

Milestones

Cayuga pastor retiring in June

When Father Robert Downs began his first priest assignment, at St. Mary's Church in Auburn in 1951, he said it was like walking into a whole new world.

"I was born in Rochester. I didn't know from nothing about this part of the diocese," Father Downs remarked.

Yet Father Downs' love quickly grew for the less populated sections of the diocese, where he has conducted most of his priestly ministry.

"I find in these smaller — if you will, rural — parishes a much easier way for me personally to pastor to people," Father Downs said. "There's a closeness, there's a warmth that I found very appealing. I love Cayuga County and Tompkins County, and I love the people of this area."

Father Downs, who turned 70 in March, will retire this June as pastor of two Cayuga County parishes: St. Patrick's Church in Moravia and St. Bernard's Church in Scipio Center. He has been the St. Patrick's pastor since 1985. The St. Bernard's pastorate was added the following year.

Father Downs grew up in Rochester's Holy Rosary Parish. He was ordained in 1951 by Bishop James E. Kearney.



He was assistant pastor at the following parishes: St. Mary's, Auburn (1951-54); Immaculate Conception, Ithaca (1954-56); St. Anthony of Padua, Rochester (1956-59); St. John the Evangelist (Humboldt Street), Rochester (1959-62); and St. Pius X, Chili (1962-70).

Father Downs was pastor at St. Patrick's, Aurora (1970-72), and St. John the Evangelist, Spencerport (1972-75), before serving as assistant pastor at Guardian Angels, Henrietta, for part of 1975.

He then was pastor of St. Pius X Church in Van Etten (1975-84) and also served as pastor of St.

Benedict's Church in Odessa (1982-84). He was then pastor at St. John the Evangelist Church in Port Byron and St. Michael's Church in Montezuma in 1984 and 1985 before going to Moravia and Scipio Center.

No retirement celebration had been planned for Father Downs as of press time. Following his retirement, Father Downs plans to reside in a private apartment in Auburn.

He also intends to assist at various Auburn parishes — "whoever is the highest bidder," he joked. On a more serious note, he added, "I'm confident there are going to be times they're going to need help."

He will also make time for two hobbies: Civil War history and baseball. In September Father Downs will take a steamboat cruise through Tennessee and Georgia, visiting several war sites. Also on the agenda: catching a few baseball games in Pittsburgh with his beloved Pirates. In fact, Father Downs' license plate reads "PIRATES8" — after retired Pittsburgh great Willie Stargell.

"If they need a team chaplain, I'm available," Father Downs remarked.

— Mike Latona

Hornell priest opts for early retirement

He stepped down as pastor of St. Ann's Church in Hornell in 1995. Now, Father Elmer Schmidt — who still resides at St. Ann's — will officially retire in June.

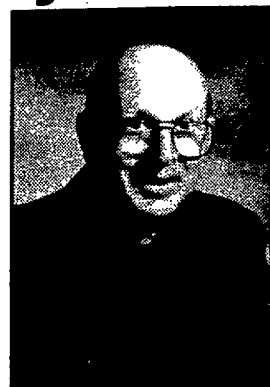
Father Schmidt, 67, is taking an early retirement due to his medical status. For several years he has been battling Parkinson's disease, a degenerative illness that involves tremors and rigidity.

Although Father Schmidt is unable to continue full-time ministry, he stays active by offering Mass and making visits to parishioners when his health allows. In addition, parishioners frequently visit him at the rectory and he also keeps in touch with them by phone.

"My motto is, 'Do what you can with what you've got,'" Father Schmidt remarked.

Father Schmidt is a Rochester native who grew up in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish. He was ordained in 1956 by Bishop James E. Kearney.

He served as parochial vicar at Rochester's Holy Family Church (1956-59) and St. Anne Church (1959-64); Fairport's Church of the



Assumption (1964-67); and Corning's St. Vincent Church (1967-74).

Father Schmidt was pastor at St. Margaret Mary Church in Apalachin from 1974 until 1983, when he moved to St. Ann's in Hornell to become pastor there.

As he nears completion of his 14th year at St. Ann's, Father Schmidt said he has no intention of moving anywhere else.

"That's the only way I stepped aside (as pastor)," he said. He added, "They love their priests and their faith here."

Father Schmidt said he looks forward to his monthly support-group meetings with other Parkinson's victims. He is also inspired by cards and letters from well-wishers at St. Ann's and his former parishes. Those parishioners, he said, have thanked him for his care and support over the years, and are keeping him in their prayers.

"Isn't that something, the way people remember? They bring tears to my eyes," Father Schmidt said.

