

ARCHIVE

Five priests in Fall River Diocese to retire after decades of service

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Five priests of the Fall River Diocese will retire at the end of June, each after having served for decades in numerous parishes and other ministerial assignments.

The names of those who will succeed the retiring priests in their parish assignments will be announced by Bishop George W. Coleman in the coming weeks.

Father Chretien

Born in Fall River, Father Chretien attended Notre Dame and Msgr. Prevost Junior High Annex in that city. He graduated from Msgr. Prevost High School in 1959 and then prepared for the priesthood at Our Lady of Providence Seminary, Warwick, RI and St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. He was ordained a priest on May 20, 1967 by Bishop James L. Connolly in St. Mary's Cathedral in Fall River.

He was first assigned to St. George Parish, Westport, as parochial vicar, and from there served in that capacity at Sacred Heart Parish, North Attleboro, and then St. Joseph Parish, New Bedford. In 1983, he was appointed pastor of the former St. Therese Parish in New Bedford and in 1990 pastor of Our Lady of Grace Parish in Westport.

Father Chretien became pastor of Notre Dame de Lourdes Parish, Fall River, in 2000. While remaining in that post, in 2003 he was assigned to serve also as administrator of the neighboring Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish, Fall

River, eventually becoming pastor there as well. Since the fall of 2010, he has been working with a task force of members from both parishes to plan for the joining of the two into one new community of faith.

In addition to parish assignments, he has served as chaplain of the Nazareth Hall School in Attleboro and to the Girl Scouts in that area; director of the Catholic Charities Appeal for the New Bedford area for almost 20 years and then for the Fall River area since 1999; and as a member of the diocesan Personnel Board and Presbyteral Council.

Father Davignon

Father Davignon was born and raised in Attleboro, attended the city's elementary schools and is a 1954 graduate of Attleboro High School.

After high school, he entered St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, Conn., to begin studies for the priesthood and completed his preparation at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore. He was ordained a priest on May 11, 1962 by Bishop Connolly in St. Mary's Cathedral in Fall River.

He began his priestly ministry as a parochial vicar with short terms at St. Pius X Parish in South Yarmouth and Sacred Heart Parish, Oak Bluffs, and then returned to St. Pius X where he served until 1974. From there, he went to St. Mary Parish in Mansfield for five years.

In 1979, he was named to his first pastorate at St. Mary/Our Lady of the Isle Parish on Nantucket. He served the island parish for 12 years when he was assigned as pastor to St. Ann Parish in Raynham.

He returned to Cape Cod in 2000 to begin his current pastorate at Our Lady of the Assumption in Osterville from which he will now retire.

Through the years, Father Davignon has also served as the Cape Cod area director of CCD and the CYO and was moderator of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (DCCW) and later of DCCW District V.

Father Gendreau

A native of Fall River, Father Gendreau attended that city's former Notre Dame and Msgr. Prevost Annex grammar schools and Msgr. Prevost High School, graduating in 1959.

After earning a degree from Stonehill College, he studied for the priesthood at St. John's Seminary in Brighton and was ordained to the priesthood on May 3, 1969 by Bishop Connolly in St. Mary's Cathedral, Fall River.

As a parochial vicar, he served at St. Michael and St. Louis de France Parishes, both in Swansea, and at St. James Parish, New Bedford, and St. George Parish, Westport.

Shortly after his ordination he also returned to school, earning a master's degree in counseling psychology from Boston College in 1974.

He was appointed pastor of St. Stephen Parish in Attleboro in 1986 and was named to subsequent pastorates at St. Joseph's in North Dighton in 1993 and St. Michael's in Swansea a year later in 1994. Father Gendreau returned to St. Louis de France in Swansea, this time as pastor, in 2006.

Along with his parish assignment, from 1981 to 1986, he also served as chaplain at Southeastern Massachusetts University (now UMass-Dartmouth).

Father Gomes

Father Gomes was born on Madeira Island, Portugal, and immigrated to the United States with his family at five years old. He is a graduate of Our Lady of Mount Carmel School and Holy Family High School, both of which were located in New Bedford, graduating from the latter in 1960.

He prepared for the priesthood at St. Thomas Seminary, Bloomfield, Conn., and St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore. He was ordained by Bishop Connolly on May 3, 1969 in St. Mary's Cathedral.

For his first eight years in ministry he was a parochial vicar, first at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Taunton and then at St. Anthony of Padua in New Bedford. He then served as hospital chaplain at Charlton Memorial Hospital in Fall River from 1977 to 1983. From there he went to St. John of God Parish in Somerset as a parochial vicar.

In 1986, he began his first pastorate at Sacred Heart Parish in Oak Bluffs, remaining there for four years until his assignment as pastor of Our Lady of the Angels Parish in Fall River.

Returning to Our Lady of Lourdes in Taunton in 1995, he was pastor there until 2001 at which time he became the first pastor of the new Annunciation of the Lord Parish that had been formed from the joining of Our Lady of Lourdes with the neighboring Sacred Heart Parish in the city's Weir section.

He began his current pastorate at St. Mary's in South Dartmouth in 2007.

During his years in Taunton, Father Gomes was also director of CYO for the area in the early 1970s and of Taunton Catholic Cemeteries from 2003 to 2007. On the diocesan level, he has served on the Personnel Board.

Msgr. Perry

A native of Pawtucket, R.I., Msgr. Perry attended Attleboro public schools, graduated from Msgr. Coyle High School in Taunton in 1955, and studied for the priesthood at the former Cardinal O'Connell Minor Seminary in Jamaica Plain, Boston, and at St. John's Seminary in Brighton.

He was ordained a priest Feb. 2 1963 by Bishop James L. Connolly in St. Mary's Cathedral, Fall River. After ordination, he was assigned as parochial vicar at Sacred Heart Parish, Oak Bluffs; and subsequently to St. Peter the Apostle Parish, Provincetown; St. Mary's, New Bedford; and St. Julie Billiart, North Dartmouth.

In 1980, he was named pastor of Our Lady of Victory in Centerville, serving there until 1995 when he became pastor of St. John Neumann Parish in East Freetown. In June 2000, he began his present pastorate at St. Patrick's, Falmouth.

Bishop Coleman appointed him to serve also as vicar general and moderator of the curia for the Fall River diocese in 2003. As such, he has since assisted the bishop as his deputy in the administration of the diocese. He will retire from this diocesan post in June along with his parish.

In 1999, he was named a Chaplain to His Holiness, a papal honor, by Pope John Paul II with the title of Reverend Monsignor. Earlier this month Pope Benedict XVI named him a Protonotary Apostolic, the highest honorary title awarded

to a priest.

In addition to his pastoral assignments, Msgr. Perry has been through the years a chaplain at UMass-Dartmouth and Bishop Stang High School in North Dartmouth, a member of the diocesan College of Consultors and Presbyteral Council, diocesan secretary for Ministerial Personnel, and dean of the Cape Cod and the Islands Deanery.