

PROLOGUE

I wrote this story of my life from the notes that I had kept through the years. Deliberately, I left out the names of people and places as I do not wish to criticize anyone.

I think that from my life a lesson can be learned by the laity and even the clergy. Priests who are available 24 hours a day to help others need the cooperation and prayers of those that they serve. Especially, they need to feel appreciated. However, I have not forgotten that no priest can expect a life better than his Master Our Lord Jesus Christ. All that I have written is true.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to:

The Blessed Virgin Mary our Spiritual Mother

My saintly mother who is in heaven

All who helped me, especially, by their prayers

All the good people who have been considerate of my shortcomings in the service of God

Two of my classmates and best friends:

Father Earl - - Larson

Father James - - Mosley, a black priest

PLEASE NOTE: James Mosley was a black man who was studying in a Monastery, in the Midwest, to be a priest. When he began to study theology he was told that when he finished he would be ordained a priest if he would move to Puerto Rico. He refused. Then he wrote to the offices of many bishops but they all refused to accept him. Finally, he wrote to the old bishop in Portland who accepted him and sent him to St. Paul Seminary in Minnesota. One year later, I was sent to St. Paul Seminary to finish my last three years of theology. There I met James and Earl. They were both ordained as priests for Portland in Oregon, the same year that I was ordained a priest.

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Chapter 1

In the Beginning

I began in humble surroundings, born in Portland, in a house that had a ghost in it. My mother had put me in the crib upstairs. A little while later, my mother and grandmother were in the kitchen. They saw a man in a black suit come down the stairs and go out the back door. They asked each other, "How could a man get in the house?" Rushing upstairs, they did not find anything disturbed. Frequently, late at night, this same man would walk in the hallway. Often at night, when my mother would get up to care for me in the crib, she would see this man walk by in the hall. He never disturbed anything, just walked around. A few weeks later, my mother and grandmother were sitting in the living room. They saw this same man standing inside the room by the bay window as they watched him just fade away. They both saw this and shortly after that, my family moved from that house. I will not speculate on the chance of this happening; all that I know is what my mother told me. Maybe that is why, shortly after we moved, the owner tore the house down. Recently, I talked to my sister and she confirmed these happenings.

My parents showed great devotion to our family. This made a happy home for us children. I was the oldest child and my brother was next. We lived in the country in a house that my father was building. There was a pump outside for water and the outhouse was out back by the woods. Our lights were kerosene lanterns. When my brother and I were pre-schoolers, our mother told us to stay out of the woods which we called the acres of forest at the edge of our property. There was a trail entering the woods. My brother and I would go down that trail until

the woods became darker, then we would turn and run out. This was exciting for us. After we got into grade school, we would climb the trees in the woods. In one big evergreen tree, we would walk out on a lower limb holding onto the limb above. When we got almost to the end, still holding onto the upper limb, we would jump and swing down almost to the ground. We found this to be a lot of fun as little boys like to climb.

Once our family went to visit some people on a farm. They had a Model T Ford parked on a slight incline in back. My brother and I got into the car and somehow released the hand brake. The car rolled across the parking area and stopped when it bumped into a tree. The neighbors probably thought that my brother and I were holy terrors. We were just lively little boys. We must have kept our parents busy keeping an eye on us.

Halloween in those days was not trick or treat; it was only tricks. Every Halloween night, my father would be out guarding the outhouse with his flashlight. It was a favorite trick on Halloween to push over outhouses. A group of boys came out of the forest. My father went to see what they wanted. One of the boys said, "Mister, will you shine your flashlight over here as I lost my shoe." My father was helping the boy find his shoe when over went the outhouse. All the boys ran.

My father, Arthur Grammond, in the first world war served in the army as a cook. After the war he became a streetcar motorman, a job he enjoyed and kept until he retired.

As we got older, we helped our mother on Saturday mornings with house cleaning. We even learned to cook and bake. This knowledge would be a help to me in later life to care for myself. For as a priest, I did my own cooking most of the time.

Christmas was a wonderful time for my family. My German mother always had a large Christmas tree that reached to the ceiling. Our family would go into the forest and cut the perfect tree. My mother had boxes of colorful delicate German ornaments. She would spend hours just before Christmas decorating the tree. Beginning at the top of the tree, she would tie several ornaments on each limb from the trunk outward. Then she would tie on strings; colorful smaller ornaments strung on a string like beads. Tinsel circled the tree. Then my mother put tinsel called icicles on all the branches. A candle holder with a candle was clipped on the end of each limb. In the center of the tree was a small Christmas crib which was the focal point of the whole tree. When all was done, my mother lit the candles and the dancing flames made the tree sparkle. It was a work of art.

After Christmas tree lights became popular, the candles were no longer used. Then my mother used a metallic reflector of several colors behind each light to reflect its color. The neighbors would come to see our tree. Some of them would try to decorate their trees like my mother's.

I owe my vocation to my saintly mother who had great admiration for Catholic priests.

A vocation is a special call from Our Lord, "Come and follow Me." When I began Catholic grade school, I held the priest in awe. An uncle, who believed in nothing, came to visit my family. I was in the second grade and this uncle asked me, "What are you going to be when you grow up?" My answer was, "The Pope." He laughed me to scorn. Many years later, after I had been ordained for sometime, this uncle was dying in a hospital. I went to visit him. He asked, "Why did you come to see me dressed in that outfit?" He was referring to my clerical clothing.

When I was in the fifth grade at a Catholic school, my grandmother died of cancer. My brother and I did not go to the funeral. About a month later, I was attending daily Mass with the school children; as a child, I was not very attentive at Mass. I saw a light flash, I paid no attention. It flashed again, coming from above. I looked to see where the light was coming from, and in a window near the ceiling, I saw my grandmother go by. When I got home I told my mother about this. I am sure that I didn't believe in ghosts, I just related what I saw.

My family, when I was in upper grade school, lived in a house by a city park. My brother and I built a chicken coup in the backyard where we had some chickens. We would open the back gate and let our chickens roam around in the park. These chickens produced very rich eggs for our family. No one objected that our chickens were in the park. Later we got a few turkeys, which would roost at night in a fifteen foot high tree in our backyard. Each year this flock provided our turkey for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner. We had a total of seven turkeys. One dark November night, someone climbed into the tree and stole all our turkeys, except one which somehow escaped. This remaining turkey we had for Thanksgiving dinner.

The police never found those who stole the turkeys. It was a mystery to us how anyone could steal those big birds in a high tree.

During the days of the depression, when I was in the upper grades of grade school, my mother, brother, sister and I would go and camp ten days in the hop field to pick hops. Hops are used to make beer. I would pick two hundred pounds of hops a day and earn two dollars. Two dollars doesn't seem like much today, but it would buy more than twenty dollars today. In those days a jumbo milk shake cost ten cents -- what is the cost of one today?

After completing grade school, I went to a Catholic High School. I took a college preparatory course including four years of Latin. I also played sports. I won an essay contest which paid for my college. I went as a day student planning to become a lawyer or maybe a priest. In college I took two years of German and one of Greek. I also took logic, ethics, psychology, biology, English lit, economics, speech, composition, history, and religion. I chose philosophy as my major. The world was on the edge of war, so in my junior year I decided to follow my wish to be a priest. The world may wonder why a man would want to give up marriage and the material things of the world to be a priest. Every man who desires to be a priest gives this prayerful thought, but there is an inner urge that helps one decide. The decision is to give your life to Christ.

Chapter 2

Early Seminary

I write my story because what I have gone through is different from the average priest. It is almost unbelievable.

In college one of the professors said jokingly, "There are three kinds of lies; white lies, damn lies, and statistics." I will begin my story without using any of these.

After consulting with my parish priest, I went to see the bishop who welcomed me and gave me all the information about the seminary. With my parents blessing, I boarded a train and was on my way to the seminary, arriving on Sunday. The Dean assigned me to a room with a classmate. This classmate showed me around and told that we could leave the campus only with permission. We could go home at Christmas, Easter, and during the summer vacation time. You might think that we would get homesick as we withdrew from contact with the world. But we had so many classes, assignments and studying to do that we didn't have time to be homesick. On that first Sunday, all the seminarians went to the monastery to attend vespers (evening prayer) which the monks chanted in Latin. It consisted of several psalms and prayers. After each psalm, the monks would chant the ancient doxology, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen." While they chanted this, they were in a profound bow. I found this so strange that I was ready to get my suitcase and go home.

To better understand the Catholic priest, one must know the lifestyle he lived in the seminary and all the studies that he had to complete. I will try to cover this briefly.

Since I did not have enough Latin, I had to take a crash course in Latin and wait two years before I could take philosophy. During this time, I took college classes and practice teaching for a teacher's certificate which I later received.

Somehow I got through those two years and was on my way to philosophy. Then I was in the major seminary which consisted of students of philosophy and theology. I now wore a cassock during the day.

I should touch on the daily schedule. We arose at 5:30 a.m., with morning prayer at 6:00, followed by Mass. Then breakfast and shortly after, go to classes. Lunch was at noon then back to classes until 3:00 p.m. Recreation until 5:00 p.m., dinner at 5:30, followed by free time until 7:30. We then returned to our rooms for study and the grand silence began. During this time we could talk to no one until after breakfast. At 9:00 p.m., we had 15 minutes of night prayer and lights out at 10:00. On Saturdays and Sundays we got to sleep in...until 6:00 a.m. On the weekends we had more free time as there were no classes. The priest who taught us told us to get some recreation during this free time or if we wished, we could study. This I often did as I had so much to learn. However, I did play some sports. I learned to ice skate and even tried ice hockey which I found hard on my ankles. Our only release from pressure was tobacco which

we could use outside or in the recreation room. Along with all the work, we enjoyed great fraternity and there was always someone around telling jokes.

Many funny things happened in the seminary. One evening after dark, I was in my room with my classmate. We were cramming for a big exam. Our door opened slightly and a hand reached in letting loose a small bird which flew around and around for some time. When it began to tire, it would try to hang onto the wooden picture molding at the top of the wall. Soon it would lose its hold and slide down the plaster wall, making a sound like sandpaper. As soon as it reached the floor it would again fly around and around, then try to hang onto the molding and down the wall it would go. This went on for some time. I began to worry that the bird would hurt itself. This flying over our heads made it impossible for us to study. To catch the bird, I got a shoe box and while the bird was in flight, I turned off the lights. The bird landed on the floor. I used a flashlight to find the bird and put the box over it. In the morning I opened the window, put the box on the sill, and away flew the bird. There was always someone playing practical jokes.

During summer vacation I had many jobs. One summer I worked in a cannery for 14 hours each day. For two summers I worked in the morning in a potato chip factory peeling potatoes. I would pick up a 100 pound sack of potatoes, climb on a step, dump a third of the sack into the washer-peeler, and run them through continuing this process for five hours. After lunch, I was an athletic director at a city park. One year I worked delivering for a department store. I worked every summer as I needed the money for school.

In the seminary, I took turns waiting on tables during the meals. I also served daily Mass and sometimes took part in the solemn High Mass. The meals were like those in any institution--not too good. A group of nuns cooked the meals. Nuns are not known for their cooking. I gave them credit; they were cooking for two to three hundred of us. However, on feast days, the food was very good. On Sunday nights we had cold cuts and the coffee was never good. At one of the seminaries that I was in, all the nuns that did the cooking were from France. During the meals, when we wanted seconds on food, the students believed that the only English words that those nuns knew were, "Wee haff no more." Like any student, we griped about the food, but we had to do some griping to keep us going.

As students, we always thought that the seminary, with all its studies, was harder than going to one of the military academies. Here are some of the courses that were taught in the seminary before The Second Vatican Council.

Along with the ordinary college courses, we studied Thomistic philosophy which was the

work of St. Thomas. St. Thomas, in the 13th century, took the ancient philosophy of Aristotle and christianized it. It became the philosophy used by the Church ever since. Philosophy means a friend of wisdom. It is defined as the science using natural reason to study the ultimate and first causes of all things. We studied it from two large text books, all written in Latin. We began with the following studies. Logic is the system of right thoughts and conclusions using syllogisms. Epistemology is the study of the objective truth of thinking. Ethics covered the principles of proper human actions of all human activities, and psychology, which is the study of the working of the human mind.

Following this we began Cosmology which is the study of all inanimate nature and all things made of matter including the whole universe. It treated prime matter and showed that matter can only be changed and never destroyed. It studied matter and its form, and the distinctions between substance and quantity. Then we defined space and place, time and location, quality, the nature of motion, substance and change, and the physical laws of nature. Next we studied the kinds of life as vegetative, animal, human, and all their powers. We considered the definition of knowledge as a process, then intellectual knowledge, sense knowledge and the nature of the intellect and its operation. In conclusion we studied the human soul, its operation, and the union of soul and body. These classes went into more detail than I can give in my brief summary.

After we completed Cosmology, we began Metaphysics which studies everything above the physical and above matter. We began with the process of knowledge by the human mind,

proving that things really exist outside the mind. Then we took up being and its properties, and a study of all immaterial things. This was followed by proving the distinction between cause and effect, and the existence of angelic beings. Next, we took up the proofs of God's existence and His powers as far as human reason can know them. We concluded that God's existence can be known by observing all of creation and by the use of human reason. For example, we know that God exists because of the perfect order in nature. This could not come from chance.

The advantage of the study of philosophy is that it trains the mind to think and reason. Along with philosophy we studied a history of all philosophies, including the teaching of all the philosophers from ancient Greece to the present day. In one philosophy class the professor asked one of the students, "What is a nebula?" The young man questioning answered, "A cloud?" The teacher became upset and said, "You are in a cloud."

