffery Noble attended St. Mark Seminary's high school program thinking that perhaps he had a vocation to the priesthood.

"Toward the end of that time, however, I thought the priesthood was not for me," Father Noble recalls.

He went on to college and began to work as a journalist and then in production control. During that time he was active in his home parish of St. Catherine of Siena in DuBois.

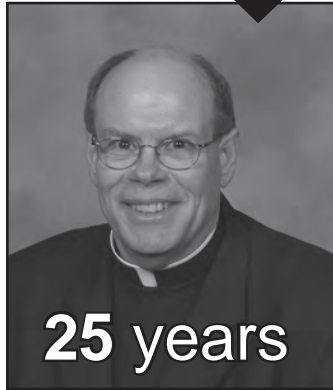
"Slowly the call began to re-emerge until, as I like to say, I couldn't fight it anymore," he says. "So I reapplied to the seminary and began to study again in earnest."

Father Noble was ordained to the priesthood on April 25, 1986 at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie by Bishop Michael Murphy.

"I've had many priests and sisters over the years who have been influential and supportive, in life, faith and in my vocation," he says.

This list includes his parish pastors Msgr. Paul Gooder, Msgr. Ernest Daley and Msgr. Robert Brugger.

"Each at different moments and in his own way helped form my voca-



## Pastor:

Notre Dame, Hermitage  
St. Stephen, Oil City  
St. Hippolyte, Frenchtown  
Our Lady of Lourdes, Cochranon

## Parochial vicar:

Holy Rosary, Erie  
St. Michael, Greenville  
Our Lady, Queen of the Americas,  
Conneaut Lake

## Administrator:

St. Hippolyte, Frenchtown  
Our Lady of Lourdes, Cochranon

## Sacramental assistant:

St. John the Baptist, Erie

## Priest in residence:

Our Lady, Queen of the Americas,  
Conneaut Lake

## Diocese of Erie:

Dean of Sharon Deanery  
Dean of Oil City Deanery  
Presbyteral Council  
Bishop's College of Consultors  
Clergy Personnel Board  
Marriage Tribunal auditor

## Chaplain:

Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse, Erie

tion," Father Noble says.

Many priests at St. Catherine of Siena were also great role models, he notes. In addition, he's grateful for the priests who helped him when he served as a seminarian, transitional deacon and a new priest. The men who helped give him a great example of priesthood include Msgr. Joseph Reszkowski, Msgr. John Lucas, Father Ralph Ciaola, Father Tom Kelley, Msgr. Charles Kaza and Father Richard Lynch.

"I like to say that I was, in part, 'raised' by the Sisters of Mercy, one of whom was the nurse when I was born and several of whom taught me in grade school," Father Noble says. "Their presence in our parish and school was a great source of comfort and nurturing."

Father Noble says the most vital issue facing the Catholic Church today springs from the Second Vatican Council.

"The council opened the way for the church to bring the Gospel into the modern world by allowing us to ask ourselves what our role is as church," he says. "But the council was only the beginning. We still have yet to answer the questions—How can we best be church for the world? And how can we best bring the Good News to the world?"

In fact, Father Noble says, the pendulum of history continues to swing while we try to address these questions.

"We have to face squarely the question of whether the church has a significant impact on the issues people face," he says. "The issues are many. The most important ones revolve around basic human rights, which are neglected or not respected—the right to life, the right to basic necessities, the right to human dignity, which when appreciated, would put an end to war, discrimination and economic instability."

Father Noble says the rewards of his priesthood are many.

"It is a joy to celebrate liturgy with your people, with God's people," he says. "It is rewarding to be an instrument of grace at all the important times in people's lives, from before birth to after death. It is rewarding to have people affirm you, include you in their lives or say 'thank you' after a sacrament or other shared event. It is a reward to see young people grow in their faith and people of all ages be faithful in their walk with God in the church."

**My Inspiration:** "Some of the Scriptures that inspire me include Luke's Sermon on the Plain with its absolute call to unconditional love and Psalm 27, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation.' The liturgy, of course, inspires us in many ways. It is a privilege for the priest to pray the words of the entire Eucharistic Prayer to God on behalf of all present and the whole church. It is also very humbling to be the instrument of distribution for holy Communion to the faithful, who bring such faith to that very beautiful and intimate moment of communion with God and God's people."

— Father Jeffery Noble

Msgr. Malene and parishioners of the  
Church of the Good Shepherd  
send CONGRATULATIONS to  
former pastor,

*Msgr. Dick Mayer*

on his golden jubilee

and

*Fr. Jeff Noble*

on his silver anniversary!

Ad Multos Annos!



CONGRATULATIONS  
Father Walter E. Packard  
(former pastor)  
upon your 40th Anniversary  
to the priesthood!



~ Fr. Bill Miller and the  
parishioners at Saint  
Joseph Church in Lucinda, PA

# Rev. Gregory P. Passauer

Father Gregory Passauer says his call to the priesthood began at a young age by noticing the faith of his parents.

His mother was a religious education teacher who prepared students for receiving their first holy Communion. His father took great care in making sure the family participated together in the celebration of Mass.

"He also provided for a Catholic education and respected each family member's faithful participation in the church," Father Passauer says of his father.

He continued to recognize the call to priesthood as he shared his faith with close friends prior to and during his years in the seminary.

A native of Our Lady of Peace Parish in Erie, Father Passauer was ordained a priest on April 25, 1986 by Bishop Michael Murphy at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie. He is currently the pastor of St. Mary Parish in Crown and its mission church of St. Ann in Marienville.

In addition to his parents, Father Passauer says his faith has been guided by a few priest friends over the years.

Msgr. Richard Mayer, who is also celebrating a jubilee anniversary, was the first priest Father Passauer was assigned to during his continuum program at Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, N.Y. Msgr. Mayer was also the pastor at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Corry where Father Passauer served as a transitional deacon.

