

# St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

June 2010

## Reflections of Fr. George Remm on the eve of his Golden Jubilee

*On May 30, 2010, former St. Patrick's pastor Father George Remm returns to St. Patrick's Parish to celebrate his 50th Anniversary Jubilee in the priesthood. One recent afternoon Fr. Remm spent a couple of hours with a writer from In Focus*



*reflecting on this momentous time in his life. What follows is his first-person recounting of that conversation.*

While I am German by descent, I always say I am Irish by osmosis. Many of my life experiences were greatly influenced by parishes named St. Patrick and by Irish priests. I find it particularly serendipitous that for the first 18 years of my life my parish was St. Patrick's in Peoria, and for the last 18 years of my pastoral life my parish was St. Patrick's in Urbana.

Having been born in Peoria, my roots are deeply grounded in this

diocese. My parents emigrated separately from southwest Germany, meeting at an English-speaking class in Peoria that both were taking to prepare for their citizenship test. Our family included another brother and myself; a third brother died during his first year of life.

My parents' marriage was an interfaith marriage; my mother was Catholic and my father Lutheran. My



brother and I were both raised in the Catholic faith. Our family lived less than two blocks from St. Patrick's in Peoria, and that became our family parish (although as a baby I was baptized at the local German parish of St. Joseph). I

attended St. Patrick's Grade School, where St. Patrick's Day was celebrated with such passion and emotion that I grew up thinking everyone knew all the words to all Irish songs. I was quite surprised when, as a priest, I found that many people do not know the words to Irish songs I was used to singing!

Upon graduating from 8th grade, my dad asked me if I wanted to go

## "Make us the people of God!"

*I*n a favorite Pentecost hymn we sing, "Come, send down the Spirit, breathe life in your people,



and make us the people of God." What does it mean to be the "people of God"? Readers of In Focus know the answer to this question. It fills every page of every issue!

To be the "people of God" is to participate in the sacramental life of the Church. We receive God's abundant gifts in the sacraments. We celebrate with those who receive Jesus' body and blood for the first time. We pray with our young people who receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. We are grateful for the journey of faith that brought our neophytes to us.

To be the "people of God" is to grow in faith and knowledge of God. We study God's word in the Scriptures. We hand on the faith to our young people through religious education, by the way we pray together every Sunday, and by the way we live our lives.

see **Fr. Remm** on page 8

see **People** on page 2

## People from page 1

To be the “people of God” is to live lives that reflect God’s justice. We care for the hungry of our community with our food pantry. We extend our care to the hospitalized, the homebound, and the prisoners. We reflect on the injustices in our world and look for ways to relieve those who suffer from them.

To be the “people of God” is to live as part of our families. We honor our parents on Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. We help our children to grow by seeing to their welfare and education, and by giving them opportunities to serve others. We support our spouses with Great Dates.

To be the “people of God” is to live as part of a parish community. We celebrate together the feast of our patron saint, Patrick. We party together at Ladies Knight Out. We choose representatives to the Parish Council and discuss the future that we want to have for our parish buildings.

To be the “people of God” is to live as part of the Universal Church. We are grateful for the help of priests from near and far. We welcome new parishioners from every part of the globe. We gather with Catholics from nearby parishes at Catholic Connected. We support the good work that is done by the Diocese of Peoria and by the whole Church on our behalf.

Indeed we are being made “the people of God”!

### Vocation Prayer



Spirit of God, help us to work in concert with you in whatever place or role we find ourselves. Give us gifts of understanding and patience, insight and love, courage and humility, in encouraging our young men and women to consecrate their lives in the Church to the service of your people.



## in our parish library

The parish library now has several books written by or about Pope Benedict XVI:

***Christ Our Hope: The Papal Addresses of the Apostolic Journey to the United States***, by Pope Benedict XVI. This is a collection of Pope Benedict XVI’s speeches made during his historic visit to the United States in April 2008. Call Number: 252.02 BEN 2008.