As a result, we had to take a semester of astronomy along with all the other classes. In the final exam of this class, I knew the answers and I sat next to a student who thought that the class was a waste of time. The first question was, "How hot is it in on the surface of the sun?" I put down the answer and looked at the paper of the student next to me. His answer was "Very hot." The next question was, "How hot is it in the center of the sun?" Again, I put down the answer and the boy next to me put down "Extremely hot". He failed in the test.

I completed six years of college and had about enough credits to graduate twice. I majored in Philosophy with minors in many subjects.

Chapter 3

Public School Teacher

My doctor recommended because of my health that I take a year off, which I did and stayed at my parents home. I taught in a public school, teaching a home room in the morning, and in the afternoon teaching physical education to the boys and girls. After school, I coached athletic teams of both boys and girls. One night a week, I ran a boys athletic club. Once, some of my boys were going on an overnight camping trip with a youth group. Since I was working with scouts, I decided to go and spend the night with them. They were camping by a fast running river. I brought my pack and sleeping bag. I sat around their camp fire and then we went to sleep. In the middle of the night, a boy was calling for help. I jumped out of my sleeping bag and grabbed my flashlight. I was the only one who had a flashlight. The leader also got up and we ran to the river and there was a boy standing in the river. If he had taken a couple more steps, he would have been swept away by the current. He had walked in his sleep. We rescued him and the rest of the night I lay in my sleeping bag waiting for the next call for help. No one should camp with children by a swift running river. One never knows what children will do. Later, some of the boys from this school where I taught went with me into the mountains skiing. One of the boys fell and stuck the ski pole in his leg. When we got him home, the doctor took 13 stitches in his leg.

I received a salary of \$1,800 for a year of teaching. Since I did so much extra work, I went to see the superintendent to ask for a raise in pay. I told him that I could earn more in a

shipyard. My try failed. I got nowhere. He got very upset when I said that the teachers should go out on strike. Not too long after that, the teachers in St. Paul, Minnesota, did go out on strike.

While I was at this school, I started a scout troop. I began working with the Boy Scouts before the second world war then I had a troop at the Boy's Orphanage. I took the boys skiing in the winter and tent camping at a high mountain lake in the summer. The lake was surrounded with pine trees with a snow covered mountain in the background. I cooked all the food over a campfire until after the war when Coleman campstoves were available. Then the campfire was for warmth, toasting marshmallows and to heat tubs of water to wash dishes. For firewood we fell dead trees and cut them up with handsaws. Our drinking water came from the clean, clear lake.

The boys enjoyed swimming, hiking, boating, fishing and mountain climbing. Sometimes deer and black bear wandered through our camp which added excitement to the trip. All the boys caught fish, some their very first. We could never eat these fish as the boys took them home to show their parents. On one of my first trips I took 26 boys camping for a week. I cooked so much food over a campfire that my hair began to fall out. In those days boys were big eaters. Since these boys were scouts, they all earned merit badges during the trip. The boys had a great time on these outings. I worked with the Boy Scouts for ten years. After I was ordained, I took my altar boys on these trips for 35 years.

Chapter 4

Later Seminary

After my year of teaching, I went East to another seminary for four years of theology. Theology is the queen of all sciences as it is a study of all that God has revealed in both the Old and New Testament and through His Son. God only revealed truth and put these truths in the minds of the human authors of Sacred Scripture, allowing them to write these truths in their own style and manner, but God watched over them so they did not write error. Everything in Scripture is true as it is the Word of God who is its author. In reading Scripture one must learn what the human author meant by his words.

At this seminary the routine was very much the same as the seminary that I had left, but it was larger, having 350 students. I made many new friends here. The buildings were of red brick which made the three residence buildings look like freight cars standing end to end. The theology books were in Latin. With theology I studied two years of Canon Law (the law of the Church), four years of church history, four years of the sacraments and their history and administration. I had enough to keep me busy.

Anxiously, I waited to begin the study of dogmatic and moral theology. In dogmatic theology we studied all the revealed truths of God and tried to adopt them to our weak human reasons. In moral theology, we studied all human acts and along with these acts we included a study of virtues. In dogma we began with God's knowability. God is known by studying His

created world, both material and spiritual, and through His revelation. On earth, our knowledge of God is imperfect. However, we have an adequate conception of God. We know that in heaven we will see God as He is, but even in heaven we will not completely know Him because of God is infinite and our minds are finite. God is infinite and so only God completely knows Himself.

We studied, in detail, the God's Essence, His Knowability and Attributes. In the Old Testament, God revealed to Moses His name "Yahweh" which has been interpreted to mean, "I Am Who Am". The Jewish people would not speak this name, so they called God "The Strong One," "The Most High," "El the Strong," and "Lord". We also studied the names of God in the New Testament. Then we considered the attributes of God which are: all perfect, infinity, unity, all goodness, all beauty, absolute truth, eternal, unchangeable, omnipresence, all knowing, all holy, and incorporeal as God is a pure Spirit. In detail we studied the divine Intellect and Will, God's love, His justice and His mercy.

Next, we considered and proved one of the mysteries of the Church, the Holy Trinity-- three persons in one God. This is foreshadowed in the Old Testament and shown in the Gospels and Epistles. Then we took up the Fatherhood of God, Christ's divine Sonship, showing the divinity of Christ and the divinity of the Holy Spirit or Paraclete. We examined the procession of the Son from the Father and the procession of the Holy Spirit from both the Father and the Son. Our proofs came from Sacred Scripture and the writings of the early Fathers of the Church. Our human minds cannot fully know the Holy Trinity as it is a mystery of God. The Son of God took a human nature and joined it to His divine nature becoming Our Lord Jesus Christ. In

theology, the name of this union is called the hypostatic union. We proved this union from Scripture, the Patristic fathers and the teaching of the Church.

The following study was Christology. Since it is so important to know who Christ is, the professor stressed how the divine and human natures of Christ worked together. We reviewed the meaning of person and nature. Person is the one who acts, nature is the power by which one acts. This is seen when Christ spoke in a human way, and when He used His divine power as God. Since Christ is both divine and human, His death on the cross was a redemptive death by which we became the adopted children of God. In this adoption we share God's life and power, and after death, His happiness in heaven. We completed this study by considering Christ's human knowledge, which He learned through His five senses. Christ as God knew everything. For example, He knew how a flower would smell, but only in His human nature did He actually smell a flower.

Our studies continued with God's act of creation and all its meanings. We studied Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, their sin and its effect on mankind. The next topic was the unity of the human race, the immortality of the human soul and the soul as the form of the body. Hence, man is a being composed of a body and soul, having an intellect and free will. Then we considered the penalties of original sin: man lost his friendship with God, his mind was darkened, his will was weakened, and he lost his right to heaven. Next, we studied the nature of angels as pure spirits, especially guardian angels of people. One interesting study was about the devil and the fallen angels and their punishment in Hell.

Our next course was Soteriology. It included Christ's vicarious atonement for sin, the infinite merits of Christ, His sacrificial death on the cross, His descent into limbo or hell, and His resurrection. Then His priesthood, His kingdom and all proofs from Scripture and Tradition. We studied the relationship of Mary, the mother of God, to her Son and the work of redemption of mankind. In detail we studied the Church that Christ founded. The Church is the mystical body of Christ, through which flows the divine life of God. As God protected the human writers of Scripture from writing error, so He protects His Church from error when teaching all His truths.

God reconciled mankind by the death of Christ His Son. The individual is justified by the grace of God given to each, coming from the unlimited merits of Christ. The subject of grace is a very profound study. To briefly treat it: Grace is divided into sanctifying grace which is the grace of justification in which one shares in the divine life of God, and into actual grace which is the help which God gives to men to help them perform good actions and avoid evil. God wills all persons to be saved so to each He gives sufficient grace for salvation. We learned that faith is necessary for salvation. We treated the problem of grace and its relationship to man's free will. Our study of dogma was completed with Eschatology, the study of death, heaven, hell, purgatory, the individuals judgment at death, the general judgment at the second coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead.

We studied theology for four years so I have given only a brief summary of it.

Chapter 5

Seminary Life

One can see why I spent most of my Saturdays and Sundays studying. The text books were all in Latin which made it harder. In the seminary I did get off campus every Saturday morning to teach religion to the children in nearby parishes. This gave me a chance, once in a while, to buy a few things in a grocery store. There was always a bookstore in the seminary which sold school supplies, candy, soft drinks, and tobacco, but it was still a treat to go to a grocery store where a variety of things were found. In the seminary I even saved string, as one had to provide for your own needs. The Seminary taught us to be self reliant, which would be useful all through our lives. Now I am sort of a jack-of-all-trades as I can do almost anything.

The campus of the seminary was quite large. One day I was walking with one of my classmates when he noticed a rabbit hole. The next day he caught a rabbit which he killed and cleaned. He brought it to me to cook in my room. I had a small electric plate and a few kettles which I had to cook a can of soup if the food in the dining room did not agree with me. I cooked the rabbit and it was perfect. Some of my classmates came and had a piece of the rabbit. After we had eaten, up came a wiseacre who said, "Don't you know that rabbits at this time of year have a disease called 'tularemia?'" All of us worried but no one became ill. Each night one of the students would come to my room for hot water to make tea. I would give him the hot water but we never broke the silence.

On Sunday evenings we often got cold cuts, fried potatoes and prunes for dinner. Once with the fried potatoes we had potato chips. This upset one of the students who shouted out so all could hear, "The only time I eat potato chips is with beer!" This, I am sure, did not please the faculty.

One of my classmates was afraid of fire. He told us that one of his uncles had been caught in a hotel fire. Our rooms were on the 5th floor. We each had a study and a bedroom. This student had a coil of rope tied to the radiator in his bedroom. If the building caught on fire, he was planning to slide down the rope to the ground. We all wanted to see him go down the rope. One afternoon he was taking a nap. We got a pan and made a smudge, placing it by his bedroom door and fanning the smoke so it would go under his door, hoping that he would go down the rope. He got wise and we never got to see him go down that rope.

At this seminary, I had two very close and dear friends, Earl and James. James, a black man, was treated like any student. There was no discrimination shown by anyone. He was just one of the boys. He was a tall and dignified man and his clothing was always neat and clean. He always kept his car polished and the inside immaculately clean. These two men joined my diocese where they would work as priests.

Many things happened in the seminary. I recall a Gregorian chant class in which the priest called on James to sing. The professor, a priest, was a big and terrifying man who spoke with an accent and had a powerful singing voice. There were about 200 students in the class.

Occasionally, the professor would call on a student to sing. If the student had an ear for music, he would do well. Most of us sat in mortal fear that he might call us to sing. On this particular day, he called on James. Since he was a deacon, the priest called him Reverend Mr. James. James stood up holding the chant book. He was so nervous that the book was shaking. The priest ordered, "Sing the 'JUBILATE' from the book, follow the Gregorian chant scale of music." James began, "JU--JU--JU" and he started over "JU--JU--JU". The professor's voice rang out, "What are you yooooooooing at young man? Who is your bishop?" James gave the name of our bishop. The professor said, "Young man, I vill haff to write to your bishop and tell him vatt a young bluffer you are." We all feared that professor might call on us in that class.

One Sunday, a priest was singing the High Mass and he wasn't hitting the notes. This professor of chant could not stand anyone who could not sing, so he began playing the notes on the organ, which irritated the priest singing the Mass. After the Mass, the priest came to see the professor and said, "If you ever do that again, I will come down and knock you off the bench." Years later, after we left the seminary, we heard that this professor, while driving, was hit by a truck and killed. As students, we thought that he was indestructible.

Chapter 6

My Final Seminary Study

Along with dogma we had classes in moral theology. Moral theology gives and explains all the laws of human actions and their relation to man's eternal destiny, which is heaven. It also considered the morality of all human actions. It accepted all God's revelation and the proven conclusions of dogmatic theology.

We began with a study of the human act and its object. A human act is an action that comes from the human intellect and the free acting human will. The morality of a human act is changed by fear, ignorance, force, passion or by habit. Actions can be good, bad, or indifferent such as walking. All actions are done with a motive which determines their morality. Some acts are intrinsically evil like cursing God. Every person has a conscience, which he must follow as it judges every act whether it is right or wrong.

Next we considered law itself, which is divided into divine and human law. The divine positive law is found in revelation and especially in the ten commandments. God's law in the universe is the natural law, which is the order God put in all of nature. We studied the necessity of law, its subjects, its obligations, fulfillment, acceptance and its base on equity.

Our next topic was sin and its divisions. We showed how the capital sins such as pride, lust, avarice, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth are the basis of all sins. To overcome sin, man

must develop virtues and especially the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity. In detail we studied the ten commandments, and the command of each was considered, along with the sins against each. For example, the first commandment is broken by superstition, idolatry and irreligion.

After finishing the complete study of the commandments, we began the seven sacraments, showing in Scripture that Christ founded them. We studied their history and development, their nature, their necessity, their matter and form and their administration. On the sacrament of penance, we had special classes to learn how to hear confessions and what advice to give to the penitent. The teacher taught us about the seal of confession--its secrecy. Another class was on the Eucharist which was the study of the Mass and its celebration. Marriage was a long course, in which we studied the validity of marriage as a contract, and all the impediments that would make a marriage invalid. Then we studied the duties of husband, wife and children. We considered the morality of every human action that could be done by man in the world, in society, in the Church, or individually. We also included the morality of war.

Chapter 7

Ordination

One year before my ordination as a priest, I was made a subdeacon, and three months later I was ordained a deacon. Now I had to read each day the breviary or office, which consisted of the 150 psalms, which were read in a week along with prayers and readings from Scripture and the early Fathers of the Church. Every priest in the world reads this office each day as it is the official prayer of the whole Church. In the office, the priest is praying for himself and all the people of God. In the seminary, we were away from the activity of the world, so we could develop a life of prayer which is so necessary. We also said the rosary and other prayers each day.

