

Profiling a flourishing Florida parish

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Shortly after Father Eugene McFarland was retired from Macedon, he had two operations. In early November, he and his brother, Bart, were driving to Florida, where he was to work in the Diocese of St. Petersburg under his friend, Bishop Thomas Larkin of Mt. Morris, when a big deer shot in front of his car near Elmira, causing \$2,000 damage, but no injuries, thank God. Phil Marvin, the Macedon automobile dealer from whom Father McFarland bought the car — and Father James Marvin's brother — sent a flat truck to Florida and towed the car back for repairs. Father McFarland then took a plane for Florida. Here is his report.

"Thank you for your phone call last night. I must admit I do not miss things like plans on how to take care of parishes in the future."

Comment: There filters into the consciousness of many a dubiety regarding the shortage of priests to serve, and the giving over of parishes to priestless committees. There are 74 retired priests in the diocese. Several were willing to continue serving their people after the magic age of 70. Policy says otherwise.

"Christ the King is big in parishioners — some 2,500 registered — and in buildings and property. The whole complex occupies a city block. I received a royal welcome from the three full-time priests who are busy here with parish activities. The pastor was a classmate with our Bishop Matthew H. Clark at St. Bernard's Seminary. He is vicar of education, efficient, orthodox. Father Kearney is a delayed vocation to the priesthood just turned 65 years. This short, gray-haired priest had been a pilot in World War II, a brother in the Holy Cross Congregation, a social worker, and now ordained five years, a very active priest.

"Father Grantges is tall (6'2"), lean, three years ordained, and literally lopes — I guess that's the word for long strides — around the complex and has been my guide since November 3 when he greeted me at the airport.

"Since there are no Eucharistic ministers, we four priests plus a permanent deacon (50ish)

On the Right Side

distribute Holy Communion at all weekend Masses, and are at the church doors 'pressing the flesh,' as the politicians would say, to the parishioners who are a mix of all ages: the retired and the young families. The school has over 450 children (K-8) in uniforms, taught by four Salesian (Don Bosco) Sisters who wear the traditional habit.

"Father Henry took me, on a tour of St. Joseph's Hospital, some four miles away, to visit parishioners. This huge hospital is run by the Franciscan Sisters from Allegany, N.Y. The one I met was in secular dress.

"Presently, I'm about to take a marriage case the pastor assigned to me, so I better catch up on correspondence to Rochester before I get too involved in parish work. As I write this in my office, a lady just dropped by to invite me to lunch at one of the parish center's rooms for a dozen house-bound senior citizens who are transported here for Mass and lunch each month. The parish offices for priests and clerical help — four ladies who are receptionists, two bookkeepers, and the pastor's secretary — are in a separate building a few steps from the rectory.

"The church seats some 800 and the chapel 500 — the latter for three daily Masses, weddings, funerals and baptisms. We take turns at daily and weekend Masses, and preach at our own Masses. So I should keep active! Best regards to all clergy and laity who might ask 'What's Father Gene McFarland doing?'"

Comment: When one is first away from home, mail is especially appreciated. Address is: Christ the King Church, P.O. Box 10395, Tampa, Fla., 33679.

Voting for a consistent ethic of life

By Father Richard P. McBrien

The JustLife Education Fund is a non-partisan, ecumenical coalition of Catholics, Protestants, and others devoted to educating U.S. citizens on how to work through the political process for a consistent life ethic, an approach endorsed by the U.S. Catholic bishops.

JustLife challenges both the left and the right: the former is generally pro-life on a whole range of foreign, economic, and domestic issues, but looks the other way when the focus shifts to the unborn; the latter is generally pro-life on abortion-related issues only.

In order to prepare fellow Christians for voting in the recent national elections, the JustLife Education Fund published *JustLife '88*, a self-described "1988 Election Study Guide for Justice, Life, and Peace."

One of the guide's special features was its analysis of the voting record of every member of the U.S. Senate and every member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Each legislator was rated on 15 votes: five concerning economic justice — school-lunch and child-nutrition programs, for example; five related to abortion; and five regarding the nuclear arms race — funding of chemical weapons, MX missiles, and so forth.

The only senator to score 100 percent on all 15 votes was John Melcher, a liberal Democrat from Montana. He was defeated for reelection by a conservative Republican.

Only two senators scored zero on all 15 votes: Stevens of Alaska and Rudman of New Hampshire, both conservative Republicans.

In most cases, however, the usual pattern was evident: liberal Democrats were "right" on everything except abortion, and conservative Republicans were "wrong" on everything except abortion.

The pattern in the House was the same. A few Democrats — Oberstar of Minnesota, Russo of Illinois, Early, Mavroules, and Moakley of Massachusetts, Kildee, Traxler, and Bonior of Michigan, and St. Germain of Rhode Island — voted "right" on all 15 votes.

The lowest scores went to conservative Republicans — Thomas and McCandless of California, Swindall of Georgia, Whittaker of Kansas, Gallo of New Jersey, Gekas of Pennsylvania, Boulter, Cobest and Delay of Texas, and Chandler of Washington.

Essays in Theology

In light of his voting record over the past eight years, John Hiler, congressman from Indiana's 3rd District — which includes South Bend and the University of Notre Dame — has established himself as one of the most conservative Republicans in the House.

On the JustLife scorecard for 1988, Hiler came in at 33 percent, in contrast to the 80 percent rating earned by fellow Hoosier Lee Hamilton, the Democratic co-chairman of the Iran-Contra Committee.

Hiler's opponent this year was Tom Ward, who had come within 47 votes of defeating Hiler in 1986. Ward's position on the issues of economic justice, abortion, and the nuclear arms race earned him a special endorsement by the JustLife in his recent rematch against Hiler.

St. Joseph County — the South Bend/Mishawake area — has a large ethnic Catholic population. In the past, Catholics have provided Democratic candidates with large pluralities. Not so this year.

As Catholics here and elsewhere have moved up the economic ladder, many of them have changed their voting habits. They tend to vote Republican more frequently. Most do so out of economic self-interest, while others, it has been suggested, may also be racially motivated.

The more conservative of these Catholics, particularly those in the pro-life movement, sometimes use the excuse of abortion to justify their votes for Republican candidates. And usually the Democrats have made it easy for them to do so.

Occasionally, however, candidates like Tom Ward or Senator John Melcher come along who make it impossible for pro-life Catholics to appeal to abortion to justify their conservative voting preferences.

Is abortion the reason Catholics are voting for more conservative candidates these days, or is abortion only an excuse?



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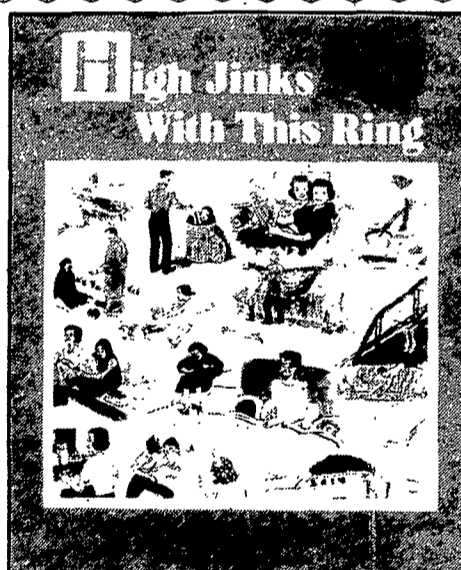
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