

Lake Shore Visitor, February 5, 1999

Fr. Cray to be buried Feb. 6

(Continued from Page 1)

the state Distinguished Service Award. He served for many years on the faculties of the Gregorian Institute of America and the American College of Musicians. Before his chaplaincy at the Erie Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Father Cray did pastoral work at St. Peter Cathedral and St. John parishes, both in Erie. He also served as a music therapist at the Harborside School for Boys.

He retired to the Salvatorian Provincial House in Milwaukee, Wis., in 1998.

He is survived by three cousins, Madeline Chaffee and Rita Firch, both of Erie, and Elaine Hellmann, Allentown; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Friends may call at the Francis V. Kloecker Funeral Home, Erie, Feb. 5 from 2-5 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. A funeral Mass will be celebrated by retired Bishop Michael J. Murphy Feb. 6 at 10 a.m. at St. Joseph Church, Erie.

Burial will be at Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Erie.

Memorials may be made to the Salvatorian Mission Warehouse, New Holstein, WI 53061-1447.

Washington, D.C., in 1949.

He served in pastoral and teaching positions in the archdioceses of Washington, D.C.; Baltimore and Chicago, and in the dioceses of Camden, N.J.; Green Bay and Milwaukee, Wis.; Sacramento, Calif.; and Sioux City, Iowa. Before his return to Erie, he was rector and superior of Trinity Prep School in Sioux City.

A graduate of the music school of Catholic University, Father Cray established a music studio in Erie where he taught piano and composition.

Father Cray was a past president of the Erie Music Teachers Association and district president of the Pennsylvania Music Teachers Association. In 1976, he received

(See "Fr. Cray" on Page 3)

with a laugh. "It was real easy for him to play — and real difficult for me. I found his music unusual to play, it was very progressive. He really knew and understood jazz, and he played it very well.

"I never saw him have a bad day," Msgr. Biebel added. "He was a very gentle man."

Father Kevin E. Cray was born in Erie on June 20, 1922.

A graduate of Cathedral Preparatory School, he attended The Society of the Divine Savior's seminary, St. Nazianz, Wis., and the Divine Savior Seminary, Latham, Md.

After college, he joined the Salvatorians (Society of the Divine Savior), attended The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., and was ordained to the priesthood at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception,

And a great musical sense. Father Cray was an accomplished pianist and composer, having published more than 70 of his works, including Masses, motets and solo piano works. He also taught piano and composition to hundreds of young students at the Cray Studio, an instructional school on Erie's west side he founded in 1970.

Msgr. William Biebel, rector at Erie St. Peter Cathedral and an accomplished organist, worked with Father Cray on the music for the installation of Bishop Alfred M. Watson as bishop of Erie at St. Peter Cathedral in 1969.

Father Cray wrote some of the music for the Mass as a gift of friendship to Bishop Watson, Msgr. Biebel recalled.

"He wrote the music and sort of handed it to me," Msgr. Biebel said

Rev. Willey said the priest who lovingly brought God to the hospitalized was the same man behind closed doors. Rev. Willey should know, the priest and minister shared an office together for years.

"He wasn't somebody who was different behind office doors than he was out in public," he said. "Father Cray was the embodiment of the Christian spirit."

Father Thomas Fialkowski, pastor of Erie's Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish and now Catholic chaplain at the Erie Veterans Affairs Medical Center, also worked with Father Cray at the hospital.

"He was loved by the staff and the people," Father Fialkowski said. "He always had a nice, little story or a joke to tell. He had a great sense of humor."

helped out at the hospital.

The Rev. Walter Willey, a United Methodist minister who worked beside Father Cray as Protestant chaplain at the hospital since 1985,

said his long-time friend made a lasting impression on the patients he ministered to.

"In a real way, his compassionate presence and loving words helped the veterans develop and maintain inner strength to help them cope," Rev. Willey said. "He had a sense of assurance and inner peace. He gave some of that assurance to the veterans here."



Fr. Kevin Cray

By STEPHEN SEARS

Visitor Staff

Although Salvatorian Father Kevin Cray's legacy always will include the beautiful music he crafted with his mind and played with his talented hands, he will be remembered most for the love which poured from his heart.

Father Cray — a priest for nearly 50 years, as well as a respected musician, composer, teacher and chaplain — died Jan. 31 in Milwaukee, Wis. He was 76.

The Erie native was Catholic chaplain at the Erie Veterans Affairs Medical Center from 1976-93. Up until leaving Erie for his order's headquarters in Milwaukee six months ago, Father Cray still