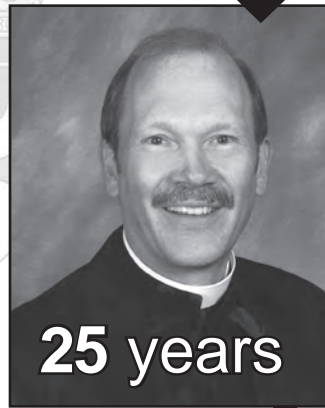
"Our shared priesthood and friendship has always been a blessing," Father Passauer says.

He and Father John Snyder shared priestly ministry together at St. Patrick Parish in Franklin.

"Our ministry serving the people of the parish extended into the diocese and beyond the borders of our American church," he says. "He taught me how the church, beyond the United States and the local church, strives to work in harmony to serve the people of God as we did at St. Patrick."

If he had just one more homily to give, Father Passauer says he would focus on the Gospel of Luke 4:16-30.

"It's the Gospel story in miniature," he says.



## My Inspiration:

"St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians (2:6-11) is a hymn of the example of Christ. It speaks of our relationship with God and his people."  
 – Father Gregory Passauer

## Pastor:

St. Mary, Crown  
 St. Ann, Marienville  
 St. Agatha, Meadville  
 St. Bernadette, Saegertown  
 St. Timothy, Curwensville  
 St. Bonaventure, Grampian

## Parochial administrator:

St. Hippolyte, Frenchtown  
 Our Lady of Lourdes, Cochranon  
 St. Titus, Titusville  
 St. Walburga, Titusville  
 St. Michael the Archangel, DuBois  
 St. Francis Xavier, McKean

## Parochial vicar:

St. Patrick, Franklin  
 Ss. Cosmas and Damian, Punxsutawney  
 St. Thomas the Apostle, Corry

## Priest in residence:

St. Patrick, Franklin

## Diocese of Erie:

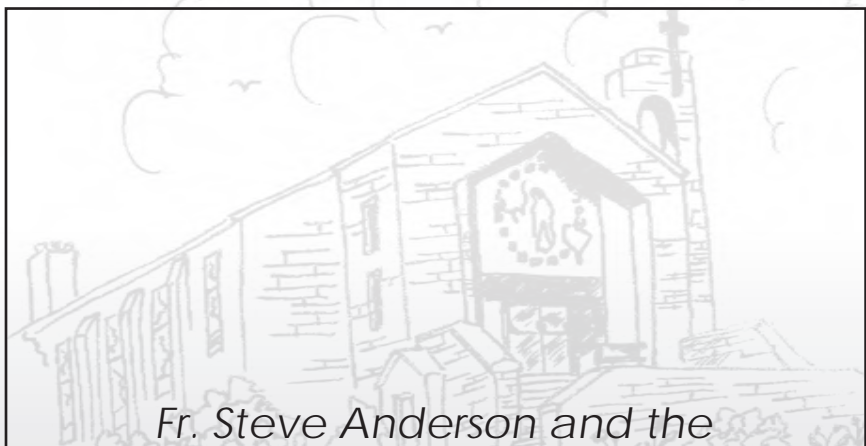
Dean, Clearfield Deanery  
 Presbyteral Council  
 Priests' Personnel Board

## Chaplain:

Polk Center  
 SCI Forest, Marienville

## Campus ministry:

Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
 at Punxsutawney



*Fr. Steve Anderson and the parishioners of Our Lady Queen of the Americas Church in Conneaut Lake prayerfully congratulate:*

**Sr. Bernardine Pais, SSJ**

**Sr. Mary Gertrude McElhinny, SC**

**Sr. Trish Tyler, RSM**

**Rev. Msgr. Henry Schauerman**

**Rev. Robert Fedor**

**Very Rev. Jeffrey Noble, VF**

**and all jubilarians**

The parishioners of St. Mary's (Crown) and St. Ann's (Marienville) congratulate and offer their prayerful support to **Fr. Gregory Passauer** on the occasion of his 25th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. God Bless you for your faithful service.





# Rev. Monty Sayers

While Father Monty Sayers enjoys preaching the living, resurrected Christ, he already has a thought about his own grave marker.

Chiseled on the stone along with his name and birth and death dates will be "John 3:30." When a curious cemetery visitor looks up that Scripture verse, they will read John the Baptist's confession: "He must increase; I must decrease."

Father Sayers says he first thought about becoming a priest when he was teaching in an elementary school in Sandusky, Ohio, following graduation from Clarion University.

"It was through involvement in a lay ministry training program in the Diocese of Toledo that I began to ponder the call to priesthood," he recalls. "I could not find anyone to talk me out of it, so that began a time of discernment that led me back to the Diocese of Erie, seminary formation, continuum and ordination."

Father Sayers was ordained to the priesthood on Aug. 29, 1986 at his home parish of St. Catherine of Siena in DuBois by Bishop Michael Murphy. He is the pastor at Immaculate Conception Parish in Clarion.

Over the years, his ministry and spirituality has been inspired by the faith, prayers and direction of

The parishioners and pastor of Ss. Cosmas and Damian Church, with missions at St. Adrian, St. Anthony and St. Joseph, join the Diocese of Erie in extending our prayers and best wishes to our brother priest, Rev. Greg Passauer and our dear sisters, Sr. Rita Marie Hettish, RSM, and Sr. Joan McCabe, RSM, on their anniversaries and their service to the Diocese of Erie.



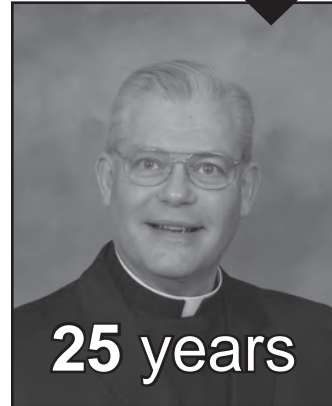
Ss. Cosmas and Damian Church  
Punxsutawney, Pa.

