

As Catholic chaplain's prexy**Father Davies honored Friday at testimonial dinner by MCI**By **LIGBIE POWELL**

"You just don't sit down and enumerate the many things Father Davies has done. They're too numerous and he does it all so low key."

"Telling about Father Davies in a few words — that's impossible."

"He's the man with the contraband for all three shifts of the men working in the Control Center at Maryland Correctional Institution. Once we get in there we can't get out and along about 8:30 a.m. we begin to be ready to climb up the wall and wonder where is Father Davies? Then he comes with the donuts."

"He is a world traveler, a frequent consultant with the Pope in Rome and a connoisseur of restaurants."

"And, he's human."

A deserving tribute

These were just a few of the many tributes given to Father Davies by fellow associates at the Maryland Correctional Institution Friday evening when a "surprise" testimonial dinner was given at The Venice, honoring his election as president of the American Catholic Correctional Chaplain's Association.

Father Davies, who is the priest at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, has served as chaplain for the past 13 years at MCI and has garnered a host of friends, both with his working associates and the men with whom he has served as father confessor, spiritual advisor, and just plain friend.

Nearly 200 people gathered for the dinner, which brought the honored guest to The Venice in the guise of picking up a roast of venison, then on to the home of Superintendent Gerald Keller, for some of his own country cured ham. Good food is an important thing in Father Davies' life and his friends try to see to it that he shares the best.

When he realized that the party was for him and that former Superintendent Robert McColley had come back to pay special tribute in behalf of everyone at MCI, the honored guest joined in the festivities and had a good time.

A patriotic theme

The committee in charge, that consisted of Gerald Keller, superintendent of MCI; Marlin Bachtell, assistant superintendent for custody, who served as chairman; Greg Callas, Father Riggi and Carolyn Suman, had decorated the room in red, white and blue and centered each table with old fashioned Victorian lady slippers holding baby's breath, baker fern and red, white and blue flowers. These had been created by Mrs. Bachtell.

Father Riggi, chaplain at the Maryland Correctional Training Center and a colleague of the honored guest, gave the invocation, while Cliff Kershner, training officer at MCI, served as master of ceremonies.

Robert McColley, now superintendent of the Maryland Correctional Camp System and residing in Ellensburg City, had a long association with Father Davies and, with tongue in cheek, mingled the humorous with the serious. He noted that the honor of being elected president of the American Catholic Correctional Chaplain's Association is just one of the many honors bestowed upon Father Davies.

"He is a member of the local and national council of the Boy Scouts of America and has been honored with the Silver Beaver Award; he was the creator of the first Explorer's Post in any correctional institution in the United States, and, when I accompanied him to a meeting in Atlantic City for a meeting of the Boy Scouts I saw first hand the respect Father Davies received from these people.

"He has been active in the development and has imple-

mented self-improvement programs at MCI and his hand has been a great part of their success. He is also a member of the Board of the Volunteers of America."

Started together

Mr. McColley revealed that when he first went to work at MCI as assistant superintendent Father Davies came there as the new chaplain. The relationship has been close and it was with a great amount of humor that he told of one prisoner whom both trusted, and of his finesse in getting away and getting contraband. "He cleaned both of us out," the former superintendent laughed, "and we both had faith in him and thought we could do something for him."

Father Davies' fame with dinners at his home were described, and the celebration of his 25th anniversary in the priesthood, held at Calvert Hall. "It is a privilege to have the opportunity to know and to work with Father Davies," the featured speaker said. "He thinks, he plans, he works, and he never believes that anything is too unimportant to do well."

Quoting from Gibran's "The Prophet" he said, "When you give of your possessions you give but little. It is when you give of yourself that you give much. It is through hands such as these that God speaks for Father Davies is a respecter of people's needs. He is a man, and a living man of God."

"There are many jobs that a chaplain performs," said the master of ceremonies. "He not only administers to the needs of the incarcerated but at times when the heavy smoke of disturbance hangs heavy over the institution he can be found walking among the employees. It is at these times that you will find the men walking with God."

Awards are given

There were presents, one humorous one — an oversized "special donut," given in recognition of the many donuts Father Davies brings in to the men in the control center each murning. He was also given a pound of coffee for this special daily event and a gift certificate for one dozen donuts. This was bestowed, complete with a description of the proceedings, by Sgt. Robert Barnhart.

Father Riggi disclosed that the word is out that the two are doing their cooking in a new micro-wave oven, so he presented a micro-wave cookbook to Father Davies; while Superintendent Keller, after first "straightening some of the stories out that had been told" gave him this accolade: "Father Davies has been a real, real asset to the Division of Corrections." He then presented him with a plaque in recognition of "the many years of dedicated service that you have given."

Julian Brown, assistant superintendent at MCI for treatment, presented to a very personal friend a "Distinguished Award" from Governor Marvin Mandel; and Marlin Bachtell gave him a plaque and a badge making him "an honorary correctional officer." "This reflects how we feel about you," he added.

A very special gift, a pair of handmade horseshoes made into bookends, was created by Charles Barnhart, who, after falling off the roof and badly injuring himself, returned to his workshop to finish the horseshoes before going to the hospital. "This gift suggests good health, good luck and a successful career," Cliff Kershner told Father Davies when presenting it.

The sermon begins

It was time for Father Davies. "It's time for the sermon," he told his listeners. He described the ruse to get him there even though he had made other dinner plans, noting he was pleased beyond words. "Being president of the American Catholic Correctional Chaplain's Association is a lonely job," he explained, "but one of the privileges is that you receive mail from all over the country."

**Paying tribute to Father Davies**

Father Joseph A. Davies, seated right, pastor of St. Joseph's Catholic Church and Catholic chaplain at Maryland Correctional Institution, is shown with some of the gifts he received during a testimonial dinner Friday evening, and some of the persons who helped honor him.

Seated left is Robert McColley, former

superintendent of Maryland Correctional Training Center, who went to MCI as assistant superintendent at the same time Father Davies went there 13 years ago as chaplain, but who now is superintendent of the Maryland Correctional Camp System; and standing center, is Gerald Keller, superintendent of MCI.

He revealed that he had been a guidance counselor in a boys' school before coming here and that his immediate superior had told him, "Go to Hagerstown and correct all the mistakes you made in guidance." "And, sure enough, some of my graduates were here!"

He then noted, "Corrections in Hagerstown is a variety and breed all its own. It is a group of people with whom it is a job to work. It is those people doing their best for the individuals with-

in their care. We have our ups and downs, our moments of despair. We are sadly misrepresented with the public. Many people just do not understand our motives. All things have a place in putting together the pieces of the inmate's life in order to make him whole. You can be especially proud of what you have done in Hagerstown."

At the conclusion Father Davies received a five minute standing ovation. The benediction was given by the Reverend Giles, Protestant chaplain at MCI.