

## Obituaries

### Rev. J.M. Bettencourt e Avila, ex-pastor of Mt. Carmel Church

FALL RIVER — The Rev. Jose Maria Bettencourt e Avila, 81, retired pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, New Bedford, and a priest for 58 years, died Thursday, Nov. 3, 1988, at the Rose Hawthorne Lathrop Home.

Father Avila, who had been living in Falmouth since his retirement, served as pastor of the New Bedford parish from May 1964 until resigning because of illness in January 1974.

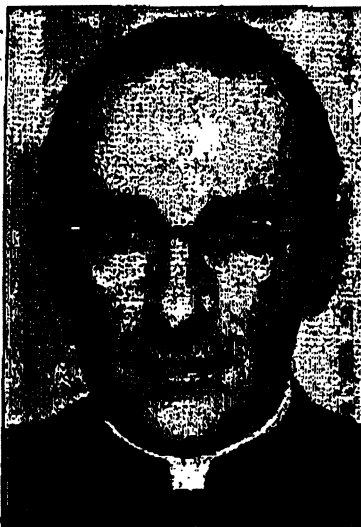
The Most Rev. Daniel A. Cronin, S.T.D., bishop of the Fall River Diocese, will be principal celebrant for a Concelebrated Funeral Mass at 11 a.m. Monday at St. Anthony Church, East Falmouth. His body will lie in state from 2 to 9 p.m. Sunday at the church, with a welcoming ceremony at 2 and wake service at 7.

Born in Rosais, Sao Jorge, Azores, on Nov. 16, 1906, Father Avila was the son of the late Joao Maria Bettencourt e Avila and Rosa Silveira de Sanches de Bettencourt e Avila. The eldest in a family of eight children, he received his elementary education on Sao Jorge and went to high school in neighboring Terceira, before coming to the United States about 1925 to study for the priesthood at Mary's Seminary, Baltimore. He received his bachelor of arts and licentiate in sacred theology with highest honors.

He was ordained on June 14, 1930, in St. Mary Cathedral.

Father Avila served curacies at St. Anthony Church, Taunton, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, New Bedford, before being sent to Washington, D.C., in 1937, for advanced studies at Catholic University. He received a master of arts degree. He also studied at Harvard University.

Returning to the diocese, he was a curate at Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Church, New Bedford; Our Lady of Health, Fall River, and again at Immaculate Conception Church and became administrator of St. Anthony Church, East Falmouth, in 1944.



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Was a priest for 58 years

Being named pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was a unique distinction in that he was called upon to replace the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Antonio Pacheco Vieira, the parish's second pastor, who died in March 1964 at 98 after serving 36 years.

The parish had been formed to Portuguese-speaking residents and Father Avila's pastorate coincided with the early years of a new wave of Portuguese immigrants to this area. He was active in promoting English classes, studies for citizenship and the development of a bilingual library.

He was named a New Bedford City Council chaplain in December 1987, when members of the clergy were invited to open its sessions with prayer.

Survivors include three sisters, Rosa Silveira and Maria Silva, both of Stoughton, and Maria Jose Avelar of Sao Jorge; and two brothers, Antonio M. and Manuel M., both of Sao Jorge.

Arrangements are by the Jenkins, Cole and Gleason Funeral Home of Falmouth.