***The Fathers***, by Pope Benedict XI. Pope Benedict’s *The Fathers* is a collection of the texts from his Wednesday audiences delivered between March 2007 and February 2008. In these weekly audiences, the pope introduces us to the lives and works of twenty-six different Fathers of the Church, from the Apostolic Fathers to Saint Augustine. Call Number: 270.1 BEN 2009.

***Companion Guide to Pope Benedict’s The Fathers***, by Mike Aquilina. Call Number: 270.1 AQU 2008.

***Introduction to Christianity***, by [Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger] Pope Benedict XVI. Originally written 40 years ago, this newly revised second edition includes a 20-page preface by the Cardinal. His elucidation of the Apostle’s Creed gives an excellent modern interpretation of the foundations of Christianity. Call Number: 238.11 BEN 2004.

***Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration***, by Pope Benedict XVI. In this introduction to the life of Jesus, the pope shares a rich, compelling, flesh-and-blood portrait of Jesus through the Gospels and the New Testament. Call Number: 232 BEN 2007.

***Maria: Pope Benedict XVI on the Mother of God***, by Pope Benedict XVI. This is a coffee table book with pictures of famous statues, paintings, sculptures, and other art from all over the world, portraying the Blessed Virgin Mary. Pope Benedict also offers inspirational reflections on the unique spiritual role of Mary as the Mother of the Savior. Call Number: 232.91 BEN 2009.

***Pope Benedict XVI: An Introduction to His Theological Vision***, by Thomas P. Rausch. The six relatively brief but focused chapters trace the stages of Ratzinger’s [Pope Benedict XVI] life and the formative elements of his theological vision, summarizing four key themes of Ratzinger’s theological thought. Call Number: 230.04 RAU 2009.

***Saint Paul***, by Pope Benedict XVI. Pope Benedict explores the legacy of Paul as he follows the course of the Apostle’s life, including his missionary journeys and his relationship with the other Apostles, such as St. Peter and St. James, and Paul’s martyrdom in Rome. Call Number: 225.9 BEN 2009.

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*If you would like to donate books on the parish library’s wish list, please contact Lori Mestre (365-9004), library team coordinator. If you need help locating materials in the library, Lori or one of the other team members will be happy to help. The parish library is open weekdays during office hours and on the fourth and fifth Sundays of the month from 8:30 to 10:45 a.m.*

## A Father’s Prayer

Lord, I need your special care. Like your earthly father, Joseph, I want to do God’s will, even if I may not always understand.

Make me gentle and selfless in the care of my family and children; help me guide them in the toils and troubles, the happinesses and wonders of this life. Make me strong in love and forgiveness for those you entrust to my care.

No one can do all this rightly, Lord, without your constant help. Be with me always, and when my work here is done, may I come to you in heaven, and all my family with me. Amen.



## Presenting the 2010-11 Parish Council

In April, parishioners elected Judy Altaner, Mark Cousert, and Amy Fahey to three-year terms on the Parish Council, a consultative body to the pastor.

At the May meeting the new members were seated on the Council, and the officers for the coming year were acknowledged: Pam Donze De Ley, president; Jeff Kneer, vice-president; and Amy Fahey, secretary.

Council members meet monthly on third Thursdays, with the agenda set by the Council officers in conjunction with the parish trustees and the pastor. Members will also

occasionally serve on ad hoc committees as the need arises.

In addition, all members excepting the officers serve on ministry leadership teams for the six key ministry areas of the parish, helping to keep the Council and staff abreast of the concerns, issues, and activities of parishioners in their several ministries.

Here are the ten elected members and the three ex-officio members (pastor and parish trustees) who make up St. Patrick's Parish Council for 2010-11. All will be grateful for your interest, communication on

matters of concern, and (especially) your prayerful support.



