

Milestones

Priests mark decades of service to church

Four diocesan priests are marking their 60th year in the priesthood; one, his 50th; and three, their 25th.

60 years

For Father Austin B. Hanna, celebrating the Mass has been the highlight of his priesthood.

"It's the Last Supper," he emphasized.

Commemorating the Last Supper and celebrating the other sacraments all over the diocese has been the focus of Father Hanna's ministry since his retirement in 1977. In addition to helping out at various parishes as the need has arisen, the priest also serves as chaplain to the Sweetland-Hill Post of the American Legion in Rochester, of which he was once commander.

Born in 1908, the Rochester native attended St. Andrew's

and St. Bernard's seminaries, and his first assignment following ordination was as assistant pastor of Holy Cross Church in Rochester.

In 1937, Father Hanna began a three-year stint as assistant pastor at St. Aloysius in Auburn.

When World War II began, Father Hanna became the first priest from the Rochester diocese to volunteer for army chaplaincy. In 1945, he became the first Catholic priest to be appointed as a member of the newly organized Veterans' Administration Chaplaincy Corps. That same year, he was named Catholic chaplain of Veterans' Hospital in Canandaigua.

After the war, Father Hanna began a long and fruitful career as chaplain at St. Joseph's Villa in Greece, a home for children and adolescents that also provides services for non-residents. While there, Father Hanna became well-known in the Rochester area for his constant devotion to the youngsters' needs.

He retired from the Villa in 1977, and currently resides at the Sisters of Mercy Infirmary in Rochester.

Father Elmer W. Heindl, born in 1910 in Rochester, retired 16 years ago, but seems to be working as much, if not more, than he did before 1980. A priest who can work after retirement but doesn't is like "a married person who's non-married," the cleric commented.

As a priest-in-residence at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Greece, Father Heindl regularly celebrates the sacraments, coordinates the altar-servers, visits hospitals and ministers to various groups, most especially to his beloved fellow veterans of World War II. As an unarmed chaplain, the priest received the Bronze Star and Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in combat situations in the Pacific Theater during the war.

A graduate of St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries in Rochester, Father Heindl's rich career as a priest began with his assignment as assistant pastor at St. Mary's in Dansville in 1936. He subsequently served during the 1930s and early '40s at the parishes of St. Alphonsus in Auburn, Holy Ghost in Gates, and St. Andrew in Rochester.

From 1942 to 1948, Father Heindl served as an army chaplain, returning to Rochester in 1948 to take the position of assistant pastor at St. Mary's in Rochester. He left that position in 1951 to become assistant pastor of Holy Trinity in Webster.

Father Heindl was the pastor of a number of parishes, beginning in 1958 with St. Bernard's in Scipio Center, while also overseeing its missions of St. Hilary's in Genoa and St. Isaac Jogues in Fleming.

He was pastor of St. Theodore's in Gates from 1960 to 1961; St. Patrick's in Cato and St. Thomas in Red Creek from 1961 to 1972; and at St. Joseph's in Weedsport from 1972 until his retirement in 1980.

St. Charles Borromeo honored the priest for his service to the parish in 1994 when it named a parish day-care center for pre-schoolers Heindl House. He will be feted by the parish with a banquet at the Mapledale Party House in Rochester on Friday, June 7, following a 5:30 p.m. Mass at the church.

Father Robert F. McNamara

needs no introduction to readers of the *Catholic Courier*. As an occasional contributor to the paper — and former staff member — the priest continually attempts to present a historical context for much of what happens in the local, national and international church.

"I have two jobs," Father McNamara said. "Being retired and being diocesan archivist."

Father McNamara is probably best known in the diocese for authoring its official history, published in 1968. He has also authored books on such subjects as the history of Catholic Sunday preaching and on St. Bernard's Seminary. He has also written dozens of articles for various periodicals, and for such tomes as the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

Born in Corning in 1910, Father McNamara was educated at Harvard University, and at Gregorian University in Rome, and was a resident at North American College there.

After ordination, Father McNamara served as assistant pastor at St. Francis Xavier Church in Rochester from 1937 to 1938. He also served in the late 1930s as chaplain at St. Ann's Home in Rochester, and was a weekend assistant at St. Salome's Church in the city from 1940 to 1979.

Most of his diocesan career was spent as a professor of church history, as well as a teacher of many other subjects, at St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester. He retired from that position in 1981 when the seminary closed.

"My priesthood has been radiantly happy," said Father McNamara, who has lived at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish since his retirement.

After 60 years in the priesthood, Father James F. O'Connell has no complaints about his vocation and his heavenly superior.

"It's the best job with the best boss in the world," he said.

A native of New York City, Father O'Connell was born in 1909 and was educated at St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries. Following ordination, the priest became assistant pastor of St. Patrick's Parish in Rochester, a position he held until 1940.

He subsequently served as as-

sistant pastor at St. Lucy's in Rochester before he took up his first pastorate at Church of the Epiphany in Sodus. While there, he also oversaw the mission parishes of St. Rose of Lima in Sodus, St. John Fisher in East Bay and St. Mary Magdalene's in Wolcott.

In 1956, he was named pastor of St. Mary's of the Lake Parish in Ontario, a post he held until 1959 when he became pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Waterloo.

He left St. Mary's in 1976, and served as assistant pastor of St. Mary's in Bath until he retired in 1980. He has been an active priest-in-residence at the parishes of St. Cecilia's in Elmira from 1982 to 1987; Our Lady of Good Counsel in Rochester from 1988 to 1991; and Holy Trinity in Webster from 1991 to September 1995.

Father O'Connell currently resides at St. Ann's Home in Rochester.

50 years

Father John P. Norris was born March 17, 1921, in Glasgow, Scotland. He emigrated to the United States in May 1928.

He attended St. Augustine's Grammar School, Aquinas Institute, St. Andrew's Seminary, and St. Bernard's Seminary. He was ordained Oct. 19, 1946, in Sacred Heart Cathedral. His first Mass was Oct. 20, 1946, at St. Augustine's Church in Rochester.

Father Norris was an associate pastor at St. Mary's Church, Auburn, 1946-51; St. Charles Borromeo Church, Rochester, 1951-56; Holy Family Church, Auburn, 1956-58; and St. Boniface Church, Rochester, 1958-61. He was active in organizing and building up youth groups in the churches.

From 1961 to 1968, Father Norris served as chaplain at the State School at Industry. He was then named pastor of the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Rochester (1968-80), which became the first diocesan church to establish a parish council, and of Assumption of Our Lady, Fairport (1980-91), where he oversaw the building of a new church.

He retired in July 1991 to St. Catherine of Siena Church, Mendon, where Father Charles J. Latus is pastor.

"Father Latus was the first assistant I had at Blessed Sacrament," Father Norris said. "I must have treated him well because he invited me here."

St. Catherine's Parish has planned a Mass and reception in his honor for 11:30 a.m. Oct. 20.

25 years

Father Peter T. Bayer was ordained to the priesthood June 12, 1971, at Corpus Christi Church. He has been director of pastoral care for St. Ann's

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