When Earl, James and I were deacons, we went to the northern part of the midwest to help at the Christmas midnight Masses and the Masses on Christmas day. We traveled on a bus for ten hours. All the seats were occupied so we stood for the ten hour ride. On the return trip, on Christmas afternoon, we also had to stand. That was such an awful ride that since then I have never ridden on a bus. On the way back we arrived in the city at 1:00 a.m. James insisted we go to an Italian restaurant so he could have spaghetti and meatballs. Earl and I just had coffee. We got to the seminary at 3:00 a.m. and had to get up at 5:30 a.m. which was the routine.

My ten years of study in college and in the seminary came to an end. Now, I am going on to a new adventure as a Catholic priest. I passed all the written and oral canonical

examinations. I never thought that my years of peace were over. Departure time had arrived. It was usual at my school, after breakfast on the day of departure, that those deacons leaving on that day would leave the dining room first to the applause of the whole student body. After the applause, I completed my packing. I was one of the fortunate ones as I had a car, due to the generosity of my aunt. My car drove along like a charm as I headed West, crossing miles and miles of prairie with not a tree anywhere to be seen. However, I remember one large tree that grew in the middle of the road, the road went on each side of it. Particularly, I remember going through the Rocky Mountains with the roadside covered with snow. Without a care, I drove along, miles and miles from anything, when I smelled smoke. "The car must be on fire," I thought, forcing me to open a window for air. Finally, I realized that the cigarettes were smoldering in the ash tray. For awhile, I became concerned. After I solved that problem, I sailed right along in my new car, pausing in Yellowstone Park to see Old Faithful and stopping to admire the bears that blocked the roadway. In the mountains, which I had always enjoyed, I just had to stop and spend a couple of nights.

Arriving in my hometown, I visited the bishop the day before ordination. Everything was prepared for the great day. It was a Saturday when the bishop ordained me a priest in the cathedral in Portland in 1950. At ordination a priest becomes an alter Christus for as a priest he acts in the person of Christ. Every priest at ordination makes a promise of reverence and obedience to the bishop. After the ordination ceremony, I gave my individual first blessing to the bishop, then to my parents and relatives and to all the people in the Church. At ordination, like all priests, I promised the good Lord that I would never do anything to offend Him. I felt

that I would go out and convert the whole world. The next morning, I offered a Solemn High Mass in Latin in my parish church, followed by a reception at the home of my parents, which was much like a wedding reception. When it was over, I needed rest and so did my parents. Then began the rounds of offering Masses in the various convents which invited me and my parents could come along. After Mass, the Sisters served us breakfast. After a week of this, I left town for a rest. I had the whole month of June off--which I really needed after all my studying and the preparation for ordination.

Chapter 8

First Assignment

My first assignment came when the bishop sent me to help a priest in a tourist town located alongside a bay full of colorful fishing boats. Full of excitement and my head full of book learning, I was anxious to get some practical experience. So I hurried to that town. When I arrived, I found that the pastor had no room for me--his brother was visiting. As a result, I slept in the back room of the old wooden church. I lit the oil heater and it brought all the moisture and dampness out of the walls, creating a terrible mildew odor--I could hardly breathe. It was an eye opener. The next day, the pastor started me doing the census work, visiting all the families in their homes. I went to homes miles and miles up into the hills where the people told me that no priest had visited for 30 years. There had been an old priest who rode horseback over these hills visiting the people, but when he died no one would take his job. I drove my car 2,500 miles each month on these visits. The diocesan law stated that I should receive five cents per mile, but the pastor said he could only afford to pay me for 800 miles. Since I only had a salary of \$50 a month, I had to borrow money from my parents.

On Sundays, I said Mass in three different towns. I was only in this parish for two months. While I was there, the pastor bought five acres of land on which to build a new church. On one side of the property there were six pine trees. In the seminary we learned to do what the pastor wanted as he is responsible. Each morning the pastor ordered me to cut those six pine trees. In the evening he asked me if I had cut them. I would answer, "No". After about two

weeks of this, the pastor got a logger to cut the trees, and take away the logs. The debris fell into a small canyon at the edge of the property. The pastor planned to burn out that canyon. He got some old tires and made me go along for the burning. He threw the tires into the brush and ordered me to light the fire. I said, "The wind is blowing from behind us." He responded, "Don't tell me, I was raised on a farm." So I lit the fire and the pastor left. The fire was soon out of control and the wind was spreading it toward a gas station, going up the trees next to the station. I ran to the gas station to borrow their garden hose to put out the fire. I could not get near as the fire was too hot. So I said, "Call the Fire Department." By this time, the pastor returned and the engines arrived and put out the fire. I heard the fire chief say, "Who is the damn fool that started this fire?" The pastor wanted me to go and see him, but I refused. So he went and the chief fined him \$25. The old fool should have know better. In this place there was no housekeeper so each night we ate at a different home up the dusty roads. The pastor told me, "Go up this road until you find the name on the mailbox." While I was in this parish, the pastor, another priest and I, one day went fishing in an outboard motor boat. We didn't catch any fish. On the way back the pastor revved up the motor to scare a sea gull off a piling. The sea gull flew overhead and let the pastor have it all over his jacket. I said, "Serves you right." While I was in this parish, I baptized my first person, a five-year-old Indian boy.

Chapter 9

Assistant Superintendent

At the end of the summer, the bishop transferred me to an orphanage where many years before I had been the leader of the scout troop. I was ready to go as I had been running like mad all summer. The superintendent would not let me do anything for three weeks. He said that he was giving me time to find out what was behind every door. I got bored with only having Mass to say each day and nothing else to do. Eventually, I got started and what a race! We had 200 children from broken homes, ages from 6 to 18 years. On the average, I got six hours of sleep each night unless a child became ill during the night; then I was up with the child, often cleaning the floor of vomit. I was prefect of the sleeping quarters of teenagers, getting them up in the morning and putting them to bed at night. Then I'd walk the hall for one hour to be sure they were asleep. In the grade school, I taught religion, coached athletics, supervised recreation rooms, the gym on rainy days, and played outdoor games in the evening to tire the children out.

In the summer I drove the older boys in a bus to pick berries, supervising them in the field. Some of them did not want to go, but they had to as this produced their spending money. We left at 7:00 a.m. and I watched them until 1:00 p.m. Then I drove them back to school and became the lifeguard at the swimming pool. Some would swim well one day and sink the next. I remember a boy who was a fair swimmer, but one day, he was four feet from the edge of the pool and began to sink. There was a boy close to him. I said to this boy, "Grab him and pull him over to me." With so many children there was never a time when something was not happening.

Sometimes there were even bloody noses. I also had the task of taking those who were hurt to the doctor. On Sundays, I said Masses in the mission churches, returning in late morning to prefect and entertain the children for the rest of the day. You know that children are always saying, "There is nothing to do." One had to keep them occupied with outdoor games, races, football, and baseball. I think that at night, I was more tired than the children.

Along with the children we had a farm and all its goodies. One time the farm man was late and one of the 8th grade boys said to me, "The cows must be milked!" I was from the city, what did I know? This boy lead me to the barn and we were about to attach the milking machine to the dry cows when the farm man arrived.

Once I was in my room, when a teacher sent a boy to tell me, "Someone is calling for help." I hurried out of the building and I, too, could hear a call for help coming from about a half mile away down by the creek. The fields were wet as it was raining. I thought that the farm man had probably tipped the tractor over. I ran the whole way across the fields and when I got down there, I found that he was calling the calves to feed them. At a distance it sounded like "Help." My shoes were covered with mud when I got back. There were two concerned nuns waiting. I said to them, "False alarm," and they went back to their classrooms.

In any school, and particularly in this one, one must keep the children and teachers happy. These children are not so easy to care for as many of them were emotionally disturbed. They would rather be home no matter how bad their homes were. However, these children did well

in athletics because we had them all the time to teach. When they played other schools, they usually won. Many of them had played very little sports before they came to our school.

Oh, I must not forget the runaways. In the fall after school started, a few of the children would run away. It was rather easy to detect them if one was watching. Even though the weather was warm, those children running away after school, would have on heavy coats and usually their comb and toothbrush in their pocket. At first it would disturb me, but the superintendent would assure me, "Don't worry, when they are found the police will call." Early in the morning we would get a call from some police department, "We have a couple of your boys." The poor caseworker would have to get out of bed to go and get them. All of these children kept me very busy. Once, one of the older children got into the safe and with pockets full of money had a fun time at an amusement park.

One would feel sorry for some children whose parents would neglect them. These parents would promise their children that they would come out on the bus and bring them gifts. The children would wait all day for the buses which would come and go, but no parents. This was especially bad at Christmas time. What can one do with some parents?

I lived in a large room with an iron twin bed, a small desk, and a wooden chair. In the summer, the room was very hot as it faced South. I wasn't very comfortable to say the least.

In the mornings after I got the children up and down to breakfast, I would say Mass. To

get an altar boy, I would go to the dining room and ask, "Who wants to serve Mass?" Many hands would go up, but on this particular morning I chose a boy named William who always wanted to serve. This boy had a high IQ but not much practical knowledge. The other boys use to pick on him. I was saying Mass and William was kneeling on the step. I heard a noise and when I looked around, I saw William laying in a heap; he had fainted. Fortunately, a nun came into the chapel and seeing what had happened, carried William out.

I gave my heart and soul working for these children. The other priest at the home said of me, "This priest is as good as gold, but he will wear himself out before he is old." His prediction will come true.

While I was stationed there, a young couple I had known for years asked me to perform their marriage. I consented but shortly afterward I broke my foot. I called and tried to get out of the wedding. They insisted, so I performed my first wedding hobbling on a broken foot. Since that was my first wedding I was so nervous that in the middle of the ceremony, I lost my place in the book that I was following. This made the bride so apprehensive that she was biting her lip. Somehow, by the grace of God, we made it through the wedding. I must have done it right for this couple is still happily married 40 years later.

One day the superintendent called me and said that a Sister called for a priest as a Sister was dying at the convent down the road. I hurried to the convent to anoint my first dying person. When I arrived, I was led by a Sister to a bedroom and there on the bed was an old nun who was

very pale. The other nuns stood around. I began the prayers and anointed the Sister. Following this in my book, there were prayers for a person who is dying now. I thought that the Sister was dying so I began these prayers. I had just begun when the dying Sister opened her eyes and asked the Sister by the bed, "Does he think that I am dying?" After hearing this I realized my mistake, I looked for the next period and hastily got out of there.

While I was at the orphanage, Father Earl, my classmate, was the assistant pastor in a farm parish. He would brag to the farmers that corn grew faster in the mid-West, where he came from. The farmers would disagree with him. To win the argument the farmers helped Father plant a row of corn. During the night, the farmers came and took out the seed and replaced it with six-inch corn stocks. When Father came out in the morning, he found that his row of corn was six inches high. Father learned a lesson, he never again argued with the farmers about corn.

During this time, I took two of my nephews, ages 11 and 12, fishing and camping in the mountains by a lake which was surrounded by forest. We pitched our tent under the trees by the lake shore. The forest rangers came and warned us that three bears were raiding the campgrounds. At night, as we sat around our fire, my nephews kept looking into the dark woods as if they expected a bear to jump out at any minute. Two teenage boys camped about 200 feet from us further down the lake. They both went up to the small mountain store. One of them came back alone after dark without a flashlight. He walked past our camp as we sat around the fire. As he got almost to his camp, he shouted out, "Help! Help! Bear! Bear! Help! Help!" I told my nephews, "You are afraid of bears so you stay by the fire. I will go and rescue the boy." I

grabbed my flashlight and ran down the trail. My two nephews ran behind me, hanging onto my shirt. When I got to the boy with my flashlight, I saw a large mule deer in the woods which the boy thought was a bear. When I got back to the fire, I asked my nephews, "Why did you follow me when you are afraid of bears?" I got no answer. For the rest of the evening my nephews were sure a bear would come, but it never did.

Bill, a friend of mine, an ex-commercial fisherman, thought that I should get away, so he took me fishing in the ocean in a thirteen foot outboard motor boat. We went out ten miles and we each had a gunny sack full of fish when the wind came up. Bill turned the boat to go in and he opened up the motor. The boat rode on top of the waves all the way in and across the bar into the river. I had a coat, with my dark glasses in a pocket, laying on the seat. When we got to the dock, I found that my dark glasses were broken from the pounding of the boat. We were lucky to get back alive. I thought, "Never again in a small boat."

The last summer that I was working at the Home, I took a group of boys into the mountains camping for a week. They really enjoyed this trip as it was a new experience for them. Many of them caught their first fish on this trip.

One of the mission churches, where I said Mass every other Sunday, was in farming country. When I would arrive, the farm ladies would be killing wasps with brooms and sweeping them into their dustpans. I could hear them count, "Was that number 30 or 31?" I was always afraid that they missed a few. While I sat in the confessional before Mass, I could almost

feel bees crawling over me. Once when I was putting on my vestments, there was a wasp in the middle of them. Occasionally, I would find one crawling on the altar. It was a miracle that I was never stung.

While I was at the Boy's Home, I suffered from allergies which made my eyes water and my nose run, especially early in the morning. Every other week, in the early morning, I would say Mass in the convent and would use four handkerchiefs for my running nose. It was awful. A few years later, I went to an allergist who ran all the tests on me. I was allergic to grass, trees, dust, feathers, fur and to several foods. Each week the doctor would give me an allergy shot. Afterwards, I would talk to the doctor for a minute and leave. One warm day in May, I received a shot and left to drive to my mother's home. When I arrived my face was puffed up like a balloon. I rushed to the doctor's office where I received a shot of adrenalin which brought down the swelling.

My doctor taught at the medical school and asked if he could use my case as an example. I gave him my permission. Soon my problem went into the medical journals. Since then, all patients who receive a shot must wait fifteen minutes before leaving the doctor's office. I feel that I played a part in bringing about this medical change.