*Fr. Joe Hogan  
Pastor*



*Pam Donze De Ley  
2008-11, president*



*Shelly Benson  
2008-11*



*Doug Wolfersberger  
2008-11*



*Susan Fowler  
2009-12*



*Jeff Kneer  
2009-12, vice-president*



*Mark Gerhart  
2009-12*



*Lakshmi Lancaster  
2009-12*



*Judy Altaner  
2010-13*



*Amy Fahey  
2010-13, secretary*



*Mark Cousert  
2010-13*



*Joe Rasmussen  
2005-10, Trustee*



*Ginger Timpone  
2008-13, Trustee*



## Parish graduates take their next step

St. Patrick's grade- and high-school graduates were honored at the noon Mass on May 2 and at a luncheon following Mass. Most of our graduates will be moving on to new schools, of course. Here at St. Patrick, they will also be moving into or out of our CREW program.

Five high-school graduates received the Fr. Charles Martell Scholarship from the Knights of Columbus. Fr. Martell was the pastor of St. Patrick from 1957 to 1977. Many of the fundraising activities that the Knights pursue during the year go to support our young people with this scholarship. Congratulations to this year's scholarship winners: Tyler Faight, Zita Hubler, Johanna McCarthy, Sam Noonan, and Andy Wszalek!

Whether graduating from grade or high school, know that your parish family is proud of each and every one of you!

Our high school graduates have many exciting plans:

- **Tim Colombo** is graduating from Keystone National High School. He will be attending the University of Illinois in the fall, majoring in Kinesiology.
- **Tyler Derenne** is graduating from St. Joseph/Ogden High School and plans to continue working through the summer and this fall.
- **Renee Durant** is graduating from Champaign Central High School. She will be attending Illinois State University in the fall to study journalism.
- **Tyler Faight** is graduating from the High School of St. Thomas More. He will be attending the University of Illinois in the fall and plans to study business.
- **Rachael Graham** is graduating from St. Joseph/Ogden High School. She will be attending Parkland College in the fall and plans to transfer to the University of Illinois in two years in order to become a teacher and coach.
- **Zita Hubler** is finishing her studies at Urbana High School. She too will be attending the University of Illinois to study bioengineering.



- **Jordyn Koerner** is graduating from Champaign Central High School and will be attending Parkland College in the fall to study nursing, starting her plan of becoming a nurse anesthetist.
- **Johanna McCarthy** will be graduating from the High School of St. Thomas More. She will be attending Northwestern University in the fall to study biology/pre-med and Spanish.
- **Marc Myers** is graduating from Champaign Central High School. He will be attending Illinois State University with the goal of becoming a peace officer.
- **Sam Noonan** is graduating from the High School of St. Thomas More. He will be attending Parkland College in the fall.
- **John Patterson** is also finishing his career at the High School of St. Thomas More in order to attend Southern Illinois University in the fall to begin studying geology.
- **Nick Thompson** is graduating from Urbana High School and will be attending Parkland College in the fall to study engineering.
- **Andy Wszalek** is graduating from the High School of St. Thomas More. He will be attending the University of Illinois this fall to study mechanical engineering.

Congratulations also to our eighth-grade graduates, new members of CREW:

Mary Campbell (moving on to Uni High)  
 Elizabeth Fahey (St. Thomas More)  
 Diego Gunderson (Uni High)  
 Amrei Hubler (Urbana High)  
 Ryan Keefer (Urbana High)  
 Joshua Koerner (St. Thomas More)  
 Nicholas Kneer (St. Joe/Ogden High)  
 Carly Langendorf (St. Thomas More)  
 Ian Niccum (St. Thomas More)  
 Colton Parisi (St. Thomas More)  
 Carina Quiroz (Centennial)  
 Annie Rasmussen (St. Thomas More)  
 Jamie Simmering (St. Thomas More)  
 Mariya Sturdyvin (St. Thomas More)  
 Gabrielle Wszalek (St. Thomas More)

## Holy Cross Happenings

Holy Cross School's writing test scores are in the top 4 in the Diocese of Peoria! These standardized tests monitor progress of students in 4th-8th grades.

