

Father John J. Hempel, 84

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

Father John J. Hempel, whose career covered a variety of ministries, died on Dec. 1, 2003, at Evergreen Manor Retirement Home in Safety Harbor, Fla. He was 84.

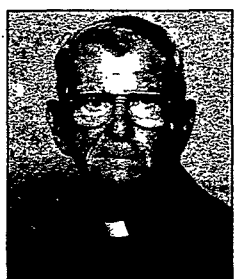
His friends noted that Father Hempel possessed a booming voice that belied his friendly personality.

"He was a man's man," said Father Gerald T. Connor, retired priest-in-residence at St. Theodore's Parish in Gates. "I don't know anybody who didn't like him."

A native of Rochester, Father Hempel was baptized at St. Francis Xavier Church and confirmed at St. Ambrose Church. He attended St. Ambrose School and Aquinas Institute in Rochester.

Father Hempel served in the U.S. Army during World War II in the European theater. He was discharged as a captain in 1945, and was awarded a Bronze Star for his work as a medical administrative officer. His military experience influenced his outlook on life, according to long-time friend Father John V. Rosse, priest-in-residence at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Irondequoit.

"He was always an Army man,



right up to the end, I'm sure," Father Rosse said. "He was very practical and holy."

"He loved the priesthood, but he also loved the military service," added Father Connor.

After the war, Father Hempel attended Fordham University in New York City, and St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries in Rochester.

Father Hempel, along with Fathers Connor and Rosse, was ordained a priest June 5, 1954, at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Rochester. He served as assistant pastor of St. Anne's Parish in Rochester from 1954-57. From 1957-1962, Father Hempel served as assistant pastor of St. Jerome's in East Rochester. He was named assistant pastor of Holy Cross Parish in Rochester in 1962.

In 1967, Father Hempel was named the Diocese of Rochester's director of Secular Mission in five rural counties, and was based in Penn Yan. During this time, he also served as a chaplain with the rank of major in the New York Army Na-

tional Guard. In 1969, he was named diocesan director of Human Concern, combining his previous efforts in rural areas with work in urban areas.

In 1971, Father Hempel became rector of Becket Hall. In 1976 he was named chaplain of Rochester's St. Ann's Home and The Heritage, now known as St. Ann's Community. In 1979, he went to San Francisco where he served as a Veterans Administration chaplain.

Father Hempel became pastor of Rochester's St. Andrew's Parish in 1980. He was named administrator of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Brockport in 1983. In 1984, he became administrator of Church of the Epiphany in Sodus and of its mission, St. Rose of Lima in Sodus Point. He retired in June 1984.

Father Hempel will lie in state at St. Jerome's in East Rochester from 3-7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 4. A prayer service will take place at 7:30 p.m. Bishop Matthew H. Clark will celebrate a funeral Mass on Friday, Dec. 5, at St. Jerome's at 10:30 a.m.

BISHOP CLARK BEGINS RECORDED MESSAGES

Recently recorded inspirational messages by Bishop Matthew H. Clark are available both on radio and online.

The audio recordings, lasting approximately 30 seconds each, are played several times each day on WHIC 1460AM, the Rochester-based Catholic radio station that was launched earlier this year. The messages are also available on the Diocese of Rochester's Web site at www.dorc.org.

There are seven messages in all by Bishop Clark, touching upon such subjects as senior citizens, vocations, daily prayer, young people and marriage. For instance, he reminds people to be attentive to senior citizens through "a telephone call or a visit, running a few errands, making sure their spiritual and medical needs are met."

Regarding daily prayer, Bishop Clark encourages such prayer traditions as the rosary, an Our Father or a novena, or simply speaking to God in conversation. "You will be uplifted and you will be comforted," the bishop says.

In another message, Bishop Clark asks for parents who sense a potential religious vocation in their son or daughter to seriously discuss the possibilities and offer support.

—Mike Latona

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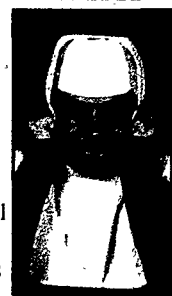
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