## Congratulations

*Fr. Gregory Passauer*  
on your 25th anniversary  
of priestly service.

Your friends and former  
parishioners at Saint  
Michael the Archangel  
Parish, DuBois

Ad Multos Annos!



### Pastor:

Immaculate Conception, Clarion  
St. Hippolyte, Frenchtown  
Our Lady of Lourdes, Cochranton

### Parochial vicar:

St. Stephen, Oil City  
Immaculate Conception, Clarion  
St. Eusebius, East Brady  
St. Richard, Rimersburg

### Parochial administrator:

St. Hippolyte, Frenchtown  
Our Lady of Lourdes,  
Cochranton

St. Stephen, Oil City

### Sacramental assistant:

Immaculate Conception, Clarion

### Campus minister:

Clarion University  
Presbyteral Council

many people.

He says his mother and father—Maureen and Mont

Sayers—exemplified a line in the church's Rite of Baptism: "...you are accepting the responsibility of training him in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?"

"They understood, but I did not make it easy for them!" Father Sayers adds.

He has had a number of formative role models including Bishop Robert Donnelly (retired auxiliary bishop emeritus of Toledo), Msgr. Casimir Bogniak, Msgr. John T. Carter and Msgr. Gerald Ritchie.

Sister Rita Panciera, RSM, has served as his spiritual director since 1986.

He says the priest who taught him what it means to be a pastor was the late Father John Kuzilla and the priest who continues to inspire an appreciation for life-long learning is Father Eldon Somers, Ph.D., who is also observing a jubilee anniversary this year.

"He was the best teacher I ever had," Father Sayers says of Father Somers.

He is also inspired by his Jesus Caritas fraternity.

St. Catherine of Siena Parish, DuBois, wishes:

Happy 60th Jubilee

to Sr. Rita Marie Hettish, RSM, and Sr. Joan McCabe, RSM,  
both former teachers at our parish school!

Happy 25th Anniversary

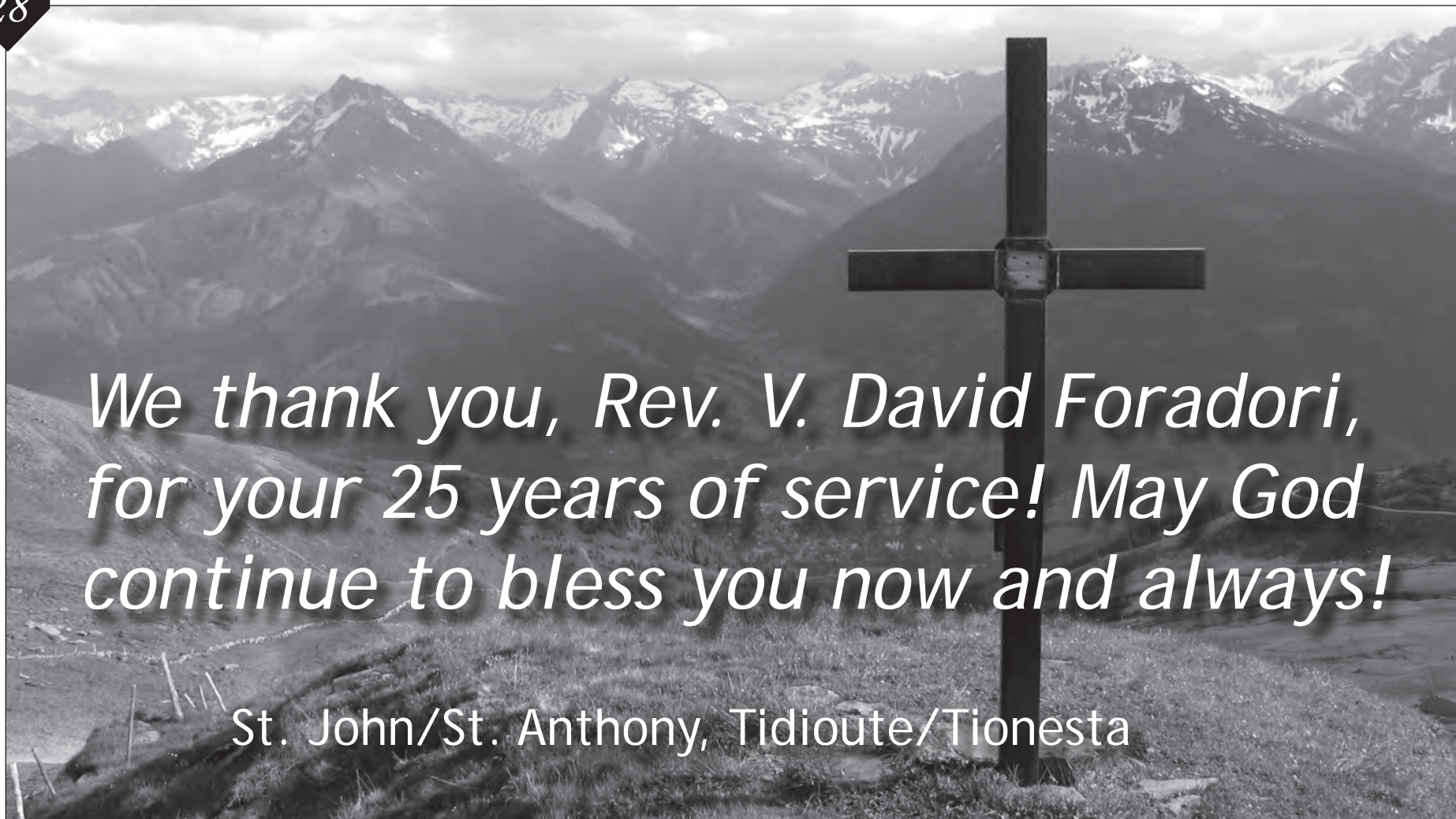
to Fr. Jeff Noble and Fr. Monty (LaMounte) Sayers,  
both native sons of our parish;  
Fr. Paul Siebert, former resident and our parochial vicar;  
and Fr. David Foradori, our neighbor!

