

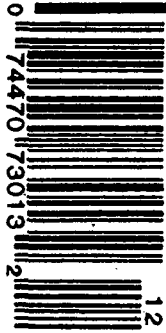
Sisters of St. Joseph
elect new leaders
- Page 3



Snowbird retirees
flock to South
- Page 9



St. John's (Greece)
ministries explode
- Page 16



Catholic Courier

DIocese OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK ■ VOL. 110 NO. 24 ■ THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 1999 ■ 75¢ ■ 16 PAGES

Priests in Retirement

One of the joys of retirement, Father Robert Kanka said, is to let go of administrative duties and breathe the air again.

"I was very tired and was glad to get out from underneath the pastoral responsibilities," Father Kanka said of his 1994 retirement from St. James the Apostle Church in Trumansburg, where he was pastor for 14 years. "I love having the evenings free. With very few exceptions, things don't come up."

Father Kanka, 75, said he can devote more time to reading, a favorite pastime. However, don't get the impression that he's immersed in a life of leisure.

Father Kanka — who resides at St. Ann's Church in Hornell — is a highly visible priest in the community. He fills in with sacramental duty at neighboring parishes, and regularly visits shut-ins. On a recent visit to the MercyCare Health facility, residents' faces lit up as he roamed the halls, and administrators were surprised to overhear that he is retired.

Another favorite routine, Father Kanka said, is to walk through Hornell and greet residents along with Father Paul Schnacky, 70, who moved to St. Ann's last year upon his retirement from St. Joseph's Church in Wayland.

"In a time when there's a shortage of priests, it's nice for people to see a couple of priests around town," Father Kanka commented.

Father James Jaeger, pastor of St. Ann's, said he values the presence of Fathers Kanka and Schnacky not only for their assistance, but also their companionship.

"What's turned out to be the joy in my ministry are my two retired priests," Father Jaeger said.

Leisure and ministry is a common



Father Paul Schnacky, left, and Father Robert Kanka, retired priests residing at St. Ann's Church Rectory, Hornell, enjoy walks together. "It's nice for people to see a couple of priests around town," Father Kanka said.

combination for many retired priests. Though they are not obligated to ministerial duty, few ever walk away completely from their priestly service.

"You can retire from administration, but you don't retire from being a priest. It's a way of life they've chosen," said Sandy Grocki, diocesan coordinator for clergy services.

Diocesan Catholics should be glad that retired priests are willingly available, based on the declining number of full-time diocesan priests. In another seven years, Grocki estimated, the number of

retired diocesan priests will equal the number of active priests.

According to Grocki, there are 158 active diocesan priests and 90 retired priests. Six priests have announced their intention to retire this June, and only one ordination is scheduled.

Father Francis Davis, 79, noted that the over-all number of priests has plummeted in his area since he retired in 1990 from his pastorate at St. Patrick's Church in Corning. At that time, Father Davis said, there were three full-time priests

- Continued on page 14

STORY
BY
MIKE
LATOÑA

PHOTO
BY
GREG
FRANCIS