

1,000 Flock to Funeral Of Priest in Uxbridge

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By Helen Sharkey
Of the Regional Staff

UXBRIDGE — "He was visible to his flock...He saw the individual, not the crowd...He had the power to echo God's words and works."

These were among the thoughts which Auxiliary Bishop Timothy J. Harrington conveyed to the 1,000 persons overflowing St. Mary's Church yesterday in the homily at the funeral of the Rev. Donald J. Rebokus. He was its pastor for five years.

Following an all-night vigil manned by State Police after Wednesday night's wake service, mourners started arriving two hours before the 10 a.m. funeral time. By 9:30, questions about seats turned to "Where is the standing room?"

It was in two side aisles, the rear of the church and the vestibule. Fire Chief William B. Albin monitored the assemblage, and had an ambulance crew on standby. A sound system was placed on church property so those in the vestibule and near the doors could hear.

More of Father Rebokus's fellow priests came than seats had been saved for. The estimate was about 150. Their voices and hands raised in unison, they all concelebrated the Mass with the nine principal concelebrants who were on the altar. Organist was Joseph R. Poli-cell.

Three Bishops Present

Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan, Bishop John Marshall of Burlington, Vt., and Bishop Harrington headed this group. Bishop Flanagan presided at the burial service in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Barre, three hours later. There, about 200 gathered at the grave, including a formal escort of about 40 from the State Police. State Police estimated 60 cars besides their own made the swiftly escorted pilgrimage.

Father Rebokus, a State Police chaplain 20 years, was given the rank of captain last year. He officiated at the March 1 funeral of Trooper George L. Hanna of Holliston, who was shot to death Feb. 28 in Auburn. At the service

Cort Gariepy, sounded "Taps," as he stood near the cemetery's American Flag which was at half-staff. "My father knew him," he said of Father Rebokus.

Remembers Headmaster

Another solitary figure, in Air Force uniform, stood in reflective silence at the church ceremony and again at graveside. He turned out to be S/Sgt. Stephen O'Neil of Worcester. "He was my headmaster," he said of Father Rebokus, who had served in that capacity at Holy Name High School.

Almost as many state policemen as priests came to the church. "He was their confidant," Bishop Harrington said of Father Rebokus. Their leader, Col. James T. Canty, was there, as was Commissioner Frank J. Trabucco of the Department of Public Safety.

Bishop Harrington said Father Rebokus was an eloquent exemplar of the priesthood and the priestly ministry, through love for God and love for humans.

Major concelebrants with the three bishops included the Rev. Msgr. Leo J. Battista, the Rev. Gerard P. Walsh, associate pastor of St. Mary's; the Rev. John Hartigan, State Police chaplain; the Rev. George E. Denomme, pastor of St. Cecilia's Church, Leominster; the Rev. James B. Kelly, pastor of St. Columba's Church, Paxton, and the Rev. Henry G. Bowen, pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Church, Worcester.

Lilly Ann Turner Services

LANCASTER — A memorial service will be held tomorrow in memory of Lilly Ann (Johnson) Turner, 56, of Old County Road who died in her home March 21 after a long illness.

She was the wife of Wesley W. Turner. The service will be held at 1 p.m. in the Church of the Good Shepherd, Union Street, Clinton.

An open house at the Turner home will be held following the service.