God's continued blessings on your ministry!

**My Inspiration:** "I am supported in my feeble attempt to 'decrease' by the daily discipline of centering prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours, the Eucharist, celebrating the sacraments, preaching, the spiritual principles of Jesus Caritas and monthly spiritual direction."

— Father Monty Sayers

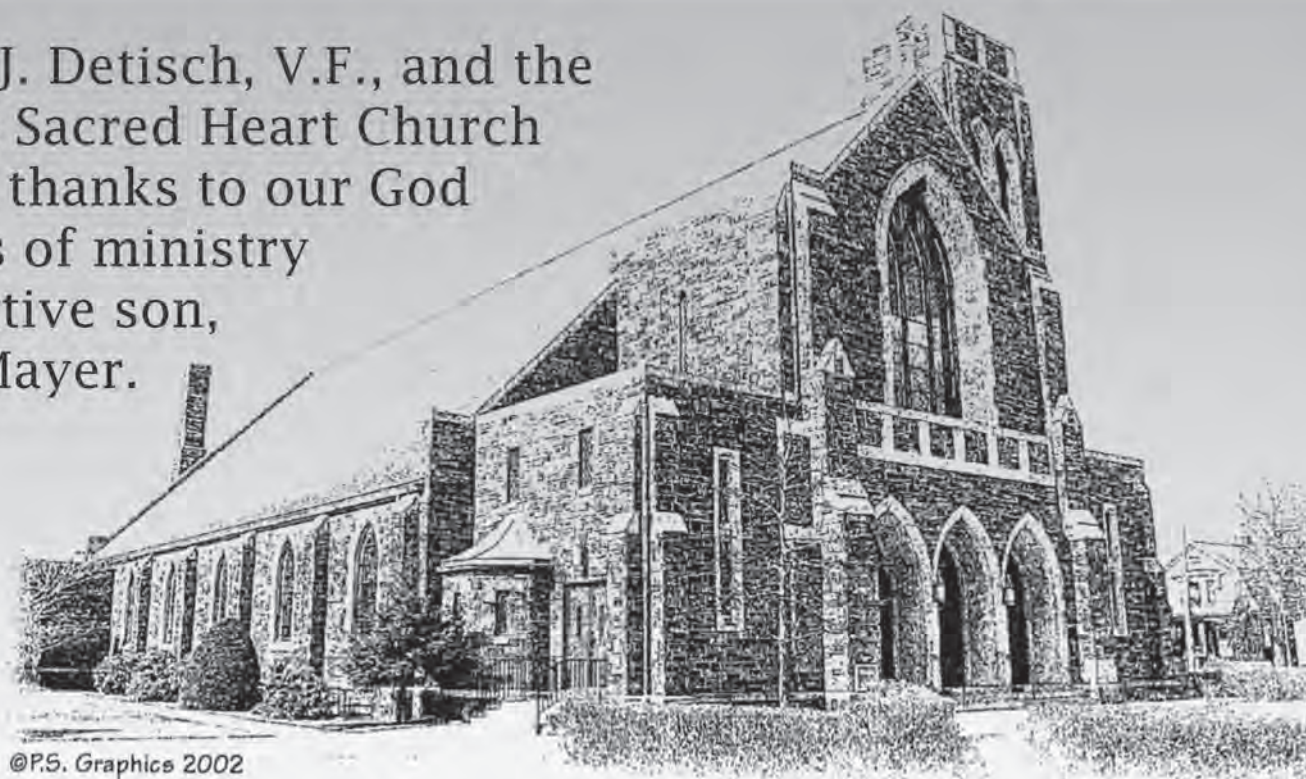




*We thank you, Rev. V. David Foradori,  
for your 25 years of service! May God  
continue to bless you now and always!*

St. John/St. Anthony, Tidioute/Tionesta

Very Rev. John J. Detisch, V.F., and the  
people of Erie's Sacred Heart Church  
give praise and thanks to our God  
for the 50 years of ministry  
given by our native son,  
Msgr. Richard Mayer.



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*"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to carry out everything that I have  
commanded you. And, know that I am with you always, until the end of the world!"*

*Matthew 28: 19-20*



# Rev. Paul S. Siebert

An oxymoronic combination of quiet time and music brought Father Paul Siebert closer to God.

"In my college years," he recalls, "I began to experience a peaceful presence when I was in the woods, meditating or walking."

Father Siebert, who began playing the guitar at the age of eight, loves performing with his friends.

"I started writing songs to God," he also says of his college years.

The year after Father Siebert's college graduation, he was pulled aside by Father Charles Skinner, who was then pastor of Father Siebert's home parish of St. Stephen in Oil City.

"He said to me, 'Hey, why aren't you in seminary?'" Father Siebert says. "I said, 'I don't know.' So, he made appointments and I was in school in a little over a month's time! If he didn't do that, I might still be thinking about it."

Father Siebert was ordained on April 25, 1986 by Bishop Michael Murphy.

Currently, Father Siebert serves as the pastor of St. Mark Parish in Emporium. He has taken his parishioners along on more than one trip to visit Mexico, often assisting in the work of the Mission of Friendship, a cooperative relationship between the Diocese of Erie and the Archdiocese of Yucatan.

"Father Siebert has a wonderful way of relating to the poor," says Cari Serafin, one of the coordinators of the Mission of Friendship. "There is something so beautifully simple about how he relates to the people. He is one among them."

Having hosted many short- and long-term volunteers at the Mission of

Friendship, Serafin says outreach can sometimes be awkward.

"It takes a certain kind of heart," she explains, "and Father Paul's love for the people and his humility takes him right into their lives. He is a good man, and I think he teaches as much by who he is as he does by his words."

For Father Siebert, maintaining a healthy relationship with God through attendance at Mass is essential.

