

Milestones

Butler chaplain will first unwind

Father Robert G. Smith figures that by sixth grade he was thinking of becoming a priest.

It seemed natural — he had an uncle who was an Augustinian priest, two cousins who were Vincentians, another cousin who was an Oblate of Mary, and an extremely close family friend in Msgr. Charles Shay, former rector of the old St. Patrick's Cathedral and pastor of Holy Rosary Church.

"He was like a second father to me," Father Smith said of the monsignor.

Father Smith, 70, will retire this summer, after 45 years serving several diocesan churches, teaching, and working as chaplain at Butler Correctional Facility's drug rehabilitation program and minimal prison at Red Creek.

"I don't think I'll do anything for at least a couple months," he said. "Then I'll see what I get into."

Father Smith has been into many things — he served as president of the Naples School Board, running at the request of residents during his first year as pastor of St. Januarius; director and vice-president of the West Ontario United Way; regional coordinator of the YOW Region; president of the Wolcott Rotary; chaplain of the Irondequoit Police Department; and currently, a Wayne County American Red Cross board member.

He also started chapters of Compassionate Friends in Naples and Irondequoit, to help people deal with the deaths of children.

Although ordained out of St. Monica's Parish, his family also had attended Immaculate Conception Church and he was baptized there.



"I was one of 30 priests ordained in the 30-year pastorate of Msgr. Joseph S. Cameron," he said, of the Immaculate Conception pastor. "I think he inspired a lot of people."

Father Smith's assignments following his June 6, 1953, ordination included: assistant pastor of St. Mary's, Auburn, 1953-56, and St. Francis, Geneva, 1956-60; professor of sacred music at St. Bernard's Seminary, 1960-67 and St. Andrew's Seminary 1960-62; assistant pastor, St. John the Evangelist, Spencerport, 1967-68; Newman chaplain, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1968-69; and assistant pastor, St. Louis, Pittsford, 1969-71.

He was pastor of St. Januarius, Naples, 1971-78; St. Margaret Mary, Rochester, 1978-84; St. Mary Magdalene, Wolcott, 1984-1993; and St. Thomas the Apostle, Red Creek, 1985-1993. He became senior

chaplain at Butler in 1989.

"They were building the prison in my parish, and I thought it would be good to plug into it," he recalled. "After two years I decided that's what I wanted to do full-time."

He hopes he's helped some of the prisoners, he said.

"You never know," he mused. "Some go back to the same neighborhood, to the same friends or so-called friends. It's awful hard for those guys to change if they want to. Many are really, really good people. But what do you do if you don't have a father, your mother is a drug addict and you were brought up without love?"

Father Smith studied voice under Arthur Kraft at Eastman School of Music, and studied music also in Baltimore, Purchase, N.Y., and LaTrobe, Pa. He also played piano and organ.

He still has the loose-leaf hymnal he developed during the post-Vatican II years when church music changed and language switched from Latin to the vernacular. The hymnal was under consideration by four publishers, he said.

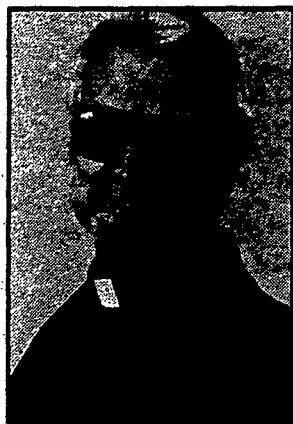
"Some of the translations we had were atrocious, and some of the music that came out was atrocious, too," he laughed, explaining that's why he made his hymnal a loose-leaf binder.

Unfortunately, he said, "After I left St. Bernard's I didn't have any time for music."

One hobby he's sure to continue in retirement, however, is enjoying organ, piano, orchestra and vocal music the usual way — relaxing in his living room on Blind Sodus Bay Road in Red Creek.

— Kathleen Schwarz

Cleric enjoys giving of self



When Father William J. Amann was a young man, he considered entering a socially oriented career such as medicine.

But then he realized that the priesthood offered him an opportunity no other career did.

"I wanted to help people — and myself — get to heaven," he said.

But while aiding people in their spiritual quests, the priest has also accomplished a number of earthly deeds, including one few of his contemporaries can claim in a diocese filled with decades-old parishes. Father Amann was the founding pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Hamlin, established in 1982.

"I always say the bishop sent me out here to help the people start the parish," he said, citing the efforts of his parishioners to establish St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

Father Amann will retire June 30, and mark his departure from the parish with a 10:30 a.m. Mass on June 7. The Mass will be followed by a noon picnic on parish grounds and a 7 p.m. dinner at Deerfield Country Club in Brockport.

