

The Rev. Edward Flannery, 86; expert on interfaith relations

PROVIDENCE — The Rev. Edward H. Flannery, 86, of St. Michael Rectory, Farnum Pike, Smithfield, an international authority on Christian-Jewish relations, died yesterday.

Son of the late John and Elizabeth (Mulvey)



Flannery, he attended Holy Name School and LaSalle Academy. He was ordained a priest on May 22, 1937, at St. Peter and Paul Cathedral by Bishop Francis P. Keough.

In 1966, after 29 years of service in the Diocese of Providence, he published *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Anti-Semitism*, which received six awards, including the National Catholic Book Award. It has been translated into French, Spanish and Portuguese.

He also wrote numerous essays and articles published in periodicals ranging from America and the Journal of Ecumenical Studies to the New York Times and the Providence Visitor. He was a contributing columnist to the "Face of Religion" column in the Providence Journal.

He also translated Jacques Maritain's *De La Philosophie: An Essay on Christian Philosophy* and Francis Mauriac's *Paroles Catholiques: Words of Faith*.

Father Flannery received a Benemerenti Medal from Pope Paul VI in 1976 and honorary doctorates from Our Lady of Providence Seminary in Warwick, Seton Hall University and the Hebrew-Union College Jewish Institute of Religion.

He received two Brotherhood Awards from the National Conference of Christians and Jews, in 1960 and 1965, the Wallenberg Tribute Award from Muhlenberg College and the Sister Rose Thering Endowment for Jewish-Christian Studies Award, also from Seton Hall.

In a statement released yesterday, the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island said Father Flannery "was a pioneer with a vision of brotherhood. . . . We were honored to bestow on him the Jewish Federation's 'Never Again Award' in 1984. The courage and eloquence of this saintly man will continue to inspire us all."

After he was ordained in 1937, Father Flannery served a summer assignment at St. Benedict Church

in Warwick, and then was assigned as assistant pastor at the cathedral in Providence.

He was assistant pastor at St. Joseph Church in Pawtucket for 17 years, from 1938 to 1955. While at St. Joseph, he attended a Fordham University summer session in 1948 and became involved in the Christophor Movement in New York City, an involvement he continued for several years.

In 1955, he was appointed assistant director of The Providence Visitor and Chaplain of Elmhurst Academy in Providence. In 1957, he became managing editor of the Visitor, and in 1961, chaplain at St. Margaret Home in Providence. In 1965 he represented the Visitor at the Fourth Session of Vatican Council II.

In 1972, Father Flannery was appointed to the staff of the Bishop's Committee on Catholic-Jewish Relations in Washington, D.C. In 1976 he returned to the Providence Diocese as director for the continuing education of the diocesan clergy. In September 1986, he became the diocesan director of Catholic-Jewish relations, retiring from that position in February of this year.

He also served as consultant to the Vatican Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations from 1969 to 1974, and was a member of the National Advisory Committee of the NCCB Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, chairman of the Israel Study Group in New York, president of the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel, and a member of the board of American Friends at the Oxford University Center for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies in England.

Father Flannery lived at St. Michael rectory, in Georgiaville, from 1984 until his death.

He leaves a sister, Catherine E. Walsh of Warwick; two nephews, John Flannery of Rochester, N.Y., and Richard Walsh of Warwick; three nieces, Mary E. Ciunci of Warwick, Elizabeth Whistler of Newport, and Mary Flannery in Florida. He was the brother of the late John Flannery.

The funeral will be held Friday at 8:45 a.m. from the Russell J. Boyle & Son Funeral Home, 331 Smith St., Providence, with a concelebrated Mass of Christian Burial offered on Friday at 10 in the Church of Saint Michael, Farnum Pike, Georgiaville. Burial will be in St. Ann Cemetery, Cranston.