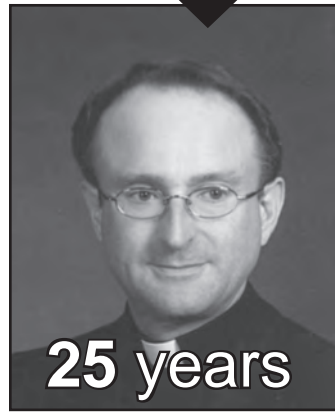
"Devoting time and energy to spiritual life has been my solid ground and keeps me peaceful and joyful," he says. "I encourage people who are able to attend daily Mass to do so."

Prayer, especially before, during and after Mass, is also important for a fruitful spiritual life, Father Siebert says.

"I find great benefit in prayer before Mass to settle myself and to be in God's presence," he says. "Prayer time after you receive Communion is so amazing because you have the Eucharistic presence right inside of you. What an opportunity to be one with God! Try not to rush after Mass, but rather, be in God's presence."

**My Inspiration:** "The Mass—from the Our Father through the Sign of Peace—seems to contain such fullness. Jesus has been made truly present in the consecration. The Eucharistic Prayer comes to a close. Heaven and earth are united. What else can we do but say the perfect words given by our savior? Time stands still and there is profound peace."

— Father Paul Siebert



**Pastor:**

St. Mark, Emporium

**Parochial vicar:**

St. Catherine of Siena, DuBois

Notre Dame, Hermitage

St. Leo Magnus, Ridgway

**Administrator:**

St. Leo Magnus, Ridgway

# Rev. Paul S. Siebert

Congratulations on your 25th anniversary of ordination.  
We extend our love and appreciation on this special occasion!  
We are blessed to have you as our pastor.



From,  
Parishioners of  
St. Mark, Emporium  
and  
St. James, Driftwood



# *Blessings and Congratulations to*



## **Rev. Walter E. Packard on your 40th Jubilee!**

From the clergy, staff and parishioners of St. Joseph Church in Warren, thank you for 15 years of friendship and faithful dedicated service to our parish, school and community. You are forever in our hearts and prayers.

THE CATHOLIC PARISHES OF SAINT JOSEPH  
AND SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, DUBOIS

CONGRATULATE OUR PASTOR,  
**FATHER DAVID FORADORI**  
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS  
TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY  
OF ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU  
WITH MANY MORE YEARS  
OF FAITHFUL SERVICE  
TO HIS CHURCH.





## Sr. Judith Trambley, O.S.B.

In her early days in religious community, Sister Judith Trambley, OSB, says she was somewhat chagrined by the passage in the Rule of Benedict that says, "If you notice something good in yourself, give credit to God, not yourself." (Rule of Benedict 42)

That has changed over the years.

"On this path of life I learn I need not earn God's love but that I can choose to become more aware of it," Sister Judith says. "And far from my earlier strivings, what gives meaning to my life is not to be perfect, but to live in and share with others the expanse of God's love."

When she told one of her uncles that she was entering a religious community, he suggested that she consider "one of those outfits that do more traveling—it might be more interesting."

"He'd be surprised to know how much traveling I have done with this Benedictine community—not measured in miles of land traversed but in the breadth and depth of my being," Sister Judith says.

She entered the Benedictine Sisters of Erie on June 10, 1984. She professed her first vows on Jan. 5, 1986 and final vows on Aug. 26, 1989. She received her bachelor's degree in mathematics and master's in psychology from Gannon University.



**Hammermill:**  
Computer analyst  
System analyst  
**Erie County:**  
Drug and alcohol case manager  
**Benedictine Sisters of Erie:**  
Benet Press, staff  
Director of lay personnel  
St. Benedict Education Center,  
administration

Sister Judith worked as a computer analyst at Hammermill for more than 15 years before entering the Benedictine Sisters of Erie and continued in that work during her first years as a sister. During the years leading up to this silver jubilee, she was a staff member for Benet Press, the coordinator of the monastery and a drug and alcohol case manager for Erie County.

Now working in administration at St. Benedict Education Center in Erie, Sister Judith also serves as the director of lay personnel for her religious community. She brings constancy and attention, kindness and calm to every aspect of her

Benedictine life and is often seen walking and enjoying nature's charm in her free time. Sister Judith's excitement at seeing the deer that frequent the grounds of the monastery is just one window into a soul that is balanced and beautiful, honest and true.

**My Inspiration:** "It is with the psalmist that I rejoice and acknowledge that God has placed a marvelous love in my heart for others. It is the light of Christ in me. This joy keeps me traveling on this path of life." – *Sister Judith Trambley, OSB*

## Sr. Trish Tyler, R.S.M.

For 25 years, horses were the main focus of Sister Patricia "Trish" Tyler's life. She trained them, showed them and won end-of-the-year championships in Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York. A photo from those days shows her in a full, formal riding outfit proudly sitting atop Silverthorn Duchess, a champion registered Morgan.

But she was out for new challenges.

"A desire to do mission work nagged at me," Sister Trish says.

She was 26 years old when she met her first woman religious. The late Sister Kathleen Marie Leap, RSM, introduced her to the Sisters of Mercy community in Erie and encouraged her to consider becoming a Mercy Corps volunteer. She did, ending up working in a print shop on a Navajo reservation in Arizona. The job was a natural fit as she had worked as a graphic designer at a Fairview printing company.

"The experience on the reservation opened a whole new world for me," Sister Trish says. "During my third year as a volunteer, I focused on my future and where I was being called. I felt a strong desire to continue service to others and was attracted to the Mercy charism and spirit."

She entered the Sisters of Mercy in 1986 and for the next 24 years was a graphic designer at Mercyhurst Prep High School in Erie where she saw the spirit of Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, manifested in the faculty and students.

"Their interaction taught me how to live the Mercy charism," she says.

