

Milestones

Priests share memories of service, reward

Three diocesan priests are celebrating their 60th year in the priesthood this year. In addition, five are marking their 50th-year jubilees and two are observing their 25th anniversaries.

60 years

Father J. Walter Carron has a special spot in his heart for St. Mary's Church in Geneseo. He was pastor of the Livingston County parish for 17 years, and continued to reside there following his 1982 retirement. He moved to the Sisters of Mercy motherhouse infirmary in 1995.

Father Carron, who turns 85 on May 15, was born in Rochester and ordained out of Corpus Christi Parish by Cardinal Edward Mooney.

He served as assistant pastor at St. Mary's Parish, Auburn, in 1937, and at Holy Redeemer Parish, Rochester, from 1937 to 1946. He then worked as spiritual director at St. Bernard's Seminary for the next five years.

In 1951, Father Carron returned to parish work as assistant pastor at St. Francis de Sales Church, Geneva. He moved to St. John the Evangelist Church, Spencerport, in 1955 and remained there as assistant pastor until 1958.

Father Carron's first pastorate was at St. Gregory's Church, Marion, from 1958 to 1961. He was then pastor at St. Michael's Church, Livonia Center, and St. Mary's Church, Honeoye, from 1961 to 1965. His longest priest assignment was at St. Mary's in Geneseo, beginning in 1965. He remained there for 30 years before moving to the Mercy infirmary.

"He was a very good employer and devoted to his parishioners," said Madilene Peri, St. Mary's business manager, who has known Father Carron since he hired her as his bookkeeper in 1965.

"He always had a wonderful sense of humor. Not everyone saw that side of him as he was a very private person," Peri added. "Even today, in his time of failing health, the sisters at the Mercy motherhouse chuckle at his humor."

"Father Carron, as spiritual director of St. Andrew's Seminary, was a great influence on my early life," added Father William Gordinier, the current St. Mary's pastor.

Father John A. Reddington is another 60th-year priest who owns longtime ties with a particular parish. Father Reddington was pastor of St. Louis Church in Pittsford for 30 years until his 1983 retirement, and he continues to reside at St. Louis.

"There are just a lot of beautiful people there. They're very loving and open; it's just a joy to be with them," commented Father Reddington, who turned 84 on Feb. 5.

Father Reddington was born in Rochester and grew up in Blessed Sacrament Parish. He was or-

dered March 19, 1937, at the North American College in Rome, Italy, by Cardinal Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani.

He was professor of dogmatic theology at St. Bernard's Seminary from 1939 to 1942. He was then a chaplain in the U.S. Navy from 1942 to 1945, serving in Italy and off its shores. Following the liberation of Rome, he attended many audiences given by Pope Pius XII for U.S. troops.

After his return to the United States, Father Reddington served as assistant pastor at St. Francis de Sales Church, Geneva (1945-50) and at St. Ambrose Church, Irondequoit (1950-53). His first pastorate also turned out to be his final parish assignment when he settled in for his lengthy stay at St. Louis Church in 1953.

For the past 42 years, Father Reddington has also been chaplain of Rayson-Miller American Legion Post 899 in Pittsford.

A jubilee celebration for Father Reddington, held March 8 at St. Louis, included a Mass followed by a reception in the church hall which is named after him.

"We had a beautiful Mass, and the reception was warm," Father Reddington remarked.

The jubilant priest seemed a little surprised that he has already been in priestly ministry for six decades.

"They've just sped by so quickly, it doesn't seem like 60 years," he said.

Father Raymond J. Wahl is another 60th-year priest who is noted

for his long-term dedication at one parish. In 1956 he became founding pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Auburn, and he stayed on in that role until his 1982 retirement.

Father Wahl, who turns 85 on May 6, was born in Rochester and grew up in St. Boniface Parish. He was ordained by Cardinal Edward Mooney.