Congratulations to George Pennacchi, 7th-grader, for placing 8th at the 2010 National Geographic State of Illinois Geography Bee, held on April 9, in Chicago.

Rachael Loftus, 2nd-grader, won 1st prize for students in grades 1-3 in the News-Gazette "Design-an-Ad" supplement. The ad designs of many other Holy Cross students were also featured.

Of the 80 students who made the 3rd-quarter Honor Roll (A's and B's), 30 made Highest Honors (all A's).

On students' last day of the school year, June 1, they will celebrate Mass together and receive their report cards. And that's it until Aug. 23, the first day of the new school year!

Holy Cross School has openings in kindergarten through 8th grade! Please call the office (356-9521) to register for the 2010-11 school year.



## On becoming Christ for the first time

When we receive Christ's body and blood in Holy Communion, we are changed. We become Christ's body, a leaven in the world's bread, an agent of change that helps the reign of God to rise, fragrantly, like a loaf browning in the oven.

We become Christ's blood, wine poured out in sacrifice and in celebration. We become the zest that unlocks the extraordinary in the ordinary, the tingle that makes sober people giddy with joy, the sweet smell and taste of the vintage.

Such transformation, such transubstantiation—of the bread, of the wine, of the Church, of us—is possible because Christ says so: "This, my body; this, my blood. Do this

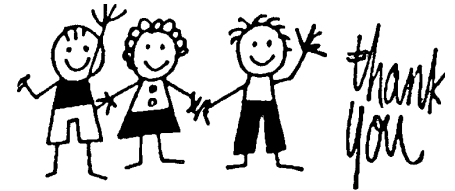
and remember me." Such a simple concept, yet one we struggle to understand, find difficult to communicate to our very young children as they receive (become!) Christ's body and blood for the very first time.

As they—and we—return to the table often and again to be nourished by and become the leaven in our world, then will the Spirit whisper through the Church, calling each of us and all of us by the names so dear to God: the body of Christ, the blood of Christ. And we will answer as St. Augustine taught us, saying "Amen" to what we are: the body of Christ, the blood of Christ.



## Special calls for volunteers

- Can you lend your ideas and talents to the Liturgical Arts Team for the seasonal enhancement of our worship space? Jan Callahan, 469-9346
- The Communications Committee is seeking a correspondent to report on Parish Council meetings for In Focus. Judy Fierke, 352-7670



*Parish groups or individuals can submit entries for this column to the Communications Committee or contact Mary Lou Menches (344-1125 or mmenches@illinois.edu). Provide your name and telephone number or e-mail address with a brief description of the kind of help being sought.*

### Did you know?

- The magazine rack that formerly stood outside the multipurpose room has been moved to the parish library, where you can continue to find your favorite Catholic periodicals and newspapers. A wall display of Catholic pamphlets and other publications outside the multipurpose room, organized and monitored by our staff, is planned.
- Alex Millar, St. Patrick's parishioner, is completing his first year at Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md. He will be in Peoria for the Ordination Mass on May 29, and will return to St. Patrick's to emcee the May 30 celebration of Fr. George Remm's 50th anniversary of ordination.

## From Our Parish Nurses: On health care for men



Every year, the week leading up to and including Father's Day is designated as "National Men's Health Week"—this year, June 14-20. We encourage all of the men in our parish to take an active role in your own health care. This is the single most important way you can take care of yourselves and those you love.

While the life-expectancy gap between men and women has decreased, it is no secret that men still need to pay more attention to their bodies. Studies have shown that men are much less likely than women to have annual examinations and take advantage of preventative services. The good news is that it is never too late to start taking better care of your health!

We urge every male parishioner to see your physician regularly and to make sure that you get the screenings recommended by your physician, and on schedule!

# An extraordinary evening with the Knights

If you missed Ladies Knight Out, the annual treat our Knights of Columbus prepare for the women of the parish, you missed something really special.