Last year, Sister Trish and Sister Margaret Park, RSM, co-founded the Rural House of Mercy in Reynoldsville, which ministers to all of Jefferson County and the Diocese of Erie's DuBois Deanery. There she sees works of mercy being carried out in visiting the sick and homebound, getting to know people living in the area, tutoring people on computers, providing a Catholic presence on the Hospice team and being a "granny reader" to local first-graders.


Sister Trish says she looks forward to being a presence of the Sisters of Mercy in the community.

"When we look at our history, so many of our sisters came from this area," she says. "That's exciting to me to be able to show people who and what a sister is."



**Graphic designer:**  
Mercyhurst Prep, Erie  
**Coordinator:**  
Rural House of Mercy, Reynoldsville  
**Sisters of Mercy:**  
Vocation team

**My Inspiration:** "As a Sister of Mercy, I have the opportunity to share my life with dedicated women who strive to carry out Jesus' mission and the charism of Mercy." – *Sister Trish Tyler, RSM*



FROM SILVER TO GOLD:  
CELEBRATING OUR  
*Journey of Faith*

## Congratulations

### FR. WALTER PACKARD

**The community of  
HOLY CROSS CHURCH in Fairview  
rejoices with you on the occasion  
of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of your  
ordination to the priesthood.**



## Father Jason Feigh ordained to the priesthood



**Father Jason Feigh**

Bishop Donald Trautman ordained Father Jason Feigh, a native son of St. Basil the Great Parish in Coalport, to the priesthood for the Diocese of Erie on June 10 in front of a gathered crowd of priests, deacons, women religious, family, friends and well wishers at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie.

Father Feigh said he looks forward to being present to the people of God in the most intimate moments of their lives. He'll be with them during the joys of baptism, their loss during the death of a loved one and offer Christ's forgiveness during reconciliation.

"Just being with people in these moments, it's humbling to think about," Father Feigh said. "I look forward to offering the sacraments, being with my brothers and sisters in Christ and ministering to them."

He first thought about the priesthood when he was 12 years old. His family would point out his attentiveness at church.

"I always found what they were doing in the sanctuary intriguing," Father Feigh said.

He grew up in a Catholic home and attended Mass with his family each week. As he got older, he said he became more involved in parish life at St. Basil the Great, first as an altar server. Then he heard about a live-in weekend experience at St. Mark Seminary in Erie.

Father Mark Hoffman, who served as the diocese's vocation director at the time, invited him to give it a try.

"His was one of the models of priesthood that I saw that was pretty powerful," Father Feigh said.

Father Alex Amico, his pastor at the time, was another one.

"He was very open and very supportive of vocation," Father Feigh said. "He served as a good pastor and role model."

He entered St. Mark Seminary and Gannon University in Erie and notes that the support of his parents and family members helped him throughout the discernment process.

"Being in seminary helped me along with my prayer," he said. "Prayer should be a priority in anyone's life, particularly someone who might be called to the priesthood. The faculty would tell us, 'Life's hard; you'd better be linked closely in a relationship with Jesus.'"

Father Feigh said he's always found fulfillment in lending a hand to someone, not for his own benefit but to reach out to something deeper. He sees the priesthood as an extension of lending that helping hand.

"Reaching people is a challenge," he said. "We have to make sure we are with the people where they are. We need to have a sense of reality but be rooted in the church."

A good priestly vocation, he noted, will lead others—young and old—to a relationship with Christ.

Father Feigh offered

simple advice for someone considering entering the seminary.

"Just give it a try and see where the Lord takes you," he said. "Christ works through everybody and has a plan for all of us."

Following Communion of the ordination Mass, Bishop Trautman gave some remarks from the pulpit.

"Tonight we rejoice and give thanks to God who has given new life to our diocese, new life to the church, new life in the presence of Father Feigh," he said.

He acknowledged the parish community of St. Basil the Great in Coalport, which has given three priests to the diocese in five years.

"You know the expression—good things often come in small packages," Bishop Trautman said. "St. Basil the Great Parish in

Coalport is a small parish but big in God's grace."

"Our newly ordained brings great gifts to his new ministry: a good mind, a good heart," the bishop said. "He has the heart of a servant and he goes above and beyond the call of duty. He has a good pastoral sense, very adaptable and approachable and he works extremely well with teens and young adults. He is humble, sincere and a prayerful person."

At the ordination, Bishop Trautman announced that Father Feigh's first assignment would be as a parochial vicar at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Erie.

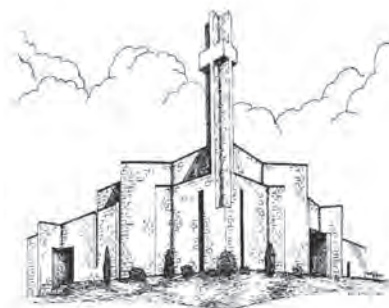
He then gave Father Feigh a personal piece of advice.

"Jason, tonight you are beginning your active ministry and I am coming to the end of my active ministry, and perhaps this is my last ordination," Bishop Trautman said. "My message is this: Love your priesthood. Be faithful to the end. See in your priesthood the Gospel treasure for which it is worth giving up everything. God bless you."

Father Feigh celebrated his first Mass on June 11 at Carmel of the Holy Family Monastery in Erie, home of the cloistered Carmelite nuns, and June 12 at his home parish of St. Basil. He also celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving at Our Lady of Mount Camel Parish in Erie on June 19.

### *The Parish Community of Our Lady of Mercy Congratulates our Deacon John Brophy*

For 10 years of  
service to us  
and to  
the people of the  
Diocese of Erie.







*Congratulations*  
on your ordination to the  
priesthood. May God give  
you many years to shepherd  
his people.

