

Catholic Courier

Father Joseph D'Aurizio; longtime pastor in Greece

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Father Joseph D'Aurizio, longtime pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Greece, died Sept. 5, 2009, at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse in Pittsford. He was 79.

Father D'Aurizio formed close friendships with many members of the Greece parish during his 23 years as its pastor, according to parishioner Rudy Zink.

"Right from the beginning we loved his gentle and kind ways. We all loved him," said Zink, who often served at the priest's daily Masses.

Father D'Aurizio grew up in Rochester, where he attended St. Andrew parish and school. He then attended St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries, also in Rochester, and was ordained June 9, 1956 by Bishop James E. Kearney at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

After his ordination Father D'Aurizio served as assistant pastor at Rochester's Corpus Christi Church until 1961, when he took a position with Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester. In 1964 he earned a master's degree in social work from Boston College and soon became assistant director of diocesan Catholic Charities.

In 1966 Father D'Aurizio became executive director of Catholic Family Center in Elmira, and in 1972 became director of diocesan Catholic Charities. Five years later he left that position and became pastor of St. John the Evangelist, which he led until his retirement in 2000.

"He did a lot for the diocese," said Father John Rosse, who met Father D'Aurizio while both were seminarians. The two rekindled their friendship in 1983, when Father Rosse was assigned to lead neighboring Holy Name Parish in Greece.

An avid golfer, Father D'Aurizio encouraged Father Rosse to join Oak Hill Country Club, where he was already a member, and for years the pair took annual golfing excursions to Puerto Rico, Father Rosse recalled. Father D'Aurizio had a dry sense of humor and was extremely hospitable, he added.

"He was extremely kind, especially to his parishioners. I think they really appreciated him," Father Rosse said.

This appreciation was mutual, Zink said. St. John parishioners loved Father D'Aurizio, who in turn was very gracious, and always had a smile and sincere words of thanks for parishioners who helped him, Zink said.

"He spoke to the people and accepted all of us. He always tried to be helpful to people," he recalled. "He was a good listener as well as a good adviser. He listened and he understood people, and then when they wanted a bit of advice he would give it to them."

Under Father D'Aurizio's leadership the parish built a new rectory and parish center, as well as a covered walkway between the church and the parish center.

After his retirement in 2000, Father D'Aurizio moved to St. Leo Parish in Hilton, where he assisted at Masses. He was a cheerful presence, frequently stopping to visit choir members after Mass and thank them for their service, according to Patricia Gorman, St. Leo's director of music and liturgy.

"He was always very appreciative," Gorman said.

Father D'Aurizio also was very devoted to his parishioners, Our Lady and his faith, she said.

"He was a warm and loving priest, and he was very religious, always saying his prayers morning, noon and night," Gorman said. "I'm sure that he's serving the Lord now. I'm sure he's back to work."

Father D'Aurizio is survived by his brother and sister-in-law, Alfred and Susan D'Aurizio; his niece, Eleanor D'Aurizio; several cousins; and his caregiver, Diane Salamone.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark celebrated Father D'Aurizio's funeral Mass Sept. 10, 2009, at St. John the Evangelist Church. Interment was at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester, 150 French Road, Rochester, NY 14618 or to any local Catholic Charities agency.

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