

Priest Leaving School for Deaf

By MARY ZAHN
and WILLIAM JANZ

Father Lawrence C. Murphy, a widely known priest who has been associated with St. John's School for the Deaf since 1950, has resigned from the school.

For months, Murphy has been the center of a controversy in which a small group of deaf men and others have attempted to get him removed.

However, in reply to a question Friday whether he had resigned under pressure, the priest said, "I'm going on a rest. I'm following doctor's orders."

Comment from the archdiocese could not be obtained Friday night.

From 1950 until May of this year, Murphy was the director of the school at 3680 S. Kinnickinnic Ave., St. Francis. In the last few months, the priest has been in charge of financial affairs and public relations at the school.

Most Former Students

The small group of deaf men, most of whom are former students at St. John's, began working for Murphy's removal last spring and had been holding meetings almost weekly since then.

The group's first public protest was in March when members passed out flyers at Archbishop William E. Cousins' 25th anniversary celebration held at St. John Cathedral.

In part, the flyers said, "... Act Now. To get Lawrence C. Murphy out of St.

John's School is a victory for God and other deaf boys at St. John's today."

A month after the protest, Mrs. Arlene Quant, a local businesswoman, agreed to help the group. Mrs. Quant, who owns Bertrik's Printing Co., 6427 W. North Ave., Wauwatosa, became interested because she has employed deaf people.

Chronological Account

The following is a chronological account of the group's



Father
Lawrence C.
Murphy

activities under the direction of Mrs. Quant:

• In April, Mrs. Quant contacted the Personnel Bureau of the Archdiocese. A few days later she gave an official in the archdiocese a packet of letters that some deaf men had written concerning Murphy.

• Archbishop Cousins called Mrs. Quant on April 21 and asked to meet with her. She saw him the next day.

• On May 9, a meeting was attended by Cousins, Murphy, several other priests and nuns, Mrs. Quant, John Conway, a counselor of deaf children who

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works for the state, and four deaf men.

Mrs. Quant claimed the archbishop refused to listen to the deaf men and she and the group walked out after one and a half hours of discussion.

• An article appeared in the Catholic Herald Citizen on May 18 announcing that Murphy had given up his directorship and was being reassigned to other duties in the school.

The story said that Murphy was "relieved of all teaching and pastoral duties as they relate to the students."

• During the summer, Mrs. Quant and the group continued to meet with priests and archdiocesan officials. It also wrote letters. The group threatened to start a civil lawsuit when they said they felt church officials were stalling them.

Murphy said Friday that his last day at the school is Wednesday. He has no plans to return to St. John's, he said.

After his sick leave, he said, he did not know where he would be assigned.

Murphy was an instructor of religion and a counselor to deaf children at St. John's from 1950 until 1963 when he was appointed the director.

During that period, Murphy helped establish an athletic program and an alumni association for the deaf.

He also was midwest adviser to the International Catholic Deaf Association and chaplain of Cardinal Strich Council 4614 of the Knights of Columbus.

In May, 1969, Murphy received the American Legion Award for Distinguished Service for Child Welfare.

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