

Rev. Donald J. Rebokus, at 51; Uxbridge Pastor, Police Chaplain

UXBRIDGE — The Rev. Donald J. Rebokus, 51, pastor of St. Mary's Church and chaplain of Troop "C" in Holden of the Massachusetts State Police, was stricken ill early yesterday and died in the rectory.

He began his association with the State Police 20 years ago while he was at St. Leo's Church in Leominster and was designated a captain in the force last year on the occasion of his 25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. He gave the homily at the funeral of Trooper George Hanna of Holliston, who was slain Feb. 26 while making a routine arrest in Auburn.

The Rev. Gerard P. Walsh, associate pastor of St. Mary's, said Father Rebokus was "on cordial terms with, and was highly respected, by many of the State Police troopers," who turned out in force for the ordination anniversary of "Father R." He said the troopers lost "a devoted friend" in Father Rebokus' death.

"He stopped by at many State Police barracks throughout Central Massachusetts and enjoyed the camaraderie of the state troopers." In return, "they welcomed him as a long-standing friend, who knew many of them personally."

State Trooper Elaine M. Condon, on duty last night at the Holden barracks, said Father Rebokus was considered a "super guy."

"Everybody around here ... always spoke the best of him, that was sure. Anytime anybody needed to talk with him, he was there."

A major repair and renovation project is in progress at St. Mary's. The \$200,000 fund goal drew a response of \$243,000 in pledges and special gifts from parishioners, who credited their pastor's forthright, informative approach as one of the reasons for the good response.

"The good people of St. Mary's deserve all the credit," the pastor said at the time the pledges were totaled.

The project was paid for as it progressed, and no new phase was undertaken until funds were in hand.

Father Walsh said the fund is within a very few thousand dollars of being fulfilled, and the goal will be overtaken by the scheduled end of the drive in May.

Meanwhile, Father Rebokus had the satisfaction of standing in a new marble pulpit Sunday as he exhorted parishioners to come back to more frequent confessions, now known as the sacrament of reconciliation.

"He was all for God," said a townsman on hearing of his death yesterday, "but he was for everybody else, too."

"He was very kind and considerate," said Father Walsh. "He was a good and caring priest. He wanted the best for St. Mary's."

The best is on the way. The marble altar



Father Donald J. Rebokus

is in transit from Italy, Father Rebokus had told his people Sunday. Father Rebokus leaves a sister, Lorraine, wife of Robert Gregorie of Derby, Vt., and two nieces.

He was born in Ware and graduated from Barre High School, Class of 1949. He attended Holy Cross College and later St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, Md.

He was ordained by the Most Rev. John J. Wright, bishop of the Worcester Diocese, at St. Paul's Cathedral, Worcester, in 1957.

Father Rebokus was first assigned as associate pastor at Sacred Heart Church in Gardier from 1957 to 1961, and then at St. Leo's Church in Leominster from 1961 to 1969. He was named headmaster of the former St. Stephen's Central Catholic High School in Worcester, where he served from 1969 to 1971, when he became headmaster of Holy Name Central Catholic High School until 1976. He was then associate pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Westboro from 1976 to 1977, and St. Louis Church in Webster. In 1978, he was named pastor of St. Mary's Church in Uxbridge.

The funeral will be held Thursday with a concelebrated Mass at 10 a.m. in St. Mary's Church, 71 Mendon St. Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan and Auxiliary Bishop Timothy J. Harrington will be the principal concelebrants. Burial will be in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Barre.

Calling hours at St. Mary's Rectory, 71 Mendon St., are 7 to 10 tonight and 2 to 6 p.m. tomorrow.

The body will then be transferred to the church for a wake service at 7 p.m. tomorrow.

State Police will form an honor guard at the church throughout the calling hours today and tomorrow, and the Mass on Thursday.

The family requests that flowers be omitted. Memorial contributions may be made instead to the Renovation Fund of St. Mary's Church.

Irene A. Brown, 71

Irene A. (Millette) Brown 71 32 Laurier