The hosts prepared and served the dinner, from delicious appetizers to tempting desserts, and then—then “the Catholic Boys” went to Branson and took the entire assembly with them in a rollicking songfest that had toes tapping and hands clapping and laughter ringing. Yes, you missed something special; make a note to get your reservation in next year!



## St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

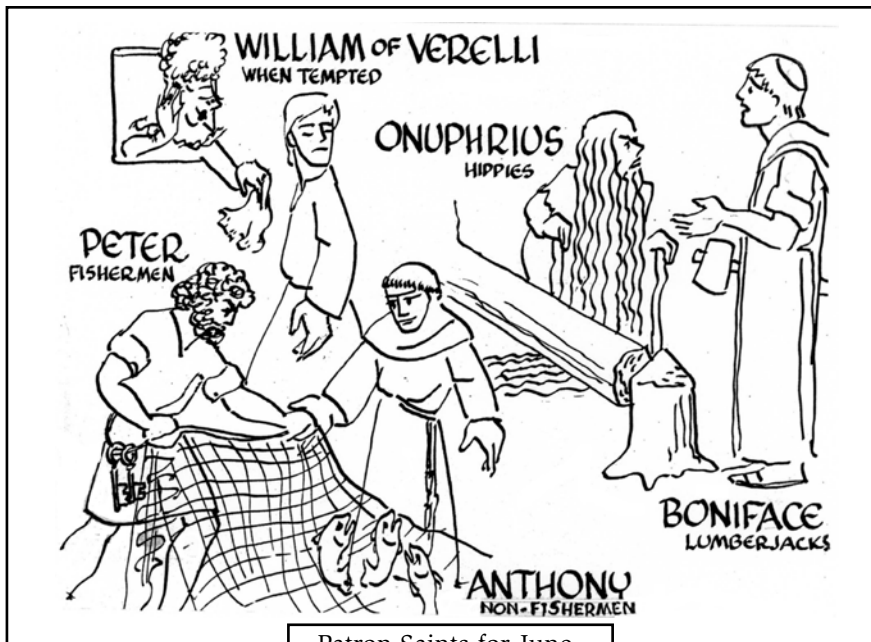
**St. Patrick's Parish In Focus** is published on the last weekend of the month in Urbana, Illinois. News items and information may be submitted by mid-month for the next issue. Materials must include the name and telephone number of the person submitting them.

Please send news items to a Communications Committee member, leave them in the committee's mailbox in the parish center, or call a committee member. All submissions are subject to review and/or editing by the committee and staff. By-lines are generally omitted.

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**Associates:** Carol Bosley, Betty Christian, John Colombo, Joe and Nancy Costa, Frances Drone-Silvers, Mary Fonner, Camille Goudeseune, Rachael McMillan, Lori Mestre, Ellen Noonan, Rick Partin, Carole Rebeiz, Lucille Salika, Sue Schreiber, Merdy Smith, Stephanie Smith, John Towns, Jim Urban, Naneera Vidhayasirinun, Mary Welle, and Joseph Youakim.

**Articles and information** for this issue were provided by Carol Bosley, Judy Fierke, Elizabeth Hendricks, Mary Lou Menches, Lori Mestre, Ellen Noonan, Fr. George Remm, Nancy Roth, Cathy Salika, Stephanie Smith, Nancy Sterman, Margaret Stewart, and Peggy Whelan. June saints by Fr. George Wuellner. This issue was edited by Rick Partin and paged by John Colombo.



Patron Saints for June

Fr. George Wuellner

Looking for Mass when you travel?  
Go to  
[www.masstimes.org](http://www.masstimes.org),  
enter the city and state  
or ZIP code, if you know it,  
and click.  
God go with you!



