

Dean Of Prison Chaplains Ends Long Career

The dean of American prison chaplains — often termed a "father" at Elmira Reformatory — has announced his retirement.

After thirty-seven years behind bars, Monsignor Francis J. Lane will turn over his chaplain's duties to a younger priest whose appointment is expected to be announced next week.

In his near two-score years at the southern tier prison Father Lane (as the priests prefer to be called) has won the respect of hundreds of hardened criminals whose lives he changed through his counsel and prayers.

His work has won repeated recognition from civic and church leaders. His story was told in a 1953 issue of nationally circulated Saturday Evening Post and in many local papers and he has been a frequent speaker at meetings of prison and law enforcement officials.

He is perhaps best known for his "Father Lane's Gang" — an organization of former inmates on "the Hill."

The "Gang" dramatically reverses the impact of Monsignor Lane's personality on his imprisoned parishioners. It began in 1947 when 40 "graduates" returned to the Reformatory as successful, respected citizens to celebrate their chaplain's 25th anniversary at the prison.

The men described to Monsignor Lane "the hard, time kids face when they get out of the Reformatory." The group came up with the idea of banding into an organization to help rehabilitate these youngsters to a normal life. The "Gang" meets once a year for a banquet in New York City but stands ready during the rest of the year to aid former prisoners as the need arises.

The "Gang" includes men of many religious denominations. Monsignor Lane has compiled an impressive list of "fraternal prison religion auxiliaries."

The standing monument to his work is the St. John Bosco Chapel, first such structure ever built within prison walls, where a complete religious program is conducted. Bishop Kearney dedicated it in June, 1958, celebrating the first pontifical Mass in a U.S. penal institution. The Mass was broadcast on a coast-to-coast radio hookup.

Father Lane also inaugurated Christmas midnight Mass. They told us it couldn't be done, but we showed them differently," he said. At all chapel services, he said, he has no right to spot him for prisoners, see neither bars nor guards. It is the one place they can escape the necessary strictures of prison life.

Pope Pius XII, who made Father Lane a Right Rev. Monsignor in 1947, in an audience with him in 1949, told him, "You are doing a noble and important work. I place my special blessing upon your work and all those with whom you work."

Father Lane's role as chaplain took him to every corner of the state and sometimes outside it to meet parents of prisoners. He said 60 percent of the prisoners are from broken homes and 95 percent were not practicing their faith at the time they got into trouble with the law.

The Reformatory "parish" averages 600 Catholics with about 250 receiving Holy Communion every week. He heats approximately 200 confessions a week, counts about 20 confessions a year and gives special classes for about 15 who never made their First Communion.

The Monsignor believes in the old adage, "Forgive and forget." He tells men about to leave the Reformatory, "You have paid your debt to society. Go out now and live as a free man and live up to the trust we have in you."

"It's the Christian idea to forgive a man who repents," he said. "I don't think we have any right to spot him for life because he made a mistake once."

Monsignor Lane has no definite plans for the future. He will remain at his chaplain's residence to aid the incoming priest get used to the unique duties. "Then I'll decide what's best for me to do," he said.



LADIES IN WHITE — Rev. Henry A. Atwell (left) congratulates four honor students at commencement exercises of St. James Mercy Hospital last Sunday in Hornell. From left are: Sharon Irene Smith, Painted Post; Sarah Ann Erway, Whitesville; Betty May Belanger, Cohocton; and Carol Ann Kuhn, Wayland. Father Atwell was commencement speaker at rites in St. Ann's Church.

Hornell Hospital Nurses Graduate

Hornell — Eighteen nurse students were graduated from St. James Mercy Hospital School of Nursing and X-ray Technology at commencement exercises in St. Ann's Church, June 14.

Commencement speaker was the Rev. Henry A. Atwell, editor of the Catholic Courier Journal and chaplain of Our Lady of the Cenacle Convent, Rochester.