Early in his priestly ministry, Father Wahl was assistant pastor at St. Alphonsus, Auburn (1937-39); Holy Family, Rochester (1939-45); Sacred Heart, Rochester (1945-46); Holy Redeemer, Rochester (1946-56); and again at St. Alphonsus in Auburn for part of 1956.

Father Wahl recalled being surprised that his first pastorate would also include the responsibility of beginning a new parish.

"It came out of the blue," he remarked.

As founding pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Father Wahl oversaw construction of a church, school, rectory and convent.

"It was just a cornfield when I came there," Father Wahl said.

He remained at Sacred Heart until he retired. In the late 1960s, Father Wahl was also regional vicar for a five-county area in the eastern part of the diocese.

Since his retirement, Father Wahl resided for times at St. Joseph's Church in Weedsport and St. Alphonsus Church in Auburn. Father Wahl currently lives at the St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary.

On May 6 - Father Wahl's 85th birthday - Sacred Heart Church will honor its founding pastor and also acknowledge the parish's 40th

anniversary. Father Wahl plans to attend the festivities, which will include a 5:30 p.m. Mass celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark and a dish-to-pass supper to follow.

Reflecting on his 60 years in the priesthood, Father Wahl succinctly summed up his feelings.

"It's been the best thing in my life, being a priest," he said with a smile.

50 years

Father Anthony F. Calimeri claims he was drawn to the priest-

hood as a child at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Auburn, by a particular priest there.

"I thought he wore nice shoes, and he drove a cute little car," Father Calimeri said with a laugh. "The Lord attracts you in mysterious ways."

Those ways led Father Calimeri, a product of the public schools and Holy Family High School in Auburn, to choose to attend St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries in Rochester.

Following ordination, Father Calimeri assisted at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Rochester from 1947 to 1951 and at St. Jerome's Church in East Rochester from 1951 to 1957. He also served during this period as a chaplain to various units of the Catholic War Veterans in Monroe County.

Father Calimeri was pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Rochester from 1957 to 1965 and then he returned to St. Jerome's to serve as pastor from 1965 to 1983. From 1967 to 1969, Father Calimeri - who can speak both Italian and Spanish - also served as director of the Diocesan Spanish Apostolate, and was chaplain to the Mexican missionary Sisters of Guadalupe from the early 1970s to the early 1990s.

In 1983, Father Calimeri was named pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Church in Phelps, a position he held until 1993. He also served as pastor of St. Felix Church in Clifton Springs from 1991 to 1993 after the two parishes clustered.

Since retirement in 1993, Father Calimeri has lived in his own home in Phelps, and occasionally assists at St. Francis of Assisi/St. Felix Parish Cluster, as well as other parishes. Father Edward J. Dillon, pastor of the cluster, will celebrate a Mass marking Father Calimeri's jubilee at 11 a.m. June 1 at St. Francis.

"I've been fairly busy and ecstatic," Father Calimeri said of his current life. "My father had the philosophy that you can rest when you get to (the) cemetery."

He added that the sacrifices he's made to be a priest were far outweighed by the satisfactions he's gained.

"Maybe people can't understand it, but I've had a good time," he said.

Father Peter Etlinger, CSB, retired last year as head of Aquinas Institute's guidance department, which he founded in 1970.

After working with generations of teenagers, first as a social studies teacher, and then as a guidance counselor, the Basilian priest said



it has always been the same issues that challenge teenagers year after year.

"As I look back and compare my teenage years with that of the modern teenager, I don't think the problems were that much different," he said. "Sex, drugs and alcohol," and a desire for friendships concerned his teenage peers as well as the younger-generation teenagers with whom he worked.

"They always come in with high ideals," he said of the freshmen he'd meet each year. "They want to be good at what they do. I was interested in keeping those ideals going."

Father Etlinger himself has kept going in his vocation. He will mark 50 years as a priest with a celebration Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Rochester at 2 p.m. Sunday, June 29.