Chapter 10

Teacher and Coach

The bishop assigned me to a parish that had a grade school and high school with an ancient conservative pastor who was a real problem. The house looked like a cracker box and it hadn't been painted in years. I had terrible living quarters, my room was about 8 by 12 feet and didn't even have a shade on the window. All the light bulbs in the house were 25 watts. All the furniture was very old. The pastor insisted that the lights be turned off before leaving any room. There was only one bathroom with no shade on the window which was a problem after dark; one felt so exposed. The pastor would take no suggestions on any improvements. He would say, "Things were this way when I came and they will be this way when I die." The housekeeper cooked on a wood burning stove. She had a small electric plate which burned out and the pastor would not buy her another one. The pastor gave her very little money for food so the meals were poor. I remember when the pastor was elated as he got some pig liver for 15 cents a pound.

There was an old grade school, a high school, a gym, a rectory, a convent and a big old wooden church. An old man came every morning at 4:00 a.m. to fire up the wood-burning furnace in the Church and light the oil heaters in the grade school classrooms. The old man died and so the Church was as cold as ice. I would freeze in the morning saying Mass; my hands would turn blue. The pastor was complaining that no one would take the old man's job. Out of curiosity I asked, "How much did you pay him?" He answered, "\$77.00 a year." I knew then

why no one would take the job. I was a young active man. I swear that in this little farm town at 8:00 p.m. they would roll up the streets--it was so dead.

Each Sunday, I traveled to three churches to say Mass. One of these churches was 25 miles away. In those days a priest could not eat or drink anything after midnight if he was to say Mass. After the three Masses, I would have breakfast about noon. I found this very hard on me.

Now my duties in regards to the school were unbelievable. I was prefect of discipline for the high school, taught physical education for the high school and upper grade school boys, taught religion and Latin in the high school. I ran the teenage club every Wednesday evening. I coached three football teams and five basketball teams. Three of my basketball teams won all of their games. I had 65 basketball games to attend in three months. The pastor would not give me any money for athletics so I had to put on events to raise money to pay for sports. Many times my dinner would be a sandwich eaten on a bus on the way to a game. I had so many teams that I spent all my spare time coaching. I enjoyed coaching and I was a good coach, as my record showed.

One year, just before the football season started, I put out all the pipes to water the dried up field. After turning on the water, I went to bed. When I got up in the morning the pipes were gone. The pastor had someone remove the pipes as he didn't want to waste well water. He was hopeless, so we started the football season on a dried up field. While I was there I never had time to meet my classmates. However, every Saturday morning I would drive 100 miles to have

lunch at the home of my parents, then right back to my duties as assistant in the parish.

I had one thrill while in this parish; I bought a new Oldsmobile car. I had it a week when two of my high school boys pulled up next to me on a country road in their hot rod and wanted to drag race. I was game so away we went. At 107 miles per hour I left them behind. That car was fabulous and I enjoyed it; I drove it like the wind. In those days there was no speed limit, just the basic rule which was that one could drive at any speed provided you had complete control of your car and didn't endanger others.

All this work was getting to me and in a little less than a year I had stomach ulcers. The doctor put me on a diet of bread and milk and I carried on the work. After a month, the bishop transferred me to another parish. It was a relief to get away from that impossible situation. However, the bishop should have allowed me to take off time to cure my stomach ulcers--which he didn't.

Chapter 11

Administrator

The bishop sent me to a tourist town for two months until the new pastor arrived. I had an Irish housekeeper who spoke with an Irish brogue. She told me so many wonderful Irish stories and jokes that she kept me laughing. This housekeeper knew everything about the town. She even knew how many children were conceived out of wedlock and where they were conceived. I would go to the City Chamber of Commerce for coffee and the next day the Chamber's staff would come to the rectory where the housekeeper would have home-made cookies and coffee for them.

One day, I came back to the rectory and there was a stunning woman sitting on the chest freezer. She spoke with a French accent. The housekeeper had let her in. I asked, "Are you French?" "No," she replied, "A dentist, while pulling a tooth, cut a nerve and afterwards I could not speak. My husband taught me to speak and I got this French accent." Her husband was gone twice a year as he was a wholesale buyer of women's clothing. She invited me to her home for coffee. I went and she had a huge guard dog. She said, "He will be all right if I touch your sleeve." I sat at the table and had coffee. The dog sat on the floor and kept his beady eyes on me. I was afraid to make a fast move. If she had a romantic idea, the dog killed it. I had my coffee and got out of there. Now I am only interested in people, not whether they are male or female, but in their persons and personality. Priests are a kind of mystery--God looks over us.

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The rectory here was open to all; it was like open house. The pastor came and he was old. He closed the doors and he told the people, "You stay out there and I will stay in here." The fun was gone out of the parish. The pastor often wanted me to walk with him. I only went once as he would just slide his feet and it would take forever to go one block. My time was up and I left this parish. Afterwards, I heard that the housekeeper went to a rest home in the city, as she was old. Later, because of her diabetes, she had a leg removed before she died. She had added a warm touch to parish life.

From this parish the bishop sent me to a girl's home for three weeks. I said Mass each morning for the Sisters and the girls. After Mass, the girls would march out two by two. The nuns saw to it that while I was there I never talked to even one girl. I spent my time there studying for the junior clergy exams that the new priests had to take for five years.

Chapter 12

Assistant Pastor

Next, the bishop sent me to a parish of 700 families in a part of the city filled with wartime defense homes. I was the assistant pastor and I had a pastor who had an alcohol problem--drinking too much wine every day. The poor man could hardly function. In those days there was no treatment for such a problem. No one considered it a disease; it was considered to be lack of will power. Having a pastor with that problem created a bad situation for me with my stomach ulcers.

All the pastor did was sign the checks that the secretary made out. I had all the work. The pastor would not go around people. I had all the administration of the sacraments, such as baptisms, marriages, funerals, confessions, instructions, meetings, and all the visits to the school. The pastor sent me to visit all the families. If I was away on a day off, the pastor ordered me to leave a number where he could reach me in case a sick call came in. He expected me to return and take the sick call.

While I was there, I told the people I would go to anyone's home who invited me for dinner. The first few homes I went to had a nice dinner. Then I received an invitation to another home. When I arrived, the house was a mess. The little children had dirty hands and faces. The chair that I was to sit on had an apple core on it. The children went to the table and put their dirty hands in all the food. It ruined my appetite. After that I never had a standing invitation to

any home for dinner. If you don't accept all invitations, people's feelings are hurt. So I seldom accepted any. All these experiences cured me.

We had many requests for groceries, fuel and other needed things. I visited these homes and saw many strange things. One family consisted of a mother, her divorced daughter and her children. They had a dog with puppies that were covered by fleas. I bought flea powder for the dogs and food for the family. The grandmother was not well but she worked. I felt sorry for them. A few weeks later when I visited them they had bought an expensive TV. It makes one wonder.

A blonde woman who was a battered wife, called for help. I counseled her a few times. Her husband would beat her then she would call the police and have him arrested. Then she would call me to hear her story. The next day she would drop the charges and get her husband out of jail. This happened over and over and I realized it was a hopeless situation.

We had a bazaar at the parish. At this bazaar, an old man came in with a woman dressed like Mae West. She called him "Daddy." I noticed that all the women's necks got longer looking for their husbands. I remember another strange happening. There was a truck driver and his wife living in the parish. She thought that her husband was looking at another woman. So to prove her suspicion she invited this other woman and her husband to dinner. All went well until the couple went to leave. Her husband went to get the woman's coat and by mistake he put his wife's new coat on this woman. She called me at 3:00 a.m. and I went to their home to be the

referee.

The pastor used to invite sick priests to come to stay, then he would go on vacation leaving me to care for the sick priests. One of the priests had a lobotomy operation and after a few days he began to act strangely; he would hide behind doors. I got worried and called his doctor. His sister came and got him.

The poor pastor with this problem had a lonesome life. He always wanted to talk to me late at night. It became a problem for me as I had to get up early in the morning. Many times I convinced him to take trips to visit his friends. I would get him in his car with a few bottles of wine and away he would go. I would have peace. Often he invited his priest friends to come to play cards upstairs until the wee hours of the morning. The elderly housekeeper who lived downstairs had a nervous breakdown. Probably she did not get enough sleep. She had to leave. Now the pastor hired a very flighty woman for housekeeper. I remember the time that she made gallons of lamb curry. We ate it for weeks; it had too much curry in it. To this day, I have not eaten lamb curry. I believe she got the recipe from the army.

One dark night I had a wedding practice in the Church. Afterward, I went to the rectory which was behind the Church. The back door bell rang and when I opened it there was the undertaker with his hearse. He had just picked up the body of an elderly Catholic woman; he brought her to my back door to have her anointed. I grabbed the Holy Oils and rushed out into the dark. It was so dark that I asked him to turn on the dome light in the hearse so I could see the body. He responded, "It does not work." I asked, "How am I going to find the body?" He

pounded on the roof and the light came on. I climbed in and anointed the body. Then the undertaker left. The front doorbell rang and there was one of the girls from the wedding practice. She had left her purse in the Church. So we went to the back door of the Church. I opened the door quickly, which made a candelabra stand near the door go klinkety klink, I jumped a foot. I thrust my hand into the fuse box and on went the lights. I was always careful around fuse boxes except on that dark night. It was an unnerving experience. Who would ever dream that they would bring a dead body to one's back door? For several nights after that I carried a flashlight.

One Sunday afternoon, the men came rushing up to me and said, "Come quick, Father, an old man is dying on a houseboat." I followed and they led me down a trail to a houseboat that was high and dry. I entered and found an old man on a twin bed. He said that he was not Catholic but that he worked in the past for some Catholic nuns. He shook my hands and kissed them and slobbered all over them. I was covered with slime and lint. I judged he only had a slight stroke and I suggested he should go to the hospital. Then he grabbed a shotgun on the wall by his bed. I didn't know if he was going to shoot me or himself. With this, I got out of there as quickly as I could. When I got back to the street I went to the nearest Catholic home and washed my hands. This old man later went to the hospital and recovered.

One day an old fire fighter came to see me. He said that his wife was an invalid and they had bought a home by the ocean where they planned to live when he would retire in a year. He said, "But the boys at the fire station know that I am slipping. They watch me and they see that

I am slipping." It was clear that he needed help so I sent him to a clinic and forgot all about him until his wife called. She was worried as her husband had gone to the barn on their country place and had not returned. She wanted me to go and find him. I got the directions and found the barn and there he was; he had hanged himself. When I got back, I broke the news to her, you could hear her scream for a block. It was very hard for her as she was an invalid. We prayed together, which calmed her.

The pastor took part in none of these events. The school and rectory needed painting and he was busy with that. To save money he bought gallons and gallons of army surplus paint. A couple of men came looking for work, so he hired them. They needed some advance money to live on, which he gave them. They started to paint the school and after a few hours disappeared. The pastor went to find them. He found them drunk in the basement so he fired them. They had painted part of one wall. Now, there was no one to finish the job. I was only the assistant and it was not my responsibility so I didn't care. I certainly did not cure my ulcers there.

On my annual visit to the doctor he discovered that I needed some surgery. He ordered me to the hospital on the following Sunday. I objected. He said, "I know you priests. You will put it off. I'm telling you to be in the hospital next Sunday and you will be there for five days!" So I told the pastor and he allowed me five days off--but only five. I had the surgery on Monday. Complications set in, with a high fever. I was there for ten days. Every day after the fifth, the pastor called and ordered me back to parish duty. It was unreal. The doctor said that I was an exception; he had found fissures and ulcers in addition to the original trouble. But on

the tenth day I went back to the parish--and right back to work. As a result it took me some time to get over the surgery.

I gave instructions to many people who joined the Church. Two of them were high school students, a brother and sister. After they joined the Church, their mother, who was full of cancer, came for instructions. Sometimes she was too ill to come. So always after her children were home from school, I would go down to their home and give her instructions. After a short time, a woman came and told me that I was the subject of gossip--"The young man who visited the widow." Some people are awful.

The pastor called me "Marrying Sam" as I had more weddings and fixed up more marriages in the Church. One day a mother came to me and told me that her daughter was a wallflower as she never had dates. A young man, a friend of theirs who was in the service, came and took the girl out one evening. Now she was pregnant. "Father, you must marry them before it shows," she said. I rushed the instructions and paper work and married them. One year later, I heard that they got a divorce. From this I learned never to hurry marriages. There was a rather wealthy family in the parish whose son wanted to get married. He brought his girlfriend to me and demanded that I give her instructions to be Catholic before the wedding. She came several times each week and after completing the course I baptized her. There was a big rehearsal dinner, a big wedding with 12 high school girls singing, and the reception was in the most expensive place in town. One of the high school girls got drunk at the reception. Each girl took a cup of spiked punch, but they wouldn't drink it, so this one girl drank all 12 cups. We had to

call her boyfriend to take her home. For this wedding, each high school girl got a silk handkerchief, the two altar boys each got \$6.00, and I, who did all the work, received \$5.00.

A woman, whose husband had had several heart attacks in the past, invited me to her home for dinner. She cooked a wonderful dinner. After dinner I was having a tasty piece of pie when her husband had a heart attack at the table. I was holding him up or he would have fallen. His wife went to call the police but she became unnerved. I said to her, "Come hold your husband and I will get help." She did this and I called the police and they were there in a short time. The ambulance came and took her husband to the hospital. I never could finish my dinner and that was such good pie.

A week later, this lady was home with her 10-year-old son. It was after dark, she was taking a shower and was about to step out of the shower when she heard a man's voice order, "Step out of there now!" She began to scream and became quite upset. She frightened her little boy, who after that was afraid of the dark. What happened was that the police were chasing a man who ran and hid behind the shrubs by her bathroom window. When they found him, they gave the command, "Step out of there now!" Someone called me that evening to go and calm her and the little boy down. What a night that was for me, sitting there drinking coffee, acting like a bodyguard.

