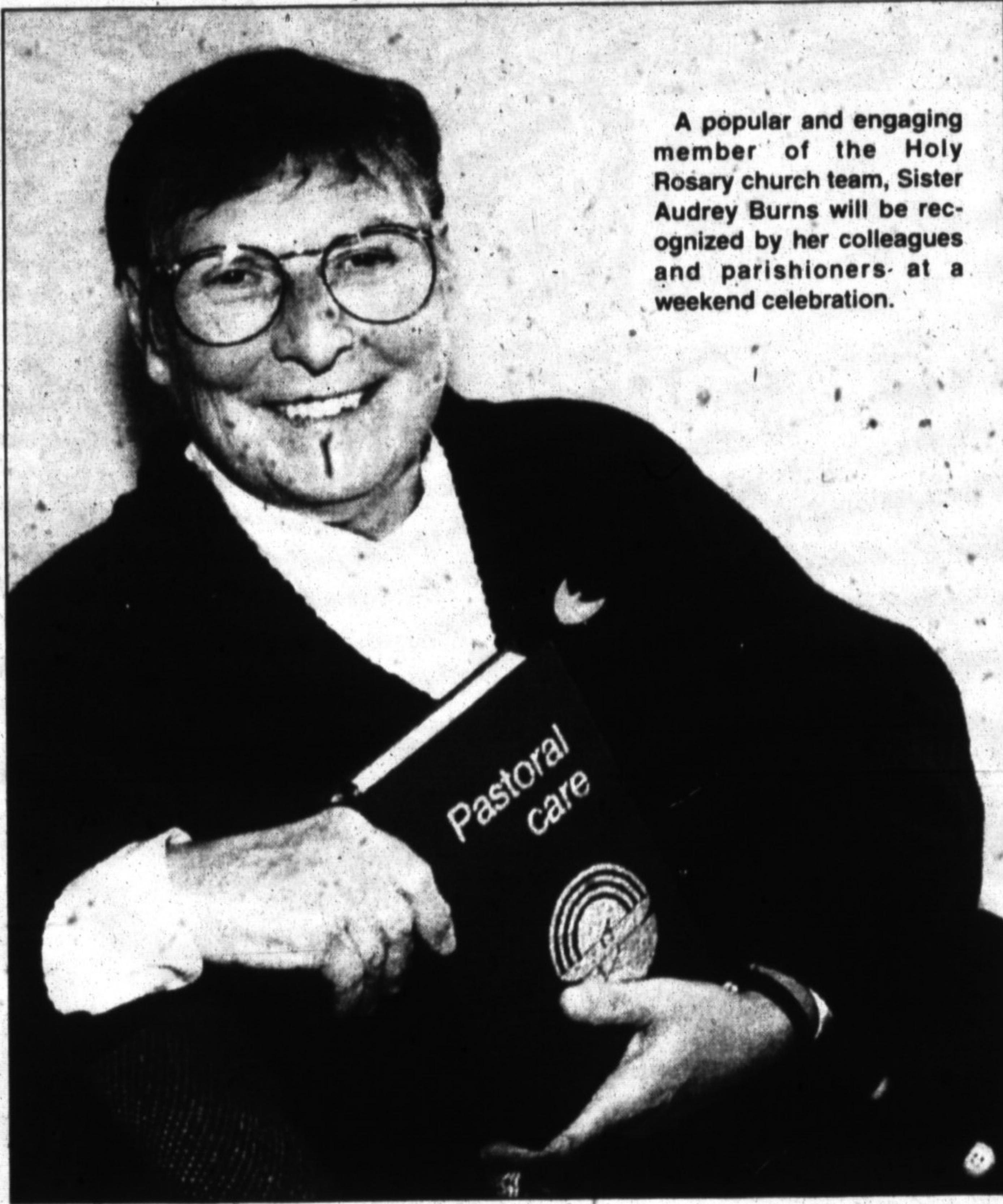


Gentle, firm faith sustains Holy Rosary's Sister Audrey

Woman to be honoured for 50 years of selfless service



A popular and engaging member of the Holy Rosary church team, Sister Audrey Burns will be recognized by her colleagues and parishioners at a weekend celebration.

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
Special to *The Champion*

AUDREY BURNS will celebrate a golden anniversary this Sunday. It won't be from the day she was born or pledged 'I do' in front of a priest, although the church has everything to do with it.

Instead, the kind-hearted 70-year-old will be entering into her 50th year with the Sisters of St. Joseph's of Hamilton. A part-time pastoral caregiver in Milton for the past eight years, Sister Audrey will be officially recognized for her half-century of service with a special reception at Holy Rosary Parish Hall Sunday.

The 2-4 p.m. celebration is open to colleagues, parishioners and those wishing to offer their appreciation. "At times it has seemed like 50 years but at others it doesn't. I've seen so many changes but each year goes by more quickly. It's been a wonderful time," said Sister Audrey.

The third-generation Hamilton native was hard pressed to recall any one thing that led her to the church. She does know, however, that the calling came quite early and was due in large part to the times she grew up in.

As a child of the depression and teenager during the Second World War, she remembers service to one's country and generosity among neighbors as focal points through her formative years. "My mother and grandmother were also part of the church. We struggled through a sort of tug-of-war for a while, with the idea of getting married and having children like my friends, but

the church seemed right for me. I don't think it was any one thing that led me to become a nun but rather a combination of the time and my upbringing. I think how a person is put together greatly affects the path they choose," she said.

Sister Audrey entered the Mother House at St. Joseph's on January 6, 1947 and made final profession of vows in July of 1952. Since that time she has served in various communities across Ontario — and abroad — including her current assignment in town.

"She's so delightful to work with and adds a spirit of gentleness to our pastoral team," remarked Father Dave Wynen.

While a combination of things decided her overall calling, her early home life was the sole factor that came into play when choosing a specialty. With her grandparents living under the same roof for most of her childhood, Sister Audrey gained great respect and appreciation for the elderly.

So much so, that now she offers care and comfort to seniors throughout Milton. After years of study at both the Toronto and Atlantic School of Theology, as well as at the University of Guelph, she accompanied a Jesuit priest to Montreal in 1988 and saw first hand the service and spiritual care being given to the elderly.

Having just transferred to town, she returned home and began implementing a similar program here. She now has five couples assisting her in pastoral visiting to Allendale, Milton District Hospital and to shut-ins.

"Gentle, caring, giving, these are words I'd use to describe Sister Audrey," said program mem-

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