

# Father Robert Meng; longtime priest, Holy Rosary pastor

By Jennifer Burke/Catholic Courier | 06.21.2010

Section: [Obituaries](#)



Father Robert Meng, longtime diocesan priest and former pastor of Holy Rosary Parish, died June 21, 2010, at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse in Pittsford following a long illness. He was 91.

Father Meng was born in Rochester in 1919, and grew up attending St. Augustine Parish. He later attended St. Augustine's school before completing his seminary training at St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's in Rochester. He was ordained March 17, 1945, by Bishop James E. Kearney at Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Following his ordination Father Meng served as assistant pastor at St. Jerome Parish in East Rochester from 1945-49; St. Alphonsus Parish in Auburn from 1949-53; St. Patrick Parish in Rochester from 1953-56; and St. Aloysius Parish in Auburn for several months in 1956. He then served as assistant pastor at St. Felix Parish in Clifton Springs from 1956-57; St. Anne Parish in Rochester from 1957-58; St. Ann Parish in Hornell from 1958-

61; and Corpus Christi Parish in Rochester from 1961-66.

After leaving Corpus Christi Father Meng traveled to western Africa with Catholic Relief Services. He worked for two years as a CRS program director in the Congo and Benin, which at the time was known as Dahomey. Father Meng enjoyed his time in Africa so much that he brought back an unusual souvenir — a pair of parrots, noted Father William Gordinier, who lived next door to Father Meng at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse for the last few months.

After his return from Africa, Father Meng became pastor at Rochester's Holy Rosary Parish, which coincidentally had been Father Gordinier's home parish. Father Meng spent the bulk of his vocation at Holy Rosary, which he led from 1968 until his retirement in 1993.

After his retirement Father Meng began assisting at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Irondequoit and St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish in Rochester. He heard confessions, celebrated Mass and became very involved with Rochester's Latin Mass Community.

Father Gordinier said he enjoyed spending time with Father Meng, and the two often shared a newspaper over breakfast.

"He was always happy, and he smiled a lot," Father Gordinier recalled.

Father Meng usually could be found working on puzzles in the motherhouse, and completed one just hours before he died, Father Gordinier said, noting that motherhouse staff planned to glue the pieces of Father Meng's final puzzle together and display it in his memory.

Father Meng is survived by his nieces and nephews, Gregory (Gwen) Smith, Lawrence Smith, Gordon Smith, Ann Meng and Margaret (Kenneth) Reek.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark celebrated Father Meng's funeral Mass June 24, 2010, at St. Jerome Church in East Rochester. Interment was in Rochester's Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to Archangel School, 95 Stanton Lane, Rochester, NY 14617.

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