In this parish I had many funerals, one of which was more trying. A woman came to the rectory late in the evening and said that she was notified that her husband, a truck driver, had

been killed. This happened in the eastern part of the state. She said, "I must go over there." I called to find public transportation for her, but there was none until morning. She demanded that I take her to her dead husband. I could not leave in the middle of the night, and it took some time to get her to go home. The body of her husband was sent to the funeral home and we had the funeral. It was customary to say the rosary at the funeral home the night before the funeral Mass. After the rosary, the wife tried to get into the coffin with her husband. Some men pulled her out. Then she fainted on the floor. An ambulance came and took her to the hospital. On the way, the ambulance got into a wreck and another ambulance took this woman to the hospital. The doctor called and said that he had sedated the woman. He wanted to know if I thought that she should come to the funeral. I answered, "No, you had better keep her in the hospital. If she comes to the funeral, she may try to get into the grave with her husband." We had the funeral without the wife.

While the pastor was on vacation, a box from Florida, addressed to the pastor, was delivered to the rectory. The housekeeper brought the box in and called me to come to help. On the box I read, "In this box is a live alligator." Why in the world would anyone send an alligator across the United States in a box? I have always pictured alligators in the swamps of Florida, not in the Western states. Even though it was addressed to the pastor, we decided that we should open the box. When we got it open, there was a live alligator about one foot in length staring at us with its beady eyes. The housekeeper said, "Oh, Father! What do we do now? What if it gets loose in the house?" I didn't know anything about alligators. What should I do with it? I did the only thing that I could. I put some water and a small board in the pastor's bathtub. Then

I dumped in the alligator. The housekeeper put some goldfish food in the water and we closed the door.

When the pastor returned, we told him there was a surprise in his bathtub. He opened the door and put his hand down by the alligator. It bit him. We certainly knew that we couldn't keep that animal as a pet--alligators get very large. Somehow, we got it back in the box. I took it to the school and showed it to all the children. In the meantime, the pastor called a man to come to dispose of the alligator. I suppose that he killed it as it wouldn't be right to dump it into some fishing or swimming hole in the river.

Chapter 13

Associate Pastor

From this parish the bishop transferred me to a parish that was twice as large but this pastor did half of the work. It was in a better part of the city. When I arrived the pastor told me, "We will get along fine if you will be punctual. Everything here is on time. If you have Mass at 8:00 a.m., it starts at 8:00 a.m., and not one half minute before or after. You must be on time." I learned punctuality there and I have carried it throughout my life. Now I am a clock watcher; people can set their watches when I arrive. When the priest is punctual, the people are on time.

I visited the 1,400 homes in the parish in four years. I was kept very busy in a parish that large. There were a few things that I didn't like such as on Sundays, after the Masses, the pastor insisted that I help him count the collection which would take the two of us three hours to count, record, and have ready for the bank. After a couple years of this, the pastor, on my insistence, got five laymen to count the money. It took the five of them four hours to count the collection which the pastor and myself had done in three hours. I think that they were all thumbs. The pastor was an expert in counting money. The stacks of currency were so perfectly done that not one bill had a corner turned. He was a perfectionist in everything he did. I was a beginner who was learning not only how to count money, but how to keep the books. I learned many things about parish work from this pastor.

In the parish, the pastor had a few people who didn't like him, probably because he was

the pastor. He called them the "loyal opposition." Some people are that way, they just don't like authority. This is true in organization; anyone who has been the head of a club will understand this. All the people liked me, the assistant pastor, as I was a young man. I got along with all of them while working there. I attended all the functions, taught religion in the school, and coached athletics. I had contact with the youth and if the children like you they tell their parents.

One day the pastor called me and told me to go to a black lady's home as she was going to have a baby and needed help now. I never went as a woman having a baby didn't need me. It all turned out well, for one of the Sisters went to see her. All she wanted was some place to keep her other children when she had the baby.

Eldon, a jeweler friend of mine, took me fishing. He said, "Father, if you will come fishing I will have some jewels put in your chalice." We drove for hours up a private road by a river that was famous for fishing. The land around the river was sand and sagebrush. We stayed in a little one-room cabin. There was a wood-burning stove on which we cooked and a water pump outside for water. In the evening my friend said, "We must get up at 4:00 a.m." I asked, "Do you have an alarm clock?" He replied, "No, I always wake up at 4:00 a.m." I had an alarm clock but I never mentioned it as I did not want to get up at 4:00 a.m. to fish. We went to bed and my friend snored all night, I got no sleep and the only one awake at 4:00 a.m. was me. My friend snored on and on. He woke up at 6:00 a.m. After breakfast he fished all day, catching fish after fish. I caught only one fish. I couldn't stop him from fishing. It was getting late and I had to be back to the parish for an inquiry class. He finally stopped fishing and I asked if I

could drive his old Ford car the 100 miles back to the city. He agreed and I drove that Ford like it had never been driven before. At first, my friend was talking, then whistling, then silent. When we got back to the city he said, "I have never had such a wild ride like that before. I guess that I was safe as I was with a priest." I got back just in time for my class.

I heard that a middle aged couple were getting a divorce. I saw them walking down the street arm in arm. I asked, "I thought that you were getting a divorce?" They answered, "We made up. Next week we are getting a divorce." I asked, "Why?" They responded, "We paid for a divorce and we don't want to lose our money. We will go through the divorce and then get remarried and have another honeymoon." I thought, "This doesn't speak well for our courts giving a divorce in such a case."

During December the parish had a Christmas tree lot on the school grounds. There were no Christmas tree farms in those days. The men went into the forest, located trees, cut them, and brought them in to sell. The sale was doing well but they needed more trees. A motorcycle police officer, who lived in the parish, said to me, "I bought a used airplane in Texas and flew it out here. Let's go up in the plane and locate some trees." I asked, "Do you have a pilot's license?" His answer was, "Who needs a pilot's license?!" I didn't go. Later, I heard that he found some dry rot in the wings of the plane. I was sure lucky that I kept my feet on the ground.

On Good Friday evening, my mother called and told me that my father had a heart attack and was rushed to the hospital. He was improving on Saturday and was sitting up in bed. I felt

relieved as I was in the middle of Holy Week services. Early Easter morning, he died. It is a terrible shock to lose one's parent. I took care of his funeral and his estate. I had visited my folks every week since my ordination, no matter where I was stationed. My father died at the age of 67, but my mother lived to be 87. After my father's death, I continued to visit my mother each week.

The pastor and I were very busy with baptisms, marriages, funerals and large instruction classes. We would baptize about 300 people a year. Even though we were busy it was a peaceful life. One Sunday, I was saying Mass. During my sermon the doors in the back of the Church opened. In came a big unshaven logger. He walked right straight down the aisle and kept coming toward me. When he got to me, he knelt down. I interrupted my sermon. After a minute he got up and went to the first pew and sat down. Then he got up and walked out of the Church. After Mass, I asked the ushers, "Why didn't you do something?" They answered, "Father, he was an awful big man!"

Every Saturday, I heard confessions for two hours. I have heard thousands of confessions, bringing people back to God. What I heard in confessions always went in one ear and out of the other. I never again thought of what I heard. A priest cannot reveal who went to confession or what was said, even to save his own life.

One day a boy who attended religion class set the Church on fire. He was a firebug. Fortunately, the insurance paid for the repairs.

The pastor informed me that in the coming summer I would get my own parish. I would become a pastor and then I would have my own table to put my feet under. It sounded exciting as I wanted to be a pastor. Having been an assistant pastor for a long time, a priest wants his own parish.

Chapter 14

Pastor

In the summer, the bishop called me in and gave me a small parish. It was 200 miles from the city in the hill country, in a small town with a mission church about 30 miles away. I drove to the little town which had several stores along the highway and a few houses in the background. I thought, "My God, there is nothing here! It is at the end of the road." My first impression was right. This scene reminded me of a Navy officer who got his 1st command of a sub in the Second World War. He stood on the dock, looking bewildered as he saw for the first time the old scow that he was to be skipper of. That was the way I felt when I saw my first parish: bewildered.

I got my packing done, arriving on the appointed day. I was to meet the former pastor at the mission church. This mission was 30 miles away near the desert, it was a little church with a few trees around it. The drinking water came from a neighbor's well. Later, after drinking this water for years, we found that it was full of arsenic. I'm lucky to be alive! When I arrived the pastor was not there. From across the street a woman "yoo hooed" me. I went over to her house and she asked sarcastically, "I suppose that you are the new priest? The pastor left word that you are to meet him at the other church." I thanked her and was about to leave when a little girl came out of the bedroom in the nude. The mother paid no attention. I said to the girl, "Here is a piece of candy if you will go and get dressed." I left, wondering what kind of a place was I coming to.

I arrived at the parish church, a little white church sitting on a mound with a small hall in back. Some rooms had been built alongside for living quarters. The Church didn't even own the parking lot. I helped the other priest pack and got him out.

My former pastor had told me about the mentality of a small town: one is not accepted for two years. During this time, I should not make any major changes or spend a large sum of money. I was very careful about this. The financial books were not in order so I had to go to the bank to find out how much money the parish had. The bank said that the parish had a total of \$125.00. In the post office, there was a bill for \$131.00 for gas for the Church furnace. The former pastor should have left enough money to pay the monthly bills. There was no money for anything. Along with the lack of money, the parish had a debt from the building of the hall. As a pastor, I now had loyal opposition. As an assistant priest, all the people liked me. Now, I had a few people who didn't like me as I was the pastor. I needed a housekeeper and secretary but there was no money to pay them. My aunt came to work on the financial books, but with no success--so at the end of the year we falsified the report which we sent to the bishop. It was a slow process to get started. The Sunday collections were very small. The people were strange as they thought that priests wasted money. Now that I was a pastor, my salary was \$110.00 each month and five cents a mile for my car, if the parish could afford it.

These people did not come to see the priest--they expected the priest to come to see them when they called. I drove my car to death so every two years I would refinance a new car

through the bank. I was even accused of taking parish money for this.

A good elderly Catholic retired couple told me to be careful as some of these Catholics are vicious. They go around town complaining about the priest to ruin him. They had done this to every priest that has been in this parish. After hearing this, I felt like a target. I thought, "What am I doing here?" This couple became very good friends of mine and I had breakfast at their home many times.

When I was an assistant pastor in a big parish in the city, a florist came every Saturday with long stemmed flowers. He made tall beautiful bouquets of flowers with greens, placing them in standing baskets at each side of the altar. In this parish I bought two standing flower baskets and three dozen long stemmed flowers. I took them to the ladies and asked if they knew how to make bouquets. They assured me as they said, "We are members of the garden club." I gave them the flowers and the baskets. Later, I went to see the bouquets. This surprised me-- there went my money for flowers. They had cut off the long stems putting the flowers in the baskets with their heads hanging over the edge. I wondered what kind of a garden club they were in. These people probably never left that little town to see anything else.

After I was there for sometime, I mentioned the possibility of building a kindergarten for the children of the town. Word came back from the Masons, "If that priest builds a kindergarten we will build a bigger one and have more money to support it."

The main work of a priest is to offer the sacrifice of the Mass for the people, preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments to the people. I offered Mass daily in the Church praying for myself and all the people of God. On Sundays, I had three Masses, one of them at the mission church. On Wednesdays, I worked at the mission, attending all meetings and religion classes. I was going to the mission on a rainy day when I saw a highway patrolman parked along the road. I turned off the highway on to a side road and looking in the mirror, I saw the police car behind me, coming up fast. His red light went on so I was pulling onto the shoulder to stop, when there was a crash. The policeman had lost control of his car and plowed into the back of my car. My hat landed in the back seat. I got out and asked, "What is wrong?" He said, "Your license plates are two days overdue." I answered, "I have the new stickers in my pocket. Should I put them on?" He said, "Would you be so kind to wait? I must call the office when I am involved in an accident, so they can come to take pictures." He had hit me so hard that he had cut a hole in the back of my car. His insurance paid for my whiplash, the repair of my car, and a rental car to use until the repairs were done. The officer was suspended for a week without pay and moved to another district. He had a reputation in the area of being an eager beaver with the truck drivers. I changed that. This was my only accident.

The income of both of these churches was very small, just barely enough to make ends meet. There was some land donated on which was a growth of trees. I had a man cut the trees and I needed a logger to take them to a mill. I inquired, "Where can I find a logger?" A man told me to look in the taverns. It took months to get those logs to a mill. With the money from the trees, I hired a professional painter to paint the inside of the Church and the outside of all the

buildings at a cost of \$600.00. This was a bargain. Some people greatly critized me for not using volunteers, which I knew never works. With volunteers, on the first day you have several men to paint. On the next day only about two, who complain, "We can't do this alone."

Housekeepers are hard to find for parishes, especially if there is little money. I had one for a short time, but she moved away. So I cooked my own food or ate in the cafes. In one of these cafes there was an Indian cook who invited me one evening to come when he got off work at midnight for a trout feed. I had forgotten about it and I went to bed. Just before midnight the phone rang and he reminded me to come. I got out of bed and went to the cafe for this dinner. They were the best tasting trout. I ate two of them. I asked this cook, "How did you cook these fish?" He said, "I cooked them on a slow griddle for one hour and fifteen minutes. Every five minutes, I turned them and put a little salt on them." They were perfect.

Another problem here was religion classes for the children. I put in the bulletin the time and day that the classes were to start. The children arrived but no teachers. I took down the names of the children and sent them home. The next day I went around to the homes and almost on bended knee, convinced some ladies to teach.