Love, Mom and Dad



(John and Mary Jane Feigh)

*Alleluia!*

*Our prayerful congratulations on your ordination to the sacred  
priesthood. We have walked with you and we have prayed for you.  
Your prayers for us are most welcome. The members of the Altar  
Rosary Society of St. Basil continue to commend you to the Heart of  
the Blessed Mother. The Knights of Columbus Council of St. Basil, of  
which you have been a faithful member since your seminary days, are  
proud of you and always welcome you. We, the parishioners of St. Basil,  
your home parish, hold you dear in our hearts. We bless you.*

St. Basil Parish, Coalport

## Deacon John E. Brophy

Deacon John Brophy and his wife, Kathi, were planning to quietly retire to the New Jersey seashore at the beginning of the millennium. At the time, however, he was going through turmoil in his family life. A conversation with Msgr. Jan Olowin, his parish priest, eventually turned to the permanent diaconate. He suggested to Deacon Brophy that he ought to look into it.

"He overcame my objections," Deacon Brophy says. "I was told that God would confirm or fail to confirm my call if I made the choice to just apply. The rest is history."

Deacon Brophy continued through the formation period and credits Kathi's ongoing support during the process. As part of the formation, she wrote an annual letter of confirmation to Bishop Donald Trautman to demonstrate her support of her husband. Deacon Brophy was ordained a permanent deacon on April 27, 2001.

"The formation period and the 10 years since then have brought Kathi and I closer together as we focus on our marriage of 44 years," Deacon Brophy says. "So far, so good!"

Deacons and their wives are required to have spiritual directors during the formation process. But Deacon Brophy initially did not want one.

"The list was small to choose from in 1997. I think that there was one name on the list—so I chose him," he recalls. "We have been together for about 15 years and I feel our relationship and our spirits are still growing."

Deacon Brophy is deacon assistant to the people of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Harborcreek. He also serves the diocese by arranging refugee volun-

teer opportunities between parishes, parishioners and the Catholic Charities Counseling and Adoption Service – Refugee Resettlement program in Erie.

"God has been the director of my actions. His Spirit speaks to me through the voices of many other individuals, especially Kathi and hundreds of refugee faces that have graced our lives over the years," he says. "We are indebted to them for loving and supporting us."

Deacon Brophy also says he is indebted to Father John Santor, his refugee ministry mentor and co-worker, "for his love, patience and example in ministry."

He says he has great hope for the future of the Catholic Church in the U.S. because the church has shown leadership by its example.

"The documents of Vatican II and the sustaining words of the Catholic bishops make it clear that we are responsible when anyone is suffering because of oppression or for any other reason," Deacon Brophy says. "In my eyes, we stand tall by what we have said. I welcome being a part of 'our' solution!"

If he had to give one last homily, Deacon Brophy would discuss Christ's beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount and how to live them. He also says maintaining our spiritual health through meditative prayer is essential.

"It must come before all else or we could go off misdirected," Deacon Brophy says.

His own spiritual program? Fourteen years ago, Deacon Brophy subscribed to the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, something he says will continue to be the foundation for his life into the future. He says he experiences joy and a flow in his life by trying to turn it over to God every day.



**Deacon assistant:** Our Lady of Mercy, Harborcreek

**My Inspiration:** "I have learned that my spirituality is paschal. My experience in life so far tells me that God has taught me to be slower to speak in diaconal life. God has saved me from many an embarrassing moment by having me stop to listen."

– Deacon John Brophy

## Deacon William Gibson

The first time Deacon William Gibson thought of the permanent diaconate was in 1984 when he participated in a weekend program called Christ Renews His Parish at St. Patrick Parish in Hubbard, Ohio. One of the spiritual directors was a deacon at the parish. He went home and spoke to his wife, Gloria, about it.

"We had three children then, and I was working rotating shifts," Deacon Gibson recalls. "We lived about seven miles from where they held the formation weekends. My wife and I prayed about it and felt that the time was not right."

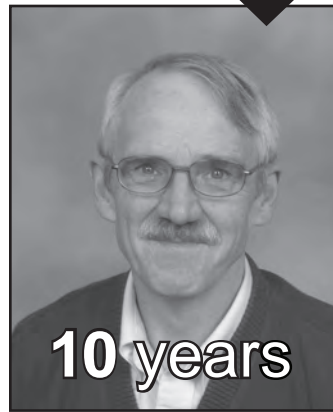
In 1996, he made a Cursillo weekend. During the petitions at Mass, the priest sitting beside him asked that any men feeling the call to the diaconate would open their hearts and follow the call.

"I came home and told my wife what had happened and that I felt now was the time," Deacon Gibson says. "She prayed about it that night, and the next day she agreed. At that time we had four children and lived 119 miles from St. Mark Catholic Center where the formation weekends were held."

He was ordained to the permanent diaconate by Bishop Donald Trautman on April 27, 2001 at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie. He is a deacon assistant at Sacred Heart Parish in St. Marys.

Deacon Gibson explains that his willingness to follow the call is simple. "A woman recently asked me what the hardest part of being a deacon was," he says. "She thought it might be preparing homilies. My reply was that I love everything about being a deacon. I am constantly amazed how the Holy Spirit comes through when needed."

There are several people whose faith has influenced Deacon Gibson over the years. One is Msgr. Francis Hughs from the Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio.



**Deacon assistant:** Sacred Heart, St. Marys Hospital/nursing home ministry, St. Marys area

"The only two times he could not be disturbed unless it was a matter of life and death were prayer time and meal time," he recalls. "Other than that, he would always return your calls, sometimes not until midnight when he finally got home. He was just a prayerful man who was always there for his people."

The other person is his brother, John.

"John's patience and faith were extraordinary," he says. "He was a recovering alcoholic for 40 years. He would not allow anyone to touch his body with any form of alcohol, even when getting a shot. He would receive the Blood of Christ at Mass. He said it was not wine but the Blood of Christ, and if Jesus wanted him to go back to being a drunk he would. He didn't think it would happen, and it didn't."

Deacon Gibson says among the most vital issues facing the Catholic Church today are people leaving the church.

"People leave the church because they feel more welcome somewhere else or because of the scandals within the church," he says. "If people truly believed that Jesus' body, blood, soul and divinity becomes present in the Eucharist, how could they leave his presence? We live in a 'feel-good' society. If someone offends us or someone else offers better talks, we leave the truth."