Born in 1918 in Detroit, Father Etlinger graduated from All Saints High School there and entered the Basilian Novitiate in 1938. He graduated from the University of Windsor, Ontario, in 1942, and worked as a social studies teacher at Catholic Central High School in Detroit from 1942 to 1944.

After completing theological studies at St. Basil's Seminary in Toronto in 1947, Father Etlinger was ordained in June of that year in Toronto. He then returned to Detroit to teach at Catholic Central, a position he held until assuming the chairmanship of the social studies department at Aquinas in 1952. He taught until 1972, when he became a full-time guidance counselor at the school.

Father Etlinger currently resides with fellow Basilians from Aquinas on Augustine Street in Rochester. The priest said he loved working with teenagers over the years, and never wanted to do anything else as a priest.

"They challenge you, they're open, they're defiant," he said of teenagers, with a laugh. "If I said something they didn't like, they challenged me."

Musing on his life as a priest, Father William M. Hart took a philosophical stance.



"I was pretty well-satisfied with all of it," said Father Hart, who retired as pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Webster in

1992. "Some things were more enjoyable than others, but I have no complaints."

Father Hart will celebrate his 50th year as a priest with a celebration Mass at 11 a.m. on Father's Day, June 15, with a reception to follow. He currently resides in the parish's former convent.

Father Hart said the class of 1947 has always supported him as a priest.

"One of the best blessings I think I've experienced is the spirit of my classmates," he said. "We still have meetings. Our class has always been close."

Father Hart grew up in Immaculate Conception Parish in Rochester, and attended School 4 and Immaculate Conception School.

He went to St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries, and said he was inspired to become a priest, in part, by his uncle, the late Msgr. William M. Hart, a former diocesan vicar general.

"If you know a priest, they look pretty good to you," Father Hart said of the example set by his uncle and other priests.

Following his ordination, Father Hart was assigned to Holy Rosary Church in Rochester in 1947, before pursuing doctoral studies in philosophy in Rome in 1949. He taught at St. Bernard's Seminary in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, as well as at St. John Fisher College.

Father Hart was named dean of men at St. Bernard's in 1961 before being named special assistant to Bishop Fulton J. Sheen in 1967. In 1968, Father Hart became copastor of Our Lady of Victory Church in Rochester, a position he held until he took up his pastorate at Holy Trinity.

Father Hart encouraged young people to consider the priesthood, a life that has brought him much contentment, he noted.

"Anybody who wants to talk to me will know that becoming a priest is the best thing you can do," he said. "I can't really imagine another calling where I'd be as satisfied as I am now."

Father Charles L. Mockevicius knew he wanted to be a priest from an early age, he said.

"I used to have a little altar at home and pretend I was saying Mass," he recalled.

That home was located right next-door to St. George's Lithuanian Church in Rochester, where Father Mockevicius has served as co-administrator with his brother, Father Dominic Mockevicius, since 1990.

"I feel like an elephant that came home to die," Father Charles said with a laugh.

The priest grew up in the parish, and attended Holy Redeemer and St. George's schools before enrolling in St. Andrew's and then St. Bernard's seminaries in Rochester. He also attended Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Norwood, Ohio, before being ordained in Steubenville, Ohio, in 1947.

Father Mockevicius spent much of his career serving as both an assistant and as a pastor in such dioceses as Rockville Centre and Brooklyn. He also served as a hospital chaplain and school principal in Ohio, and did a stint as an associate chaplain at a senior citizens' residence in Uniondale, N.Y., in the mid-1970s.

In 1980, he began a chaplaincy at a Veterans Administration Hospital in Northport, N.Y., a position he remembered fondly.

"I used to walk seven miles a day, attending all the patients there," he said.

He worked as a chaplain until he retired in 1987. He then moved back to the Diocese of Rochester and began assisting at St. Vincent de Paul's Church in Churchville where he helped his brother, Father Dominic, who was then pastor. The two moved to St.

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