Later, each summer, four Sisters would come, for two weeks, to conduct a religious vacation school for the children. In the mornings, they taught classes. In the afternoons, I would take them in my car to see the scenery in the mountains. On one of these trips, a porcupine crossed the road and began to climb the bank. I stopped the car and told one of the Sisters to get

out and hit the porcupine with the loose end of a towel. The towel will be filled with quills, which you can show to the students. But the Sister was afraid to get out. Maybe she thought that the porcupine could shoot its quills, which is not true. By the time I got around the car, the porcupine disappeared into the forest.

On another trip we met a bear. The Sister in the front seat had a camera; she wanted to take a picture of the bear. The bear, obligingly, put its paws up by Sister's window. "Sister, take the picture!" I said. She responded, "The camera is not ready." The bear went behind the car. The Sister asked me to get out of the car so she could move to the driver's seat and get a picture of the bear as it comes around the car. I got out and Sister moved into my place. The bear came right at me. I jumped into the car on top of the Sister and slammed the door. I wasn't going to be eaten by that bear. Sister didn't get her picture.

The people in that area always had money to fish and hunt and to go to the taverns, but little money for the Church. I tried to increase the parish income but got nowhere. These people determined the amount they would give. Even with a second collection for the diocese they would not give any more. For these collections, they would cut the amount given to the Church and that amount would go to the diocese. Every priest wants to be successful in his first pastorate, but that place was impossible. A priest in a parish like that soon realizes he is pounding his head against a stone wall as he will accomplish very little.

There was a man in that parish who was an excellent marksman with a rifle. I was

her husband that maybe he should get her away from the children for a time by sending her to visit some relatives. He made arrangements and put her on the bus from which she was to transfer to a train in the city.

The next day her husband called the relatives to see how she was, and found that she had never arrived. He thought she may have suffered foul play so he called the police. Weeks went by but no woman. Even I got worried. One day a man from this town was visiting a lady friend in the city. He happened to step into a church and there was the woman. He called a friend who went and got her. You can guess who got the blame for this woman's bad experience. I probably did. None of this would have happened if her husband had gone with her. As I look back, I can see how the problem of her parent affected her. God sent her this trial, but she was a good, kind, lovable woman and a good mother.

Many strange and unexpected things would happen in this territory. I always attended all meetings and events of the parish especially at the mission. At the mission, those women, the old timers who built the Church, resented new women who moved into the parish. These new women would often say, "In the parish that I came from we did it this way." The old timers would resent this so I always went to their meeting to keep peace. Unknown to me, the women called a special meeting in the Church and had a fight, they were pulling each others hair--a real fight! When I went to the mission the next day, a husband of one of the new women came and told me what happened. He said that the old timers were meeting to sign a petition to have me removed. I could not believe what I was hearing as I always got along with all of them. A few

days later one of the women was having surgery and died on the operating table. This did not affect them at all. I gave sermon after sermon on love of neighbor but they had deaf ears. It took six months to get them to speak again to each other.

One year, before Christmas, I had some men cut Christmas trees and load them on a truck. One night I drove this truck to the city and sold the trees to raise a little money. The license plates on the truck were not correct. I was lucky the police did not catch me. The idea came to me to plant Christmas trees on the donated land. I had a man harrow disk an area and I bought 3000 trees. On Saturday the people and two forest rangers came to plant the trees. I had to be away on a funeral. When I returned, I found that they ignored the area prepared for the trees and planted them in the grass--very few survived. One would think that forest rangers would know how to plant trees. This place was driving me up the wall. With this type of help my task was difficult.

One day a woman called and wanted to see me. I drove 35 miles to her little farm. She had three large white geese as guards. I parked in her yard and up came the geese. I had heard that geese can hurt you with their powerful wings and I suppose do some damage with their beaks. I had on my black suit and Roman collar. These birds not only can run but they can fly. When I got out of my car, they came with their wings flapping. I ran for my life with the geese in hot pursuit. The race was on but I made it to the house first and wedged myself between the front door and screen door. The geese stood there, loudly scolding me as I had escaped their clutches. If the woman had not been home I don't know what I would have done--probably got

eaten. She opened the door and I went in. After our discussion, I was ready to leave. I knew that those damnable geese were outside waiting to get another crack at me, so I made the woman take me to my car. As I was driving down the highway, I thought what an unnerving experience to be chased by a flock of geese. I decided that I would never return to that house again.

To top this situation off, the bishop called and said that he could not move me this year. After six years in this place, I was on the verge of a breakdown. I went to see my doctor who decided that I needed a rest. He notified the bishop who then said that he would send a priest to take my place. The priest, an old man from Europe, came. I signed over to him the checking account and gave him the post office key and I left. The bishop's office did not have the courtesy to tell me that this priest had taken money from other parishes where he worked. If I had known this before, I would have arranged for my part-time secretary, who counted the collections, to pay the bills and pick up the mail. Afterwards, she told me that after I had left, all the five and ten dollar bills disappeared from the collection.

A little over two months after I left, a woman called me and said that if I didn't come back soon the parish would be gone. I may be too late. This old priest always wanted a parish and decided to get this one. He painted me as a spendthrift and himself as a savior who would save their money. He would get up in church and say, "The fuel bill is \$130.00--that is too high. I will save you money." So he would turn off the furnace and the bill next month would be less. "See, I saved you money." He removed 100 light bulbs from the two churches including all the porch lights. He turned off the electric heat in all the rooms except in the room that he lived in.

All bills were less and he would tell the people, "See, I saved you money." The whole house became mildewed. He turned off the freezer and refrigerator, leaving the doors shut, and they filled with mildew. He would go to their homes for dinner and bring them gifts of parish altar wine and canned goods. When he bought at the local grocery store, he bought only cheese and bread. He was clever. Probably he took the money from the collection and bought his food in another town. He even took money from the Christmas cards mailed to me. When I came back and ordered him out, he would not go. I did not have a chance, I was driving out their saviour. He left on Christmas and took half the collection with him. I am sure that he was a sick man. He got away with all the trouble he caused.

On the Sunday after he left, ten of his followers sat in the front pew all during Mass with their arms folded, like they had the devil in their hearts. They were defying me as I said Mass. That was just too much. I felt like I was in the Twilight Zone. Canon law protects my right to the parish so I thought, and my priest friends confirmed this. However, I lost, for the system says that the pastor is responsible for everything that happens in his parish. The bishop's office sent the priest, and the priest who was the dean in the area backed him. This was an injustice done against me, the canonical pastor of the parish.

I came down with laryngitis, so I left that parish on the recommendation of my doctor. The bishop told me to take off as much time as I needed. It took two months for me to get my voice back. My parish was stolen, which unnerved me. I really had it from that terrible nightmare that I went through.

Chapter 15

Sick Leave

My parent invited me to come home, which I did. I almost quit and became a truck driver. I even thought of going back to teaching in the public schools. My mother convinced me that I should stay and forget the ungrateful people.

After two months I got over the laryngitis and I began to calm down slowly. A priest friend of mine was going back East for three weeks to visit his elderly parents. He had a priest lined up to take his place and he had bought his tickets. At the last minute the priest could not come. So my priest friend begged me to take his place at this small hospital which was run by Sisters. He said, "All you have to do is say Mass in the morning and bring communion to a few Catholics and occasionally anoint a dying patient." I couldn't refuse as Father was a very close friend of mine. I didn't feel well, but I spent three weeks at the hospital as chaplain. I said Mass in the morning and took communion to two Catholic patients. Then I sat all day in my room waiting for an emergency which never came. There wasn't even a TV to watch. At 9:00 p.m., the Sisters dimmed the lights so the patients could sleep. I didn't want to go to bed at that hour. At night, the only place that had life was the maternity section. There the coffee pot was on and I would go up about 10:00 p.m. and have coffee with the nurses. After about a week, the Sister in charge of the maternity ward tore into me for going up to the maternity ward for coffee. She said that she could not stand for this. One would think that I was going to have an affair with a pregnant woman. How dumb!

One day I took two of the Sisters to the beach. I parked the car up on the top of a hill and we walked down a trail to the beach. One of the Sisters wanted to find driftwood. After a while, the other Sister and I walked back to the car. On the way up, we met two hippies going down the trail. When we got to the car we worried about the Sister still on the beach. In a little while, she came up the trail followed by the hippies carrying her driftwood.

Somehow the bishop heard that I was working, so he called me to his office. He told that if I was working then I was well enough to go back to work, completely ignoring the doctor's orders. He sent me to a parish where the pastor had resigned after fighting with the people for many years. I arrived there before summer and found an old house surrounded by redwood trees. The upstairs was too hot to live in. In the bedrooms upstairs, I found opened boxes of bedbug powder. So I put a cot in the dining room and there I slept. The well water was so polluted that one could not drink it or even wash in it or you would smell like a swamp. One little girl who attended school there brought her own water from home to drink as she had a kidney disease. At first, the people glared as if I had come to waste their money. I told them that the bishop had forced me to come. I wouldn't fight with anyone and if anyone fought with me, I would give them the keys and go home to mother. After all, I was still on sick leave.

The former priest had overbuilt and the people couldn't forget it. They had a parish committee which I met with each week for three hours. They would plan nothing, only talk about their farms. After some weeks I finally convinced them that we were there for the greater honor and glory of God. Then the people began to work as volunteers. They painted the school,

installed new lighting in the classrooms, and sanded and refinished the desks. Outside, they poured new sidewalks, filtered the well water, and placed yard lights all over the property. I began to worry about the money that they were spending. They said, "Don't worry about the money, we will get it." Near the end of the summer all the people had a surprise birthday party for me. It was a good party and a donation of money was given to me. The people signed a petition to keep me there, but the bishop said that he had another place for me. These people were very fine, most of them related and very conscious of this. One had to be careful of what you said about anyone as you may be talking about someone's second or third cousin. This was a very religious community.

Every summer since I left that parish, one of the families has given me a crate of strawberries and a grain sack of sweet corn from their farm. Such generosity and kindness touches my heart. The people of that parish have great respect for the Catholic priest.

Chapter 16

Pastor in a Tourist Town

At the end of the summer, the bishop sent me to another assignment at a tourist town by the ocean. I inherited a church, a rectory, and a mile away, a hall and a convent with four Sisters, and 20 miles away, a mission church and hall. The first night that I was there, a mob was forming outside the rectory to start a riot. My heart began to pound; it was a strange feeling. I am sure that the riot was not because I came. Finally, the police broke up the riot.

At this parish, the convent, hall and mission church were new, the church and rectory were old and run down. No one painted them for 20 years. The floors in the church were worn bare from beach sand. There was no janitor so later I cleaned the floors and put Gym seal on them. In the church the pews were old and rough. The carpenters built them when they built the church, about 50 years ago. There were eight oil furnaces to buy oil for, it was time to pay the Sisters' salaries, and the tourist season was almost over. The financial books were in disarray, so I had to go to the bank to find out how much money the parish had. At the bank, I learned that the parish had only one checking account to cover both churches. In the checking account I found a grand total of \$1500.00. I paid the Sisters' salary, a total of \$1200.00. Then I sat down in the kitchen and asked myself, "Where do I go from here? I know no one and where do I get the money to pay the monthly bills?" The Sunday collections brought in about \$500.00. To make things worse, some of the people came around and blamed me for kicking out the former pastor whom they loved. The former pastor had asked to leave. This was the treatment that I

received for about two years. I was almost ready to go home to mother.

Imagine inheriting a place where the rectory and church were in one part of the town and the convent and hall in another. I had to run back and forth. Along with the churches, I had to take care of a hospital and several large rest homes. The Sisters were a help as they conducted a kindergarten and taught religion classes to the children in four different places adjacent to the public schools.

This was not an ordinary parish because of the tens of thousands of tourists who invaded the area. Everywhere one looked you could see people. The visitors took over the sidewalks, streets, stores, restaurants and, of course, the beach.

I started an altar boy club to keep the boys interested in serving. I took them swimming every Sunday during the school year. They would arrive at the rectory at 1:15 p.m. in the afternoon and put on their bathing suits, and we would walk a half block to a private swimming pool at a motel. We were there for 45 minutes, during which time I taught many of them to swim. Then we would go back to the rectory where they would dress. I would provide the ice cream for them to make ice cream cones and they would sit and watch TV or just talk. At 3:00 p.m. they would all go home. I did this for ten years until the town built a public swimming pool.

One of the first things that I did in the parish was to find a part time secretary. I was told

that there were none in the area. Finally I found a woman, with seven children, who was married to an alcoholic, who strictly forbade her to take a job. He said that he would never allow it. I found this out when I talked to them. I asked them to talk it over and I left. Two weeks later, she came and took the job and said nothing. When she went home that night, to escape the violence of her husband, she told him so many lies that he blamed me the pastor. Years later, one morning at 11 a.m., the secretary was working in her room and I was in the room next to hers. She came and asked if her 15 year old son could talk to me. Sure, I said, let him come in and in he came. I asked: "What can I do for you?" No answer. I asked: "How can I help you?" No answer. Out of the corner of my eye I saw him bend over and he threw himself at me in a sexual manner. I threw him on the floor and said: "Get out of here and don't you ever come back." Out he went. I can't prove that his mother ordered this so she could tell her husband that the priest is to blame for everything. Later this secretary moved into an apartment, leaving her husband to cook for himself. I am sure that the husband blamed me for this. I think that this woman was mentally sick. Before I left the parish, some of the older ladies told me that the secretary was the biggest gossip in the whole area and knew the dirt on every family. Probably, I was the topic of part of her gossip.

Five years after I left the parish, I heard that the secretary could no longer remember numbers. Each week some of the ladies would help her count the collection as they were covering up for her. This secretary has convinced everyone in town that she is the little old lady who is alone and has no one. I now ask: What about her husband and seven children?