The class was presented by the Rev. William H. Hickey, hospital chaplain and received diplomas from the Rev. Joseph P. Hatley, pastor of St. Ignatius Loyola Church.

Sisters of Mercy, instructors in the nursing school, students and other instructors took part in the procession.

FATHER ATWELL'S theme for his address was from the 50th Psalm, "Have Mercy On Me, O Lord." According to the Great Mercy.

Opening his address Father Atwell told the graduates that there is no greater way to learn the lesson of Mercy than at the foot of the Crucifix and it was most fitting that they should receive their final academic honors there.

"In a world that is boasting of the largest of hospitals, schools, and industries in history, you may feel very small and unimportant, but always remember that it was through the small people of the world that God worked his miracles. At a Beth Ann Reuss and Sara Cath time when the world is in direst need of the Phillips, all of Hornell.

Mary Frances Handley, Olean; Suzanne Lippert, Greenwood; Marianne Elizabeth McDonnell, Buffalo; Nancy Colleen Minnick, Alfred; Patricia Ann House, Rochester; Nancy Jean Conroy, Fortville; Barbara Anne Braham, Hornell; and Carol Ann Kuhn, Wayland.

From the school of X-ray technology, Mary Frances McVeis, a Beth Ann Reuss and Sara Cath time when the world is in direst need of the Phillips, all of Hornell.

Coming CDA Installs Slate

Corning — Mrs. Thomas Sheehan of Waverly, and Miss Mary Kay Margoff of Elmira, district deputies, were in charge of installation ceremonies for new officers of Court St. Joseph, Catholic Daughters of America in the C. D. of A. rooms.

At a business meeting, conducted by Mrs. Edmund Gay, vice regent, members voted \$5 to each of three Catholic parochial schools for a girl student in charge of this project are: Mrs. Phillip Ruocco, St. Mary's; Mrs. Francis Brutley, St. Patrick's; and Mrs. Norman Schwartzman, St. Vincent de Paul's Parish.

IT WAS announced that yearbooks will be prepared this summer by the Rev. James Baker and members of the executive committee.

Chairman of refreshments was Mrs. Evelyn Erskine.

First Graduation Set At Waverly

Waverly — The first graduation class of St. James School received Communion in a holy at the 8 a.m. Mass. The Rev. G. Stuart Hogan, pastor, addressed the graduates. Following the Mass, the graduates held a breakfast at O'Brien's Restaurant.

The Rev. Bartholomew O'Brien will be the speaker at commencement exercises this evening (Friday).



Former Principal Honored

RECEPTION HELD last Sunday in St. Casimir's school hall, Elmira, in tribute to Sister M. Adalbert, S.S. (Sister Wojcieszka) a former principal who was stationed there for over 20 years. Sister was presented a plaque from her former pupils, to be used for the new infirmary, to be constructed for retired Sisters of the Community. Carol Apenowich, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Apenowich presented the honored guest with a bouquet of roses. Apenowich was a member of the first graduating class taught by Sister Adalbert. Shown in photo from left are: Donald E. Kales, general chairman; Sister Adalbert and Rev. Ladislav J. Szczepanski, pastor.

Elmira AOH Offers Barry Award At ND

The Msgr. John J. Lee Division, Ancient Order of Hibernians, will sponsor an American history award at Notre Dame High School, starting with the 1959 graduating class.

A decision to present the award was made at the division's monthly meeting, Friday night, June 12 at Columbus Center.

The award will be named in honor of Commodore John Barry, Father of the American Navy and outstanding Revolutionary War hero and patriot.

Acceptance of the proposal for the award was made by Sister Mary Raphael, Notre Dame principal, who described the idea as "... a wonderful gesture on the part of the Hibernians."

THE AWARD — a handsome sterling silver medal with a replica of Commodore Barry displayed on the front side and an appropriate inscription on the reverse side — will go to a graduating student who excelled in the study of American history. The winner will also receive monetary remuneration.

Members of the AOH division felt that the importance of the study of American history should be encouraged, and further, that there is a danger in a certain modern-day effort on the part of a few so-called intellectuals to undermine the value of our American history.

