

In Depth

Diocesan priests labor for church in other 'fields'

By Lee Strong

Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and Louven, Belgium, are far removed from the Diocese of Rochester.

Yet priests of the diocese serve in those cities — as well as Santiago, Chile, Boston, and Tabasco, Mexico.

Currently, 11 diocesan priests are living and working full-time outside the diocese. An additional six priests (seven, including Bishop Matthew H. Clark) are on sabbatical, and five others are serving as military chaplains. Including



Father James Schwartz frequently returns to Rochester from his duties at the Center for Human Development and assists at parishes.

inactive or retired priests spending at least part of the year outside the diocese, a total of 38 diocesan priests — or 12 percent of the diocesan presbyterate — were living or working elsewhere as of Jan. 1, 1989.

At a time when the local church is contending with decreasing numbers of priests, it might seem unwise to allow diocesan priests to serve elsewhere. But according to Father Robert Schrader, director of the Division of Personnel, Staffing and Development, such an attitude is

narrow.

"We're part of the universal church, and the place where the universal church draws its priests for individual ministry is from dioceses like ours," Father Schrader said. "We're even encouraged by documents of the church to provide for the missions and to provide for the young people who are serving in the armed forces."

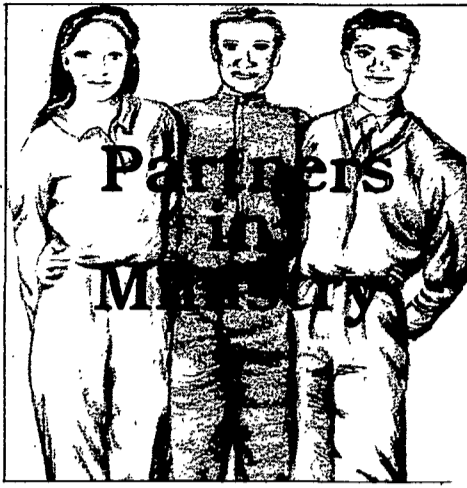
Father John Mulligan, moderator of the pastoral office, said that priests working beyond diocesan boundaries "is a healthy reminder to us that the church ranges outside the diocese," and noted that the Diocese of Rochester has, in turn, been blessed with a number of priests from other dioceses who have served and currently serve in the Diocese of Rochester.

Among those priests are Father Frank Martinez of the Diocese of Davenport, Iowa, who is serving as chaplain at Genesee Hospital; Father James Enright of the Diocese of Buffalo, who is working as the chaplain at Auburn Correctional facility; and Father Stephen Mbugua of the Diocese of Molo, Kenya, who is living and working at St. Catherine's Parish in Mendon while studying at St. John Fisher College.

Father Schrader pointed out that in addition to serving the wider church, the priests bring back with them benefits to the local church. "Whenever they go elsewhere and experience the church in other dioceses and other nations, they bring back a different perspective and different ideas, some of which might be helpful here," he explained.

Father Peter Deckman, for one, testifies to that.

"It's made me a better priest," Father Deckman said of his 14 years as a missionary in Bolivia. "It broadens your vision. Contact with



other people, crawling into their skins, gave me a good opportunity to see from their point of view and to see me from the outside."

Now the pastor of St. Francis Assisi Parish in Rochester, Father Deckman said his missionary experience helps him as a parish priest. "It keeps me from getting stuck in the mire, from just seeing the parish boundaries," he said.

The local church also benefits from the educational experiences of the priests living and working elsewhere, Father Schrader said. Priests on sabbatical often use the time to catch up with the latest theological and pastoral developments. Father Robert Kennedy, for example, returned last spring from Notre Dame University where he had been working since 1983 on a doctorate in theology focusing on liturgy and sacraments.

"I think it's a wise investment of any diocese to have people who are trained in particular areas of church life," Father Kennedy observed. "I think that's a valuable resource to the diocese."

Father Kennedy, who now teaches at St. Bernard's Institute, said that through his education, he is able to help people working in the pari-

shes. "I see my teaching as a ministry very much tied up with the diocese," he said.

Other priests who have a call to teach are sometimes forced to exercise that gift elsewhere, Father Schrader pointed out. The closing of St. Bernard's Seminary in 1981 forced priests whose expertise had been in seminary training to look outside the diocese for places to use their skills.

Father Frank Lioi, former rector of St. Bernard's, was invited to work at the American College at Louven, Belgium, where he is currently the vice rector and director of development. In a telephone interview last week, he noted that diocesan priests and sabbatical regularly use Louven's seminary for sabbaticals and training. Currently, one diocesan seminarian Brian Jeffers, is studying there. Last year, Jeffers spent part of his summer vacation working in a Scottish Parish. An English seminarian, meanwhile, spent the summer working for four weeks last summer in St. Mary's Parish in Apalachin with Father David Simon, who had studied at the American College last spring.


"I think it's a broadening experience," Father Lioi said. "You get to experience various cultures and ways of life. You see what the universal church is all about. You get to see the church in Belgium, Germany, France, and England, and see how they conceive of themselves as Roman Catholics in their lives and learn their view of the U.S. church."

Father David Murphy, another former teacher at St. Bernard's Seminary, now teaches at St. John's Seminary in Boston. He gained a national reputation during his years at St. Bernard's because of his involvement there in field education, and has since become the author of the field-education section of the U.S. Catholic bishop's document on the training of priests, the "Program of Priestly Formation." "I've become a real specialist," the priest commented. "I couldn't use that expertise in Rochester."

Continued on page 8



When St. Bernard's Seminary closed in 1981, the former rector, Father Frank Lioi (right) became vice rector and director of development for the American College in Louven, Belgium. Members of the diocese — such as (from left) Father David Simon, seminarian Brian Jeffers, Father Daniel Tormey and Sue Roll — frequently visit the college.



The **COURIER-JOURNAL**
will present its . . .

Wedding Supplement
Thurs., Feb. 16th, 1989

Serving the Rochester Catholic Diocese

More weddings are performed in the Catholic Church than in any other.

Our most popular issue every year is our Wedding Supplement.

* This section, in addition to appearing as a supplement in the issue of February 16, is also distributed to couples attending Pre-Cana instructions throughout 1989.

Included in this Package are 12 one inch ad insertions in a Wedding Guide appearing monthly in the Courier-Journal where your company name will be seen throughout the year.

Space Reservations: February 3, 1989 Copy Deadline: February 10, 1989
Phone: (716) 328-4340

BILLY GRAHAM

TV SPECIAL



A HISTORIC VISIT TO CHINA

TUESDAY 8:00 CH 10

BILLY GRAHAM'S NEWEST BOOK, "ANSWERS TO LIFE'S PROBLEMS," NOW AVAILABLE IN ALL BOOKSTORES