## Like the lilies of the field

You think you can't sing, you're timid about delivering the readings at Mass, and you aren't available regularly enough to be a Eucharistic minister. Yet you want somehow to participate more fully in the celebration of the Eucharist. Here's a suggestion for you! You can add beauty to the church's raiment by helping to clothe it.

The Liturgical Arts Team is looking for parishioners interested in adorning our church. You do not need any prerequisite talents, just the desire to enhance the liturgy. The team doesn't have monthly meetings but works on banners, flowers, and arrangements at certain seasons of the year. They meet when it is time to change the church environment to reflect the liturgical season—for Advent and Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost, and the long season we know as "Ordinary Time." The team has a budget, so members buy what is necessary and are reimbursed by the parish.



The mission of the team is to enhance the worship experience of parishioners by enhancing the worship space of the church. They meet at a round table; there is no chairperson, just a facilitator. Some members sew, some arrange flowers, and some develop ideas based on a seasonal theme developed from the Sunday Scripture readings. The team tries to create a prayerful

atmosphere beginning with the altar area, continuing through the entire church, and carrying on to the main entry, inside and out.

If you have an artistic bent that can be fulfilled by joining this team, please contact Jan Callahan (469-9346 or janet\_callahan@sbcglobal.net). You will be surprised and pleased at what you can accomplish as a member of the team!



**Q:** What is the present rule for the fast before Holy Communion?

**A:** At the end of the third session of the Second Vatican Council in 1964, Pope Paul VI considerably simplified the Eucharistic fast. According to this 1964 decree, persons are to fast (no food and liquids) for one hour before receiving Communion (not one hour before the Mass at which they receive).

Water does not break the fast and may be taken anytime. The same goes for medicine.

The reason for this regulation is simply to aid in preparing oneself spiritually and mentally for participating in the offering of the Eucharist at Mass and for receiving it in Communion.

Because of their special needs, the discipline is considerably relaxed for the sick and aged, as well as for those who take care of them. Thus the period of the Eucharistic fast is reduced to "about a quarter of an

### Quick fixin's from the kitchen of . . . Nancy Steerman



#### Pudding Cookies

- 3/4 c Bisquick
- 1 pkg instant pudding
- 1/4 c salad oil
- 1 egg

Mix well all ingredients and form into small balls. Flatten by hand (or with the bottom of a glass dipped in flour) on an ungreased cookie sheet and bake 8 minutes at 350°. Note: Different flavors of instant pudding lend different colors to the cookies.


\* \* \*

*If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please send it to Ellen Noonan (403-0979 or eknoon@comcast.net). The only requirement is that it be easy and quick to prepare!*

hour" for the sick and aged and for their care-givers, to give them every possible opportunity to receive Our Lord in Communion.

\* \* \*

*Questions about Catholic practice or Catholic teaching may be sent to the Communications Committee in care of the parish office.*



Deadline for submission of information, articles and news items for the next issue of In Focus is June 13.

## Fr. Remm from page 1

to the Catholic Spalding Boys School or to the public school. These were the depression years and although my dad had a job as a machine operator at Caterpillar, money was very tight. I informed Dad that I had saved enough from my paper route to go to Spalding—this is an example of saving for vocations! That money, along with scholarships and part-time work, funded my high school Catholic education. I still remember Msgr. Patrick O'Connor Culleton, the pastor at St. Patrick's in Peoria, asking me one day, "George, are you going to be a priest?" Regrettably, Msgr. Culleton died in March 1960, just three months before my May 1960 ordination.

Along with two other classmates from Spalding (Fr. Tom Royer from St. Mary's in Urbana was one) I enrolled in the first two years of the pre-seminary program at St. Bede in Peru, Illinois. From there I went to St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, where I earned a bachelor's degree in theology and a master's degree in church history.

My master's dissertation was on the history of the Catholic Church in Peoria County before it became a diocese, 1837-1877. (Ten years after I was ordained, I earned a second master's degree in liturgy at the University of Notre Dame during a five-summer residential program.)