The Chemung County Hibernians also honor the memory of Msgr. John J. Lee with the award to a male graduating student who has shown outstanding qualities.

The recipient's name is at the discretion of the Council of Catholic Men.

Reservations Open At Guild House

Reservations for future occupancy at St. Elizabeth's Guild House, East Ave., Rochester may be made now with Mrs. John Heffernan, director.

Applications of students and working girls may be made by calling BR-7255.

Ithaca Knights Elect

John Barrett As Head — Ithaca John E. Barrett was elected Grand Knight of Ithaca Council 277, Knights of Columbus, at the annual election held last week. He succeeds Ronald Hogan.

OTHER OFFICERS elected for the 1959-60 year include: William Solis, Deputy Grand Knight; Ernest Jackson, Chancellor; Leo J. Gough, Warden; William S. Gough, Judge Guard; Robert J. Shannon, Outside Guard; and Thomas L. Solis, Trustee for three years.

Solis was elected delegate to the International Council with James McCreary as alternate. Barrett and Hogan are delegates to the State convention with James L. Ols and Frank E. Spaulding alternates.

Barrett, who is Supervisor of Industrial Safety at Cornell University, lives at 802 1/2 No. Cayuga Street with his wife, Mary, and two children, Richard and Elizabeth.

He is also a member of the Youth Degree Assembly, Holy Name Society and National Adoration Society of the Immaculate Conception Church, and the National Council of Catholic Men.



JOHN E. BARRETT

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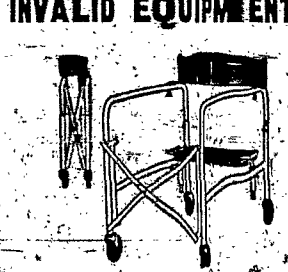
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Valley Knights Set Breakfast

Waverly — Valley Knights of Columbus Councils will hold their annual joint breakfast on Sunday, June 21st, at the American Legion Home. At that time, the name of the Catholic Father of the Year will be announced.

A committee from both the Sayre and Waverly Councils has been named. Making arrangements are: Richard Coleman and Dick Koons of Waverly, and Eugene Kohler and Jerry Costello of Sayre.

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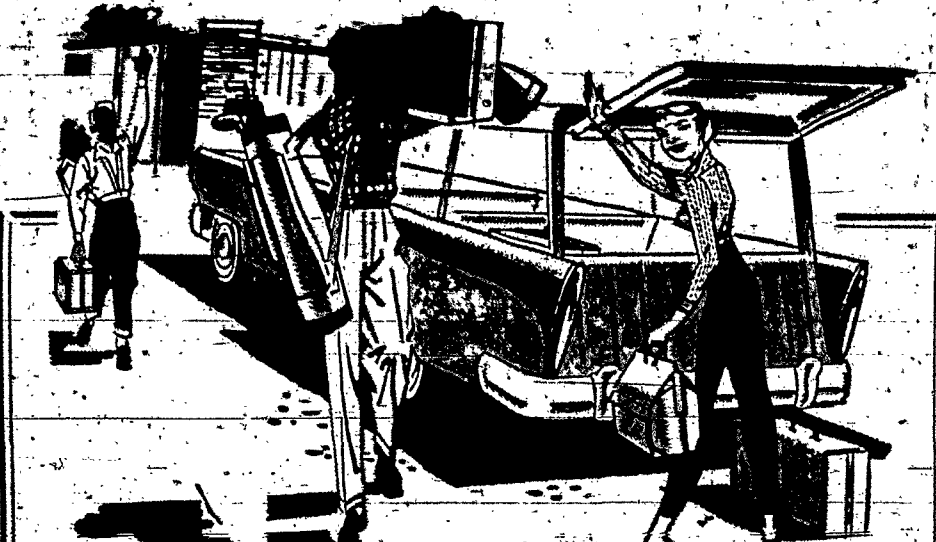
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