

No Race Differences In Catholicism, Says Priest

Speaking recently at the Catholic Interracial Forum here, the **Rev. Eugene J. Hicks**, a young Negro priest, declared that there was no basic difference in races of the Catholic faith. The conclusion, the speaker explained, was predicated on his experience in a suburban all-white area and an urban all-Negro community.

Father **Hicks**, who now serves as an assistant priest at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Harlem was formerly at Regina Coeli (Queen of Heaven) parish, Hyde Park, N. Y. He asserted that he had found at the first assignment "a real Christian spirit and never one instance of uncharitableness" because of his race.

PARISHIONERS DISREGARDED RACIAL ORIGIN

Although an all-white parish, the young priest said the Hyde Park parishioners had received him and treated him as they would any other priest, and had invited his visiting relatives to stay at their homes when they came to see him.

TREATED AS ANY OTHER CATHOLIC BOY

In speaking of his present as-speaking person with a pleasant personality, said the parishioners of St. Charles have received him with "an evident joy at having a priest of their own race," and added, "but basically they have accepted me as a priest."

He also said that at St. Rose of Lima parish in Brooklyn, where his parents now live, he found the same Christian attitude, although there are few Negro families in the parish. "I am treated as any other boy of the parish who became a priest." Commenting further on the subject, he said:

"When a man is ordained he is a priest; he is not a white priest or a colored priest. He will go wherever sent whether in a white, mixed or colored parish. A real priest is a priest to everyone regardless of who or what he is."

PREDICTED INCREASE OF NEGROES TO PRIESTHOOD

The speaker expressed confidence that there will be an increase in the vocations to the priesthood among Negro boys and feels that the presence of Negro priests in a largely Negro area would be a factor in inspiring and encouraging Negro boys to study

for the priesthood.

Born 28 years ago in Cambridge, come a priest while a pupil in the Padua in the Bronx where he was reared. He attended Cathedral College Minor Preparatory seminary of the Archdiocese of New York and St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, Yonkers.

He was ordained in May, 1952, and his first assignment was the parish at Hyde Park where he remained for two and a half years. He was transferred last September to the Harlem parish.



RV. **EUGENE J. HICKS**