He hopes that Catholics can continue on the road to conversion.

"If we Catholics truly believed and practiced our faith, we could convert the world after we convert ourselves," he says.

**My Inspiration:** "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him." – Ephesians 1:3-4



## Deacon Jerome P. Peterson

At a very young age, Deacon Jerome Peterson says he was aware that God was calling him to some type of service.

As he grew older, he realized that he was being called to married life. However, he says he could still sense that the Lord was asking something of him.

When the vocation of the permanent diaconate came to the Diocese of Erie, it seemed to be the ministry to which Deacon Peterson was being called. But he was reluctant to enter the program. There was one stumbling block for him. He says he was concerned about the church's requirement that an ordained deacon cannot marry again if his wife dies.

"I had difficulty with this as there was a time in my life when I experienced deep loneliness," Deacon Peterson says. "But then I reflected on Mary's call to her vocation as the mother of our savior. There were a number of valid reasons why Mary could have refused. Her 'yes' literally put her life in danger, yet she accepted."

He was ordained a permanent deacon by Bishop Donald Trautman on April 27, 2001 at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie. He is currently a deacon assistant at St. Julia Parish in Erie.

He describes his time serving as a deacon as "grace-filled, exciting and rewarding."

**My Inspiration:** "I am most inspired by three Scripture passages. First, Joshua 24:15, 'As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.' Second, John 2:5, 'His mother instructed those waiting on table, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Finally, John 6:68, 'Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.'" – Deacon Jerome Peterson



**Deacon assistant:**  
St. Julia, Erie  
St. Patrick, Erie  
Prison ministry apostolate

"I continue in my service as deacon because I can see the good works that God is completing through me," Deacon Peterson says. "I have been able to enter into ministries I can share with my wife, Joan. These ministries enrich our marriage."

He and Joan have been married since 1983. He has three step-sons, Gary, Mike and Joe, who is married to Kelly. Deacon Peterson and his wife also have three sons of their own, Collin, Liam and Cade.

Growing up, he says his faith was nurtured by his parents, Jack and Dorothy Peterson.

"I cannot recall a single day in my life wondering if they loved me," he says.

If he had just one more homily to give, Deacon Peterson says he would preach on the role of a man in his marriage and his vital role as father to his children (Ephesians 5:22-33).

"I will never tire of teaching this lesson," he says. "As an elementary school teacher, I experience first-hand the differences in children who are aware that they are loved by their parents and those children who know that they are unwanted and unloved. You cannot imagine the damage that has been done by men who do not live their vocation as husband and father."

He encourages young people trying to discern their vocation in life to allow themselves to be led by the Holy Spirit.

"God will not call you to a vocation and allow you to be miserable," he says. "On the contrary, a person is happiest when doing God's will."

## Deacon David A. Pratt

Deacon David Pratt first found out about the Diocese of Erie's Permanent Diaconate Formation Program when his wife, Judy, showed him an article about it in a 1994 issue of the Lake Shore Visitor. She encouraged him to look into the program, which helps prepare those who are called to ordained ministry as a deacon.

"After making a half-hearted telephone call, I procrastinated until I forgot about it," Deacon Pratt admits.

He felt differently in 1996 after reading another article about the program and decided to pursue the calling.

"I believe the first call was the Lord giving me a 'preview of the coming attraction,'" he says.

Deacon Pratt was ordained a permanent deacon on April 27, 2001.

Before looking at the permanent diaconate, Deacon Pratt had thoughts as a young man about joining the priesthood. He was an altar boy from his grade school years at St. John the Baptist in Erie through his four years at Cathedral Preparatory School.

In college, both David and Judy thought they had religious vocations and went to see Msgr. James Peterson to discuss them. But something interesting happened.

"Two years later, I told Father Pete that Judy and I were engaged," Deacon Pratt says. "He congratulated me and said, 'The ways of God are strange.'"

He serves at St. Jude the Apostle Parish in Erie.



**Parish:** St. Jude the Apostle, Erie

Deacon Pratt was previously a member of the parish stewardship and liturgy committees, a lector, eucharistic minister, catechist, member of the parish choir and parish Cursillo coordinator.

He previously worked as an auditor in the diocesan marriage tribunal and as a development consultant for the International Institute of Erie.

He has served as president of the Serra Club of Erie and as a lector and altar server for the TV Mass for shut-ins.

The faith of numerous people has touched Deacon Pratt throughout his life, including that of his family along with Msgr. Peterson, Father James Sperry, Msgr. Robert Brugger and Father Jerry Simmons.

He is also inspired by his family. He and Judy have been married for 51 years and are the parents of grown children, Debbé, Dave, Mike and Damian. They also have 8 grandchildren.

Ten years after his ordination, he is most proud of the work he does with the elderly and new deacons.

With the encouragement and support of Msgr. Robert Smith, director of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program, Deacon Pratt says he and his fellow deacons were able to implement a deacon ministerial program in many nursing homes.

He says he has also enjoyed the opportunity to teach in the diaconal formation program.

**My Inspiration:** "Hymns and Psalms that are sung inspire me. Well done liturgies, homilies and spiritual music, especially the Ave Maria. Most importantly, the holy Eucharist."

– Deacon David Pratt



*Congratulations  
to our  
Fubilarians*

St. Francis of Assisi, Clearfield

*Rev. Msgr. H. Desmond McGee*

*Sr. Mary Carol Hoke, SSJ*



# CONGRATULATIONS AND BLESSINGS

*Monsignor Thomas J. McSweeney (McSweenski)  
on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of your  
ordination to the priesthood.*

*A huge Dziekuje for your dedication and commitment!*



From the staff and parishioners at  
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Sr. Moira Sullivan, SSJ '61



"If you are what you should be,  
then you will set the world on fire."

- St. Catherine of Siena



**God Bless  
the  
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