

Missioner Is Up to 'New' Good

By John Dash

The one question never to ask Father John Drexel is, "What's new?"

It's been two years since the Rochester-born Brazil missioner has been in town, and there's a whole lot new. More new, as a matter of fact, than can be nicely encapsulated in a sentence or two.

For one thing, he's perfected his technique for blustering his way into free parking in downtown Rochester. He doesn't bother anymore with the City-owned or privately owned public parking lots. He goes straight for the corporate lots used by executives. Two years ago he astounded more than one attendant with the announcement "I am the president of Brazil — I will park here." Today he meekly states that his "daddy" is the president of whatever corporation owns the lot.

He said last week the new



FATHER DREXEL

announcement nearly earns salutes from the gatesmen.

The Oblate of Mary Immaculate is half-way through his two-month U.S. break from his duties in Brazil. He's visiting his parents, visiting friends, and making short hops to interview Catholics active in social justice concerns.

The first needs no explanation. The last does. Among Father Drexel's many ministries is that of reporter. He is a writer, photographer and publisher in Brazil. He consistently focusses on justice and peace issues.

And the second does. After a luncheon visit with a friend, the friend recently remarked, "I have the weird feeling John undresses his mind and sits back and expects you to do the same."

Father Drexel himself tells the story of meeting with a well-known prelate recently. The two, he said, had an eye-contact contest going. Finally the bishop pointed to an area somewhat behind his ear and said, "You're about back to here, aren't you John?" Father Drexel replied, "Yeah, but you're back to here," pointing to the very rear of his skull.

That quality may explain

Father Drexel's recent promotion. He has been named communications secretary for the Brazilian bishops conference.

He said last week that he accepted the post with some misgivings. The first is that he will have to spend 15 days a month in Brazilia, the nation's capitol, and several days in Rio de Janeiro, both jaunts away from his beloved mission in Sao Paulo. And the second is that he may have to fight not "to change my style," to accommodate his role.

At the heart of all of his activity are Sao Paulo's abandoned children. As has been previously reported, Father Drexel has opened group homes for the waifs of Sao Paulo's streets, children left to bide by themselves by their impoverished prostitute mothers.

Within the past year Father Drexel, with aid from Brazilian and U.S. associates, has opened a third home, raising the number of children he supports to 27.

Father Drexel's Brazilian address is Pe Joao Drexel, Al. Franca, 889, Sao Paulo, Capital, Brasil.

At Your Parish... Parish, OHD Help Unit

St. Joseph's Parish, Penfield, along with the Diocesan Office of Human Development, recently contributed some \$768 for new bedding for patients of Unit D of the Rochester Psychiatric Center.

The gift was a response to a suggestion by Dr. Isaac Koilpillai of the Center that the Office of Human Development and St. Joseph's could assist the hospital in upgrading the environment at the center.

In expressing his thanks,

Our Lady of Mercy, Greece

Our Lady of Mercy Parish, 600 Denise Road in Greece will sponsor its parish festival this week on Aug. 2-4. Funds raised from the festival will be used for the school.

The festival will begin at 6 p.m. and end at 12 midnight

St. Patrick's, Victor

A parish celebration took place June 3, marking the 25th anniversary of Father Paul Cloonan's ordination to the priesthood. Father Cloonan has been associate pastor of St. Patrick's since

Dr. Garish V. Shah, Director of the Psychiatric Center, stated that the center has recognized the same needs for its patients and is now establishing a committee for "milieu enhancement." St. Joseph's was requested to designate a parishioner to participate on that committee on a regular basis.

Father James Moynihan, pastor of St. Joseph's, commended the project and the concern for the patients shown by Dr. Koilpillai and Terry Holbrook, social worker

in Unit D, and commented that the project shows how an active Christian concern is very much needed and can have a healing effect upon the suffering.

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