— Mike Latona

School Sisters of Notre Dame to honor 21 jubilarians

The School Sisters of Notre Dame have scheduled a Mass May 3 at the motherhouse in Wilton, Conn., to honor 21 members of the congregation celebrating jubilees in 1997. The 2 p.m. Mass will be followed by a dinner.

Of the SSND jubilarians this year, four have Rochester connections.

70 years

Sister Theoderic Becker, SSND, was born in Rochester in 1904. She entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1923



from Holy Redeemer Parish. She made her first profession of vows in 1927 and her final profession in 1933. She taught at two Rochester schools: Holy Redeemer, from 1968 to 1974, and Holy Ghost, from 1975 to 1977.

Since 1977, Sister Theoderic has served at the motherhouse in Wilton, where she currently works in the development office.

60 years

Sister Karla Kremer, SSND, was born in Rochester in 1912. She entered the congregation in 1934 from Holy Redeemer Parish, making her first profession in 1937 and her final profession in 1943. She taught at Holy Redeemer School from 1960 to 1962, and at St. Boniface School, from 1962 to 1972. She also served as a nurse at Monroe Community Hospital from 1974 to 1982.

Sister Karla currently serves at the motherhouse in Wilton, where she works in the development office and helps care for the

older sisters.

Sister Mary Joseph Sheheen, SSND, was born in Buffalo in 1911. She entered the School Sisters in 1934, making her first profession in 1937 and her final profession in 1943.

She taught for 31 years in diocesan schools in Rochester: Holy Redeemer, (1958-60); Holy Ghost (1960-70, 1974-89); Ss. Peter and Paul (1970-72); and Holy Family (1972-74). She also served on the clerical staff at Holy Ghost School from 1989 to 1992, and in community service in the Holy Ghost Convent from 1992 to 1995.

Sister Mary Joseph now lives at the motherhouse and works in

the finance office.

50 years

Sister Mary Justene Boehly, SSND, was born in Rochester in 1923. She entered the congregation in 1944 from St. Michael Parish, making her first profession in 1947, and her final profession in 1953.

From 1956 to 1968, Sister Justene taught at St. Joseph Business School in Rochester. She was on the staff at Bishop Kearney High School from 1968 to 1996.

Sister Justene currently lives at her family home helping to care for sick family members.

21 jubilarians

Sister Mary Justene Boehly, SSND, was born in Rochester in 1923. She entered the congregation in 1944 from St. Michael Parish, making her first profession in 1947, and her final profession in 1953.

From 1956 to 1968, Sister Justene taught at St. Joseph Business School in Rochester. She was on the staff at Bishop Kearney High School from 1968 to 1996.

Sister Justene currently lives at her family home helping to care for sick family members.

Elmira monastery to host 25th jubilee



Sister Mary Reginald of the Cross, OP, (Angela Becerra) was born in Los Angeles, Calif., Dec. 12, 1946. She entered the Dominican Monastery of the Angels there in 1966, making her first

profession of vows on the feast of Ss. Peter and Paul, June 29, 1972, and her perpetual vows June 29, 1975.

Sister Mary Reginald transferred to the Monastery of Mary the Queen in Elmira in 1992. She has served the community primarily as cook and infirmarian, as well as landscaper/gardener.

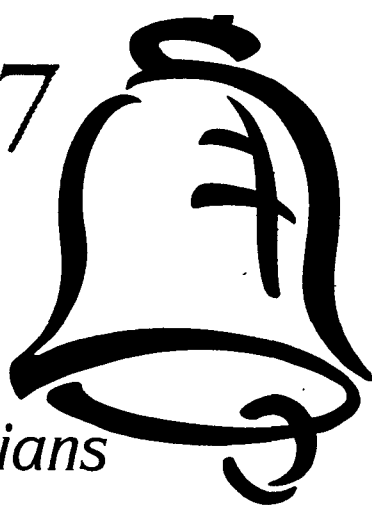
A lover of Scripture, Sister Mary Reginald's motto is, "Your

Word is Truth" (Jn. 17:17).

Sister Mary Reginald will celebrate her silver jubilee of monastic profession on June 21 at the monastery. The celebration will include a 10:30 a.m. Mass, followed by a luncheon. Those planning to attend are asked to R.S.V.P. The address is Monastery of Mary the Queen, 1310 W. Church St., Elmira, N.Y. 14905.

Congratulations and Best Wishes

1997



Jubilarians



Nazareth College

4245 East Avenue • Rochester, NY 14618-3790

Time to have a baby?

...GET THE TIME YOU NEED
Prenatal Care and Delivery

A baby's birth is a milestone in the life of a family.
© Mary Dahl Maher, CNM • (716) 271-2480

Park Avenue Midwifery • 325 Park Avenue • Rochester

Call

716-328-43340

to subscribe

to the

Catholic Courier