### Ordination and first assignment

I was ordained May 29, 1960—almost three years before the Second Vatican Council began. Vatican II was a time of great change in the Church—I believe it was a time of divine inspiration. Changes were

being suggested that we had never even thought of before, for which we were not prepared. I was absolutely excited about the changes. As a seminarian, I had already become quite interested in laypeople involvement and in liturgical changes. While all my theology studies were pre-Vatican II, with Mass celebrated in Latin by the priest with his back to the congregation, and my pastoral studies did not include lay



ministry, by the time I had my first assignment as a pastor all this had changed.

My first assignment was as one of three assistant pastors at Holy Trinity Parish in Bloomington. A big-city parish with a grade and high school, it was a great assignment that I thoroughly enjoyed. One of my duties was to teach a class at Trinity High School each day. In addition, for six years I served as the athletic director for the high school, finding myself in the world of high school athletics—scheduling athletic events, getting referees, and attending games.

During my time at Holy Trinity, Trinity High School became Central Catholic High School. There was a motion on the table to name the new school Catholic Central. Upon my recommendation, at the last

minute the name was changed to Central Catholic. My concern was that opposing fans would yell, "Stop the Catholics!" (or similar cheers) if "Catholic" was first in the name.

As assistant pastor at Holy Trinity, my belief in the importance of lay ministry was made even stronger. At that time there was no RCIA: priests would give private instruction to those inquiring about Catholicism. Most appointments were after work hours—from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. My duties often required that I attend games during this same time period. Not being able to be in two places at one time, I started the first inquiry class with lay people to help instruct. This was a precursor to the not-yet-formed RCIA program. At this time I was also involved



with the program called Pre-Cana. My experiences as a member of the Pre-Cana team allowed me another opportunity to see, firsthand, the strength of lay ministry.

### Working for the diocese

In 1969, six years after Vatican II, the introduction of the new Roman missal in English was slated to take

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place. I was released by the bishop from my duties at Holy Trinity and assigned to work with the diocese's Liturgy, Music, Art, and Architecture Committee to assist in preparing and educating priests on liturgical changes. My parish was Sacre Coeur, where I had limited assistant pastor duties and no office support; my office was my bedroom. I was the first Director of the Office of Liturgy, Music, Art, and Architecture for the diocese. Two years later I took up residence at St. Mark's in Peoria and continued my diocesan assignment for five more years.



Christian Funerals was written. The RCIA program was created. After attending a workshop on deaconate programs, as a member of the study committee I advanced the recommendation that the diocese start a permanent deaconate program. I participated in the third Marriage Encounter done in English in the United States, held in Chicago. So enthused by the program, I came back and recommended that the diocese start the program. A year later, the first Marriage Encounter Weekend was held in our

diocese. Working with laypeople and using the structure of the Marriage Encounter program, we later initiated Beginning Experience, a program for those who have experienced loss in a relationship.

These were great years. It was during this time that I earned my second master's degree. Spending summers in academic study on the



For almost seven years I served as Master of Ceremony to Bishop O'Rourke. This experience allowed me to see and experience more of the diocese as I traveled with him to parishes for Confirmation, special events, ordinations, etc.

campus of Notre Dame was very helpful in my work with the diocese as it made its conversion to the tenets of Vatican II. I was involved with the hiring of the first music director for the diocese, followed by the creation of the first Office of Christian Music. As a member of the Art and Architecture Committee, I oversaw the writing of the first set of guidelines for the building and renovation of churches.

These were exciting years of change. One by one, sacraments were being revitalized. The Order of

I had by this time been an ordained priest for 16 years. While I was always affiliated with a parish in limited pastoral work during my diocesan assignments, I had yet to be assigned as the pastor of a parish. To serve as a pastor was the reason I entered the seminary. In 1976, I asked Bishop O'Rourke for assignment to a parish as a pastor.



