

Father

Alers

to head Hispanic ministry

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The Rev. Juan Alers has been appointed coordinator for Hispanic Ministry in the Diocese of Lafayette, it has been announced.

The appointment was made by the Most Rev. Jude Speyrer, Bishop of Lake Charles, and was effective March 1. It was for a term of three years. Father Alers will continue as administrator of Sacred Heart Parish in Oakdale, Bishop Speyrer said.

Father Alers said that he

hoped to establish a ministry of support and religious instruction to those in the diocese who are Hispanics. This will include religious services and spiritual and social program, he said.

"In order to develop this ministry," Father Alers pointed out, "a census is needed for Catholics who are Hispanics. We are asking all those who are Hispanic and speak Spanish to send the following information to me: Name, home mailing address

and home phone number."

The information should be sent to: Hispanic Ministry Coordinator, 297 Meadow Drive, Oakdale LA 71463-2308.

"Anyone knowing of any Hispanic who speaks Spanish as a first language should please remind them to send in the information," he added.

A native of Puerto Rico, Father Alers completed his seminary studies in St. John Seminary in Boston and was ordained

to the priesthood in 1969. He has taken graduate study courses at Yale University, the CELAM institute in Medellin, Colombia, and at institutions in Spain and Rome.

He was an instructor at Catholic University in San Juan Puerto Rico for 14 years, and was vocations director, director of Catholic charities and vice chancellor for his diocese. He served as chaplain at the U. S. Penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia.

Father Alers came to the Diocese of Lake Charles from the Diocese of Orlando in Florida, where he was in charge of programs for immigrants and illegal aliens. In September of 1987 he was assigned to Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in Jennings, as an associate pastor.

He was appointed administrator of Sacred Heart Parish in Oakdale in December, his term to end no later than June 30, 1988.