After I hired this secretary, I looked for a housekeeper. There were many retired women in the area but they all had good pensions. They would not work as they said it would make them too nervous. I finally found an elderly lady, whom I did not realize was so old. One night, after I hired her, a tidal wave warning sounded. At midnight, I got ~~the~~ housekeeper in my car and we drove into the hills. Everyone in town did likewise so the hills were full of people. We sat until 4:00 a.m., when the wave disappeared. Everyone was worn out. That morning no one went to work nor did the children go to school. A tidal wave is very dangerous as it is a huge wave that travels at 500 miles per hour and hits the land. When it recedes it sucks everything into the sea. A few weeks later, there was another tidal wave warning, but the housekeeper and I stayed in the rectory. We felt that sitting in the hills was a waste of time. Again, the wave never came. This housekeeper took Thursday as her day off and wouldn't return until 2 a.m. On Fridays she would fall asleep in a chair. After awhile I asked her: "What do you do on your day off?" She said: "At 6 p.m. I clean a beauty parlor until 2 a.m." After three months the work was too much for her, so I let her go. It was like throwing grandma out into the street. She found an apartment and later went to live with her daughter in Florida. I went back to cooking my meals or eating in a restaurant.

Later on, a priest recommended a former housekeeper of his, so I hired her. She had a reputation in the town "as the little old lady that always had one drink too many." Her friends came with her and they partied together. After eight days, I let her go. She demanded a months pay which I gave her to get rid of her. Another priest sent me a woman who needed a job, so I hired her. She did not last long as every morning at 6:00 a.m. she was in the kitchen deliberately

banging the cupboard doors. I guess she wanted me to get up. I had a cat and I asked her to feed it as I was to be gone for a few days. When I got back, I found that she had starved the cat. She would put sand covered clothing in the dryer and the lint filter was always full of sand. Later, I learned that before she became my housekeeper, she lived in a mental home. This arrangement would not work so I let her go. She had a stepdaughter in the city, whom I called and told that I was bringing over her mother. She did not want me to since her mother was a disruptive influence in her home and rude to their friends. I took her in anyway.

This reminded me of a priest friend of mine who told me of his experience. He was interviewing a woman for housekeeper and during the interview she said, "Excuse me, Father, I must go lock my car as I left my pistol on the seat." He didn't hire her.

So many people were coming to my door asking for a handout that someone said that they had a mark on my door. I would always give them a donation and they would leave. The lady who was in charge of the Red Cross said, "Now you stop this. This is silly. The next time someone comes to the door you call me. I will come down and ask them some pointed questions. And if they are not in need, I will tell them to get."

One afternoon about 4:40 p.m. a man came to the door for a handout. He was tall and he had a bent nose like he had been in a fight. I told him to come back at 6:30 p.m., and I called the Red Cross lady. She said, "I am going out to a friends home for dinner tonight. When the man comes, call me at this number and I will come over and ask him the pointed question." I put the

number on a piece of paper. There were two ladies at the rectory. I told them that when this man returned to call the Red Cross lady at this number.

When the man returned, they gave him the number. He went to a phone booth and found the address and went to that house. The Red Cross lady asked him the pointed questions and decided that he was not in need so she told him to get. When she went home that evening she thought this man may follow her and break into her house and kill her. The couple who she had dinner with, sat up all night with the fear that he may come to retaliate against them.

After that, when someone came to my door for a handout I always gave them something.

A woman arrived in her car from out of town to apply for the job as housekeeper. She seemed very nice so I hired her. We got along well and she was a good cook. All went well for three months, until one day when she came back from her day off and called me into the hall by her room. She pointed to the doorbell on the wall and said, "That is a bugging device, you bugged my room." I responded, "That is the doorbell, I will go out and ring it and you listen." I could not convince her, she took off all the wires and we had no door bell. About a week later I told this to my doctor and he said, "She is a paranoiac and will probably poison you." This frightened me. The next day I got an elderly lady to go with me to see the housekeeper.

I said to her, "We won't need your services anymore." She answered, "We should have talked this over like reasonable persons. I suppose that you brought this woman along so she

could gab it all over the parish." I told her to pack and be out by the weekend and that I would give her a month's pay. With that I moved into a motel, returning each morning to say Mass and then back to the motel. I worked with my secretary by telephone. On Thursday, which was Thanksgiving, when I came for Mass, I found a note on the table with a key. The note read, "Here is your key. I have left." Her partly packed car stood in the garage. Why would she go and leave her car? Maybe she drowned herself in the ocean. I knew she had a stepdaughter in the city so I called her. She told me that her mother was there but she said nothing. Women can be problems, so I had my aunt come for a few days. On Saturday, this housekeeper came back. She had a key and walked in. Seeing my aunt, she stopped. My aunt helped her pack and she left. With this I decided no more live-in housekeepers. Later, a very lovely and normal elderly lady named Anna came to help. She came each morning to clean and if I was gone overnight, she would stay and guard the house. When I was away she guarded my office like a bulldog--no one, not even a priest, got in. I really appreciated this wonderful woman. She worked for me for many years until she became ill in her late eighties. When she died I conducted her funeral.

Chapter 17

A Friendly and New Bishop

We got a new bishop in the diocese. He was a very fair and understanding man. He came to my parish for confirmation. There was a stray cat which I fed outside. The bishop brought with him his little dog that he was very fond of. Somehow the stray cat got inside the house and went after the bishop's dog. It chased the dog upstairs and I had to save the dog. The bishop was understanding and laughed about it. It certainly was not ~~the way~~ to win the favor of the new bishop. I had a good life under this bishop. It was a happy time when he came to the Parish for Confirmation. He was so kind and considerate.

It brings to my mind a story of a priest who had a cat and a canary. He was very fond of them. One day the cat came out of the room where the canary was with feathers in its mouth. Now the priest had to be twice as fond of the cat.

When I came to this parish, an elderly man and his wife were recording the people's collection envelopes. About a year later the new bishop started a financial drive for the diocese. The elderly man volunteered to keep the record of these contributions and send in a monthly report. He became very aggressive and rude to the secretary and housekeeper. He always complained that it was too much work for him and his wife. Sometimes he would say, "I can't fill out the report this month as my allotted time for the church has been used up." It would leave me high and dry. Who will do the report? He had all the records at his home. After he did this

several times, I decided to give the work to the secretary.

A man went with me to the elderly man's house and I thanked him and his wife for all the work they had done and took the parish records to the secretary. A month later the man was out walking and either had a stroke, fell, and hit his head on a rock, or he was hit by a car. He got a concussion. His wife blamed me. She said that I had so upset her husband when I took the job of recording the envelopes from him--that is why this happened to him. This was unreasonable. A few years later the old man died and they got a young priest to bury him from the funeral home. Some of the men of the parish attended and said, "It was disgusting as they had the old man sitting up in the coffin as if he was ready to speak." This was done by a liberal priest. It makes one wonder. Why not let the old man sleep in peace?

I heard of another strange funeral. There was a wealthy man who was always worrying about someone stealing his money. He couldn't stand the thought of dying and leaving his jewelry and money behind. When he died, the funeral procession to the cemetery was led by the hearse and followed by an armored bank car. They lowered the coffin into the grave. Then the door of the armored car was opened and the man's jewelry and money were piled into the coffin. A truck came and poured concrete into the grave. Believe it or not, this funeral actually happened. This man is the only one that I know who took his wealth with him. It is an extreme example of people who get too attached to their wealth. Greed possesses the hearts of many people in our world.

The story is told of two old priests who didn't get along very well. One of them died and the other was asked to give the funeral sermon. In his sermon, he was talking about death--how at death the soul leaves the body and goes to the next world, and the body remains behind. In his description, his choice of words may not have been the best for he said, "The shell is here but the nut is gone."

Chapter 18

The Good Sisters

The good nuns were hard working women. They conducted a kindergarten for the children of the area, taught religion classes on release time by the four public schools, gave instructions to adults, and frequently helped elderly people in need. They were an asset to the community.

The motherhouse of the Sisters had a shortage of nuns and spoke about recalling the Sisters. I went to the motherhouse to keep them which we did for a few years more. We even bought them a new car to help them. We began with four Sisters and after a few years they could only send us three Sisters. The new superior of the convent and one of the newly arrived Sisters, who had also been a superior, had a personality conflict. They didn't get along and eventually they were fighting. The superior had some laity on her side. Some places had singing nuns-- "Dominique". I had fighting nuns! The other Sister, who conducted the kindergarten, spent most of her time in the classroom to stay away from the fighting. I could do nothing as the pastor's authority ends at the convent door. I had my parish council go to the convent to stop the fighting. A man went with them and when the argument got heated, he went out and sat in the car. They got nowhere. This fighting created scandal in the town. Women do fight and nuns are human.

Many years before, the bishop told us priests, "Gentlemen, never fight with a woman,

especially if she is a nun." I tried to get the motherhouse of the nuns to send someone to mediate the problem. They told me that they never did that. It took several months before those Sisters were transferred. What a worry! My hair was turning gray. After this problem was over, the parish only had two Sisters for the next two years. These Sisters trained the laity to teach religion classes to the children. Then they were transferred to the motherhouse. With the departure of the Sisters, the laity came into their rightful place of helping in the parish.

Chapter 19

Parish Work

I had started a parish council of laity about a year after I came to this parish. I couldn't keep them from talking about money. We needed to work on the spiritual needs of the people of the parish. All they wanted to talk about was money. I finally had to dissolve them. About a year later I began another council which was much more responsive to the needs of the people.

The old wooden church with its steeple and the two story rectory were in need of repair. So we hired a painter to paint the inside and outside of both buildings. The church inside had a light blue ceiling and the people wanted to keep it the same color. The only color that goes with blue is peach. So I bought a can of peach paint and helped the painter mix it to a light peach. We painted the wood carvings in gold and the altars in white. It made the church. It was beautiful and visitors always commented on how nice the church looked.

The furniture and rugs in the rectory were worn out, the appliances were old and on their last leg. Even the kettles and dishes were gone. Some of the rooms had no heat, so we installed electric baseboard heaters in them. From the ceiling in the kitchen hung an electric cord with a 60 watt light bulb. I had florescent lights installed in the kitchen and in the two offices. Later, we refurnished the whole rectory.

There was a couple in the parish with several children who were fanatical about religion.

They started an ecumenical Bible reading at their home. They would stop people on the street and say, "Come to our home and we will drive the devil out of you." This was weird. What could I do with them as they were way off base? The husband quit his good executive job. As he said, "The Holy Spirit told me to quit and move into the country and rise pigs." The whole family moved out of my parish. Later, I heard that this man went to some off-group and claimed that they ordained him a priest. He rented a vacant store and began to preach. I met one of his children downtown and asked, "What is your dad doing?" The boy answered, "All my dad does is preach." I thought, "My God, what will happen next?"

I went around the parish to visit all the homes of my people. I remembered one that I visited. The mother was home with her four-year-old son. The little boy came into the room carrying the cat by the nap of the neck. He threw the cat down and said, "I am going to kill that cat." I began to wonder, "What am I doing here?" The mother put the boy outside and apologized for him. When I left and went outside, there was the little boy throwing rocks at my car. I drove away and I continued to visit the homes with my fingers crossed.

One family that I remember visiting was the Dee family, who had a number of children. While I was there, Mr. and Mrs. Dee got into a fight, shouting at each other. I didn't know what to do. My attempt to intervene went nowhere, so I made a quick exit. The husband and wife were fighting like brother and sister. Later, I heard that they were married as teenagers; probably too young to make the right choice.

Some time later, I was in a meeting and I received a call that Mrs. Dee was on a bridge planning to jump into the bay. I called a lady from the Altar Society to rescue her and take her home. A month later, this lady went to visit the family. She rang the doorbell. Mr. Dee answered the door, greeted her and quickly went outside. Right behind him a frying pan full of scrambled eggs came flying through the air. There was Mrs. Dee, who greeted the lady as if nothing had happened. After years of fighting, this marriage ended in divorce. A few months went by, then Mr. Dee married his girlfriend. Through the years, I have seen so much that nothing surprises me. This is just an example of the weakness of human nature.

The parish was physically divided, with the church and rectory in one part of the town and the empty convent and hall in another, about one mile away. Our idea was to get the parish together. The question arose: Do we sell the church and rectory and build by the hall and convent. Or do we sell the hall and convent and build by the church? The people liked the old church and any priest who would sell it might as well leave town. How do you sell a convent and hall in an area zoned residence and duplex only? I had put the question to the former bishop and he thought that we should build by the church. Through all this, the work of the parish went on: baptisms, marriages, funerals, instructions classes, Masses, religion classes, and social events. We used the empty convent for religion classes and found that the rooms were too small.

One Easter, I asked two of the ladies that were helping me as coordinators of religious instruction, "What are you going to give your children on Easter?" They said, "A little candy." I responded, "Wait, I will bring them Easter baskets." I bought the baskets and all the candy and

chocolate rabbits and made beautiful Easter baskets, covering them with colored plastic. I took them to their home on Holy Saturday after their children were in bed. One family had five children, the other, two. The parents put names on the baskets and hid them. In the morning they told the children that the Easter bunny had come. The children were excited when they found the baskets. Both of these families have continued this practice as a family tradition. It was the same tradition that was in my family. I have a soft spot in my heart for children.

Chapter 20

My Mission Church

My mission church was built a year before I came to this parish. A wealthy man bought and gave to the church a very spacious area of ground on which the church was built. He bought all this ground so the church would never be hemmed in and there would be plenty of room for expansion. There was a retired navy priest who lived in the area who said the Sunday Masses in the mission church. The mission ran smoothly. It was joined to the parish church financially and administratively. I separated the two by starting a separate checking account for the mission. This pleased the people of the mission church who were mostly vacation home parishioners. I took care of all the administration of the mission.

The retired priest was a great help to me. He not only said the Masses at the mission but he would fill in at the parish church if I had to be away.

One year, The county court called him for jury duty. He went, faithfully, to the court for the required time. Afterward, I asked him, "What was it like?" He answered, disappointedly, "It was nothing like Perry Mason!"