**Serving in Kewanee and Urbana**

I was then assigned to Visitation and St. Joseph parishes in Kewanee. At that time Kewanee had two additional parishes, St. Anthony and St. Stanislaus. Shortly after I arrived, the priest who had been pastor at St. Anthony's for 50 years died and the bishop merged the four parishes into two. Visitation and St. Joseph merged to the new name of St. Mary. I was pastor of St. Mary's in Kewanee from 1976 to 1986. I loved it, and I loved the people.

While I was at St. Mary's, ten parishioners went to Ottawa to take



part in the first Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) program in the diocese. They returned inspired to start the program at St. Mary's. We had men's and women's weekends for quite a few years. That's when people discovered they could really talk about spirituality. Man, what a change from pre-Vatican II years! The parish community, I as pastor, the sisters, the parish council, and the lay people

became close through CRHP. While I enjoyed my first experi-

*Continued on next page*

ence as a full pastor very much, in 1985 I told parishioners that although I loved them, I felt it important for a priest to move on. I believe most of what you can accomplish will be done in the first ten years. Some parishioners relate to some priests and not to others. Working with a new pastor offers a parish a new challenge as well. I prepared the parish for one year for the transition.

During that time Fr. Doug Hennessy told me he would be taking an assignment in Rome and asked if I might be interested in coming to St. Patrick's in Urbana. My assignment as pastor at St. Patrick's in Urbana began in August 1986. I felt very blessed in coming to St. Patrick's following Fr. Doug. I knew I was coming to a parish well formed in the principles of Vatican II. I had worked with him when he was Director of Religious Education for the Diocese of Peoria. I knew his parents and had attended his ordination. I also knew that, coming to St. Patrick's, I would not have to do a renovation!

I loved my 18 years at St. Patrick's. I loved the people here. The parishioners were very involved; they took responsibility and carried it out. I was overwhelmed by the retirement celebration the parish gave for me in June 2004. I am very much looking forward to celebrating my Golden Jubilee here at St. Patrick's. I cannot even imagine celebrating it anywhere else. I feel I have been very well affirmed by the people of St. Patrick's.

I am grateful for the people who have been a part of my life and a part of my journey as a priest. As well, I am grateful for Vatican II and how it has influenced our lives as Catholics. I see these years—the last 50 years—as the most exciting years of the Church. I am truly blessed to have been a part of it.

When recently asked what I would like to be remembered as, the answer was easy. I would like to be remembered as a parish priest.

## Life in retirement for Fr. Remm

### Have you been able to pursue any new hobbies or activities now that you have more time?

I have developed an interest in family genealogy. In 1984, my mother and I traveled to Germany and I was able to spend some time with my relatives there. They gave me documents related to historical family information. Since I was busy being a parish priest at that time, I put the documents away and did nothing with them. However, upon retirement and with time to do so, I retrieved the documents and began my genealogy journey. Using the information from the documents and from visits I made to Missouri and Indiana to meet relatives, and with the help of the Family Tree Maker software, I now have 1,420 names in my database of people who are all relatives of mine! Of course, many of these are deceased.

### Do you find yourself reading more?

Reading is taking me into The Sacred Universe writings by Thomas Berry. A Catholic priest, Berry focuses on the whole story of the origin of the Universe, what it means, the implications, the development of life. Reading Berry's books has led me to order related lectures on DVDs from The Teaching Company to further my study on the universe and how God has brought all this about. I am truly experiencing the joy of learning.

### How do you blend your priesthood with your retirement?

When I retired, I did not leave the priesthood. I am still a priest. I go on weekends to assist parishes in the diocese when there is a need. I maintain a prayer life every day, now having the opportunity to do so more easily with no pastoral responsibilities. Having an altar in my home, I can say daily Mass there.

### Are you still a pilot?

Although I am still a pilot, I no longer fly. It is difficult now to rent a plane in Champaign-Urbana: you have to go either to Mattoon or to Rantoul. In addition, flying is more complex as well as more expensive. I enjoyed flying while I was

