

Keeps Eye on Parish in the Spud Country

As assistant pastor at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in West Hempstead, the Rev. Francis T. Dobson saw the congregation grow in 24 years from 500 families to more than 3,000. Now he is pastor of his own parish, St. Francis Cabrini in Coram, a congregation of 500 families.

"I doubt that St. Francis' growth will be as phenomenal as St. Thomas' was," he said. "But you never know. I am right in the heart of the farming and potato country, but housing de-



Rev. Francis T. Dobson

velopments are springing up almost as fast as the fine potato crops."

Father Dobson, radio director for the Rockville Centre Diocese, is in charge of production of 11 Catholic weekly programs over various Long Island stations. For 10 years he conducted the Salve Regina program on WHLI and is now heard on programs on WALK and WPAC in Patchogue, and WRIV, Riverhead.

Another current duty is the preparation of radio programs to publicize the diocesan campaign for funds for the four diocesan high schools which are planned.

Grew Up in Queens

The affable, 6-foot-2, 207-pound priest was born in Manhattan and raised in Woodhaven. As a youngster he served as an altar boy and knew by the time of his graduation from parochial school that he wished to become a priest.

He was graduated from St. John's Prep and College and attended Our Lady of Angels Seminary at Niagara University and Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington. He was ordained in 1939 and served all his priestly life until now as assistant to the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph A. Smith at St. Thomas.

One of his duties at St. Thomas was instructing the altar boys. Six of his charges, he proudly points out, have become priests themselves. One of them is the Rev. William Tierney, vice chancellor of the diocese.

He's an Avid Golfer

The brown-haired, blue-eyed pastor, who played baseball and football in his youth, is an avid golfer, when he gets the chance.

"I am happy when I break 100," he said modestly.

His other big sports interest is rooting for and suffering with the Mets. At one time he held similar affection for the Dodgers.

His new church is a small white clapboard building, set on 28 acres, most of it woodland.

His father, Thomas, a retired grocer, and mother, Ellen, now live in Oceanside.