The priest said he's happy that he helped build up the parish, which currently boasts 970 families, but he noted that there's still work to be done on its church building.

"You've got to leave something for your successors to do," he said. "Jesus didn't do it all either. He left a lot for us to do, so I don't feel so bad."

Ordained at Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral by Bishop James E. Kearney on June 5, 1954, Father Amann was first assigned to St. Andrew's Church in Rochester where he served as assistant pastor until 1958. He held the same position at Holy Trinity, Webster, from 1958 to 1962.

From 1962 to 1965, Father Amann was chaplain at Bishop Kearney High School in Rochester. From 1965 to 1981, he served as assistant pastor, then co-pastor and finally pastor at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Greece. He administered St. Cecilia's Church in Elmira from 1981 to 1982 before being named pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

Father Amann plans to reside at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Brighton after he retires. He said he wants to devote his time to assisting at his new parish as well as traveling. He added that he had found being a priest a fulfilling life of giving. However, in an era when many people no longer think self-sacrifice is the key to happiness, he said such a life was unappealing to many.

"There's so much out there that militates against any kind of service vocation ...," he said, citing consumerism and materialism. "(But) there's a reward in commitment."

The priest added that he feels privileged to have been a vehicle for God's love, particularly at such moments as baptisms, funerals and eucharists.

"It's humbling to realize that I'm the instrument of the Lord in these sacraments," he said.

— Rob Cullivan

Wayland pastor to stay close to 'family'

Father Paul R. Schnacky had served mostly in city parishes throughout his priesthood. But when he arrived at St. Joseph's Church in Wayland in 1979, he took a quick liking to the rural setting.

"I was amazed that there was a place like this still in existence. You could leave your door open at night, and leave your key in the car downtown. Kids were riding their bikes up and down the street, and you could go the hospital and not see guards at the door," said Father Schnacky, who will retire this June after 19 years as pastor at St. Joseph's.

Father Schnacky, 69, was born in Rochester and grew up in St. Boniface Parish. He was ordained June 6, 1953, by Bishop James E. Kearney.

He served as assistant pastor at St. Michael's Church, Rochester (1953-57); St. Alphonsus, Auburn (1957-58); Holy Family, Auburn (1958-60); Ss. Peter and Paul, Rochester (1960-64); St. Salome's, Irondequoit (1964-65); and Holy Redeemer, Rochester (1965-75).



Father Schnacky then became pastor at St. Patrick's, Cato (1975-76) and assistant pastor at St. Philip Neri, Rochester (1976-1979) before arriving for his 19-year stay at St. Joseph's in Wayland as pastor.

One reason he was drawn to the north-

ern Steuben County parish, Father Schnacky noted, was the existence of a school. He explained that the closing of Holy Redeemer School in 1975 had been a painful experience for him — whereas St. Joseph's School has now been in operation since 1884.

Father Schnacky plans to reside at St. Ann's Church, Hornell, in his retirement.

"I'd like to work with the older people," he said. "I'd like to run Bible studies, and perhaps bus trips to shrines in the area."

A deciding factor in his choosing St. Ann's is that "they have a cook, to be honest," he laughed.

In addition, the move will leave Father Schnacky only a short distance from Wayland, making it easy for him to maintain contact with his beloved St. Joseph's community.

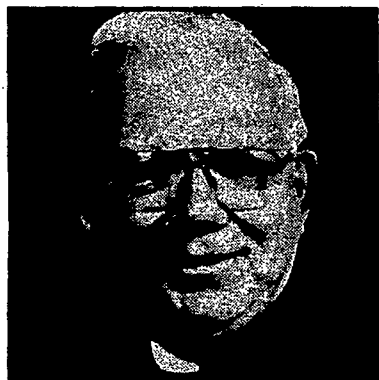
"I hope so. They're my family," he said.

Father Schnacky's retirement dinner is scheduled for Tuesday evening, June 9, at the Genesee River Hotel in Mount Morris.

— Mike Latona

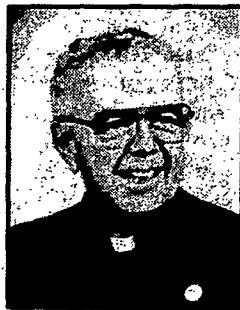
Congratulations

Rev. Gerald T. Connor



on your Retirement
from St. Pius the Tenth Parish

Happy Retirement



Fr. Bernie Dollen
From the
Staff and Parishioners of
St. Christopher's