We tiled the floor of the church and bought new pews. Everything was in good order. Later this same wealthy man purchased a building next to our property, which we converted into a guesthouse for priests. In this building there were living quarters for an older couple who were

the caretakers. They took care of the guesthouse and the flowers around the buildings.

Every week I would drive to the mission with needed supplies and visit the caretakers and the retired priest. We got along well. On Sunday, the mission church was full of people. It was a beautiful setting overlooking the ocean.

Chapter 21

Another New Bishop and a Bad Lunch

The bishop became ill and retired. We had a new bishop in the diocese. I went to his installation at the cathedral. The priests were seated in the cathedral where they could not see anything. A few days after this the new bishop with two of his priest friends came to my area to play golf for a few days. I wanted to meet him so I invited them for lunch at a cafe. In the cafe, the two priests sat across from each other and talked all during the lunch. The bishop sat across from me and gave me the silent treatment--he would not say a word. He was rude. I not only got the bill, but I got indigestion. A personality conflict arose; I would be the loser. To do his bidding this bishop surrounded himself with power hungry young priests who had little use for older priests.

When I taught school, occasionally there would be a teacher who in her classroom would have a child, usually a boy, as a scapegoat. If the principal removed that boy from the room, the teacher would find another scapegoat.

I fell into the same position with this bishop. There was no reason for this as I never argued with him or disobeyed him. I think that I was just the unlucky one who came along. My parish ran like clockwork. Not only did I have the problems of the parish, but I had this bishop riding me. This created an awful lot of stress for me. I had no help or backing from his office. The bishop and his priests should work as a team. Every parish priest is entitled to the backing

of his bishop, which I did not have. This was very unfair.

About two years later, the retired navy priest at the mission church had a stroke. He went to live with his brothers. Now, I needed a priest to say the Sunday Masses at the mission. A younger priest, whom this new bishop put in charge of a small seminary, came to see me and asked if he could come to say the Masses at the mission. I felt that since he was in charge of a school he must be all right so I hired him. A month later the people of the mission were complaining about the strange liturgy.

The new bishop came to my parish for confirmation. He asked me about the strange liturgy at the mission. I told him that I had heard about it and that I would go and find out and let him know. He said sternly, "You are the pastor!" So I went and talked to the young priest who told me that he put his personality into the Mass and so it was different. No one could follow him in the missalettes--the Mass book. It was so terrible that some people would not go there for Mass.

I informed the bishop about the strange liturgy. He said to me, "You can't ruin the good name of a good priest." I answered, "I don't want to ruin his good name, all I want is to get him out of my mission." I got nowhere. I couldn't move him. Priest friends of mine said, "Fire him." I could not go against the wish of the bishop. Later, I wrote a letter to the bishop and said that I would not be responsible for what that priest did at the mission church.

A few months later, someone inspired by the devil, broke into the mission church and burned some of the statues. He took the consecrated hosts which I had ordered the younger priest not to keep in the church, put up a ladder, climbed into a loft and stuck the hosts on the wall. The caretakers called me and I took care of the hosts. Then I went and told the bishop. To my surprise he showed no concern. I thought that he would tell me to have the parish say prayers of reparation. He acted like he did not hear me. Normally, he should have moved the priest then, but he left him there for several more months. I felt that the bishop bore the full responsibility for what happened as he would not heed my wish as a pastor to move the priest.

The devil, who hates God, is very active in our world today. St. Paul told us that we are not fighting against flesh and blood, but against the principalities of darkness. This desecration of the Blessed Sacrament gave me many heartaches.

After this priest was gone, I got an order of priests to send a priest each weekend to the mission. Peace returned.

Every four years this bishop would come to my parish to administer the sacrament of confirmation. He was never friendly to me or my parish. Some priests told me that he was friendly in other parishes. Every time he would look for something to complain about. Once I got a lecture because we changed the building zone when building. Another time after confirmation when the people marched out of the church to go to the reception in the hall, the bishop, while taking off his vestments, asked me if I had removed the microphones from the

altar. My answer was that I didn't as I hadn't had time. I got a stern lecture on being so careless-
-that is why things were stolen from the church. In all the years that I had been in this parish I
always left the church doors open during the day so people could pray and nothing was ever
stolen. The bishop was just being impossible. This always added up to stress. After every
confirmation, my morale was very low. All that work for complaints!

Our preparation of the high school students for confirmation was excellent. Beginning
six months before confirmation, these children came each week, for a one and a half hour class.
They studied all the teachings of the Church and had discussions about each. Their attendance
at these classes was 100%. Very few parishes have that kind of success.

Our church was spotlessly cleaned for confirmation. The ladies prepared a reception in
the hall for after confirmation. I was very pleased with all the preparations.

Chapter 22

Priest Helpers for Summer

In that tourist town it was necessary that we increase the number of Sunday Masses during the summer to take care of all the visitors. Different priests would come to say the extra Masses. I recall one tall and lanky priest, one warm Sunday, saying Mass. I was in the rectory. The door opened and in came four men carrying the priest with the Mass vestments still on. They said that he had fainted. I had them call a doctor and I went over to church to finish the Mass. When I got back the doctor was there and reported that Father was suffering from heat exhaustion.

Several times, I had told one priest, who helped for a couple of summers, to close the door on the back porch. It was raining and Father had just washed his clothes and put them in the dryer. He went inside and heard the dryer stop and start again. He went out to see what had happened. There was a tramp who had taken off his dirty wet coat and put it in the dryer with Father's clean clothes. Needless to say, Father had to do his washing over.

One of the priests who came to help during the summer, had been a waiter during his college days. He helped with the Sunday Masses and during the week, recalling the joys of his college days, worked in a busy restaurant as a busboy. The waitresses called him "their divine helper." It was all in fun and Father enjoyed it.

Most of the helping priests were fine, but once in a while I got a problem. One old priest came who always complained about almost everything. He had a burial of a fallen away Catholic at the cemetery. I had a burial at the same time so I was using the small container of Holy Water. He asked, "How am I going to bless the grave without Holy Water?" I told him to get a little bottle and put some Holy Water in it. He asked again, "How am I going to bless the grave without Holy Water?" I left to take care of my funeral. It turned out afterwards that at his burial there were only two hippies, who didn't, as he said, "know enough to take off their hats."

The old priest had trouble with the shower in his bathroom. He asked, "How am I going to wash my hair?" I suggested that he use my shower upstairs, which satisfied him. His Sunday sermons were so long that people were complaining. I asked him to shorten them, but he made them longer. One day he went downtown, tripped on the curbing and fell into the gutter. People had to help him up. While he lay in the gutter, he recalled a poem about a drunk who fell into the gutter. When he opened his eyes he saw a pig, and the pig turned and walked away. I finally sent this priest home as I couldn't stand his complaining. He was such a problem that I was glad to see him go.

One summer, a priest from the East came to help with the tourists. He was impressed with the wonderful weather and the good fruit. Fishing and painting were his hobbies. He sketched several shops in town. A man took him fishing and he came back with ten trout. He cooked a couple each day, but he never changed the grease in the pan. In a few days he was sick.

My secretary told him that he shouldn't use the same grease over and over. He lost his taste for trout.

In a tourist town all kinds of strange people appear, some of them with no money. Speaking of strange people, during the days of the hippies, a flower child came every day for a week to my door with a flower.

Chapter 23

People and Their Children

There was a family that had seven children and was on welfare. The children would come to the rectory and they were always hungry. I fed them and I worked with this family for a few years. The father was an alcoholic who would get drunk at a tavern and come home and beat the boys. The mother would do nothing to stop him as she said that she loved him. The mother and father would lock the children in the house on a nice day and they would spend the day in a tavern. I called Welfare for help. The case worker came to interview the family. The family, having been on welfare for years, gave the caseworker all the pat answers. I am sure that the caseworker concluded that I was interfering in the life of a happy family. The case was hopeless, the abuse of the children continued. Two of the boys became altar boys. I did what I could to help this family. Eventually they moved away. Many years later, I met one of the boys, now grown up, in the city. I asked, "How is your family doing?" He said, "Just fine since my father quit drinking and joined the church."

A few years later, a Protestant family came to see me with their 10-year-old boy. This boy would steal things at school and they didn't know what to do with him. The father was in military service. These parents also had two girls—one older, and one younger than the boy. The boy would steal and the mother would make him go back to school with the stolen item. Then she would beat him and he would get on his bike and run away. This would happen week after week. I visited the family and they agreed to send the boy to see me each time he stole. This

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went on for six months. I finally discovered what was wrong. The mother somehow was rejecting this child. To get attention, he would steal and she would beat him and he would run away. I tried to tell the parents, but they would not listen. I called the juvenile authorities and explained the case to them. They sent a Mickey Mouse case worker, a beginner, to visit the family. The family cursed and swore at him and he ran for his life. Afterwards, several nights each week, at 10:00 p.m. this boy would phone me and ask, "Why do preachers lie?" Then he would hang up. I didn't know what to do as the caseworker blew it. This went on for months until the family moved. Years later, I heard that this family took instructions and joined the Catholic Church. I went through the suffering and some good came of it. No matter how hard one tries you cannot always win.

I always emptied the poor box on Sundays after the Masses. Sometimes there was no money. This made me suspicious, so I marked quarters and put them in the box. Next Sunday, they were gone. I continued to put in marked quarters and emptied the box at different times until I could determine that the money disappeared about 12:30 p.m. on Sunday. To catch the thief, I filled the box with pennies and had a police officer hide in the church. Sure enough, a 15-year-old boy opened that box with a homemade key and the policeman got him. The boy's hobby was making keys for locks. His parents forbade him from entering most of the stores in town. Even his own parents had to hide their money. The court put him in a reform school which changed him. Now he is a successful married man.

Chapter 24

New Pews and Guard Dogs

The pews in the church were old and irreparable. I heard of ~~some~~ pews at a school in the city that were available. So I drove to the city, arriving at the school about lunch time. No one was at the door, so I entered and went in. I walked down the hall to find someone. A man appeared and asked me, "How did you get in here?" I said, "I opened the door and walked in." "How did you get this far?" he asked. I responded, "I walked down the hall." He said, "We have two German shepherd guard dogs." For some reason that I will never know, the dogs did not appear. I tremble to think what I would have done if they had come. The trip was worth it as I got 10 pews.

Each week, I went 100 miles to the city to visit my elderly mother and aunt, who lived together. I had done this for years, but now my aunt fell and broke her hip and was in the hospital. So I would visit her first and then go to see my mother. Four months later, my aunt was home and my mother fell and broke her hip. We got my mother to the hospital and the doctor did not take care of her until the next day. Somehow there was a mix up. After a few months, she was back home.

To get away from all the stress, I took a few days to go skiing in the mountains. I have always enjoyed the outdoors and especially the mountains. The snow always makes the mountains so beautiful and invigorating. There I could relax and forget the continuous ringing

of the telephone and doorbell at the rectory.

When I got back, the furnace in the rectory went out. It was very old. We put in a new furnace, which blew dust all through the house. The carpenters came and took out all the old vents and replaced them and installed an electronic dust remover. At first, it did not work, but with some adjustments it began to operate.

All of this kicked up my ulcers and somehow I sprained my right ankle so I went to see the doctor who ordered me to stay off my feet. I went back to the parish and the next morning I received a call from the hospital for a man who had a heart attack. In the evening, I received another call to go to the hospital for a man who died in an auto accident. On Saturday, I had a wedding at the mission church, followed on Sunday by three Masses. On Monday, which was All Saints Day, I said two Masses and on Tuesday, which was All Souls Day, I offered three Masses. My ankle got worse and the doctor said I had tendonitis. He gave me some pills and said, "Stay off your feet." The next Friday, First Friday, I took communion to the sick in the rest homes and to people in private homes. The next day, Saturday, I had another wedding and three Masses on Sunday. To top it all, I came down with a cold and could only whisper at the Masses. How could I stay off my feet? I was the only priest in this parish.

Chapter 25

Sick Calls

On the first Friday of each month, I took communion to all the sick in the parish. One elderly lady, who was full of cancer and dying, was not in her apartment when I came. A lady told me that she was in the hospital. I had brought her communion for many years. I went to the hospital and gave her communion. Afterwards she said, "The doctors told me that they are going to operate on me next Tuesday." When I left her room, I knew that surgery couldn't help her, just make her miserable. She was so old and full of cancer and she was dying. The doctors should just keep her out of pain and let her die in peace. As pastor, I took care of my old people. I went to the front office and said, "If you operate on her Tuesday, she will be dead on Wednesday." My words were not heeded. They tried to operate and had to stop as her muscles went into spasms. She did not die on Wednesday, she died on Thursday. I went to see the doctor about this and asked, "Why?" He said, "We were operating to learn something for medical science." I knew that medical science was not interested in what new medical facts are found in a small hospital. They were just padding the bill.

There was an elderly business man who was riding a bicycle and fell and broke his hip. The general surgeon operated and put in a pin. Later, the pin slipped and the surgeon went in the man's hip to fasten the pin. By this time the man's leg was much shorter. His wife came to me and I told her to take her husband to the city and get a bone specialist. She answered, "That is what our children have said." She went to see the doctor and informed him that the priest had

recommended this. The doctor came to the rectory and ranted and raved. I admitted that I had told her to go to a specialist. He shouted, "I am a specialist, I am a specialist!" All that he was trying to do was keep the business at home. The woman took her husband to a city hospital and they had to rebuild his hip.

I had just finished a Sunday Mass when I got a call from a woman who said that she just got home from Mass and found her husband dead on the floor. I got the Holy Oils and rushed to anoint him. She was not upset so I went back for the next Sunday Mass. I learned later that after I left, she went to a restaurant and had lunch. The story behind this was that when she was a young woman, she met and married this much older man who had money. She probably thought that he would not live so long. To her surprise he lived forty years. So when she found him dead she probably was not very disappointed that he died.