

People You Should Know

# Curate in Jeep Serves Parishioners Daily

## Popular Father Coffey at Sacred Heart Gives Rides to Children



**ASTRIDE HIS TRUSTY CHARIOT THE JEEP,** is the Rev. James H. Coffey, curate of Sacred Heart Church for the past three years who has won countless friends by his allegiance to children and many acts of kindness which he displays on his daily rounds.

By **DON FLYNN**

This drama must be written in two acts for the theme actually contains two sections, the first a 30-year-old priest with twinkling eyes, broad shoulders and a bouncy jaunt like that of a victorious prize-fighter and the second stanza—a jeep.

The principal role is played by the Rev. James H. Coffey, curate at Sacred Heart Church for the past three years, and he shakes honors gladly with his supporting cast—the jeep. For love, understanding, goodwill and kindness, all of these ingredients are amply provided to the drama by Father Coffey who manages somehow to turn these traits into acts of brotherly love every time he turns the wheel of his vehicle—the jeep.

Among Father Coffey's duties are daily trips to the Lynn Hospital, Union Hospital, Isolation Hospital and the Lynn City Home. After a year of riding by bus, in borrowed automobiles or just walking, he decided that his daily rounds would be aided greatly by having his own transportation. While playing softball one day at Barry Park someone inquired why he didn't purchase a jeep and the idea struck

the young curate as a good one.

On the first day that he purchased the jeep, Father Coffey decided to display the vehicle to his parishioners and that evening, accompanied by the Rev. John F. Mullin, S. T. D. fellow curate, the pair toured every street of the Sacred Heart parish. Father Coffey simply wanted to break the news of his purchase and also to stem any possible alarm that might result should he call at some future date at the home of a sick parish member or on other duties.

The jeep "stole the show," beams Father Coffey in retelling his first experiences. "Practically every kid in West Lynn trooped down to the rectory to see my new purchase and of course each one of them wanted a ride. I learned very quickly that the children

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# Coffey —

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must be seated in a scientific manner in order that all of them would be provided with a ride," explains Father Coffey.

"By seating the older and larger children first and then having the smaller tots sit in their laps, I can now accommodate a total of 18 youngsters without any danger of them falling out or causing any accidents," he adds. When loaded, complete with Father Coffey at the wheel, the jeep resembles a pretzel of arms, legs and bodies.

Whenever the West Lynn priest starts on an errand, there are always several children who want to ride along or else secure a lift to some distant spot. And Father Coffey fairly beams at the opportunity to give a helping hand and never fails to accommodate his younger neighbors.

The jeep has also been used for other purposes including the time when Father Coffey helped a young couple move their 700 pound ice chest to another apartment. Or the time he conveyed a small baby to Lynn Hospital who had been overcome by the heat. Or when he helped move a family's complete household furnishings. He is always on call to provide assistance to anyone in need or trouble.

A native of Roxbury, Father Coffey attended Boston College High School, Holy Cross College and St. John's Seminary. His first assignment was at Sacred Heart Church where he has served as C. Y. O. director. In addition, he directs the parish Girl Scouts, altar boys, Legion of Mary and has organized a roller skating club, ice skating club, tennis team and other activities, all devoted to youth of the section and their athletic development.

His mother, Mrs. Estelle Coffey, looks with pride upon her son and displays with understanding enthusiasm all the trophies and prizes that he collected while winning the inter-collegiate tennis championship while at Holy Cross.

Of the many titles and honors that have been bestowed upon the popular priest, Father Coffey is probably more pleased with the nickname "Chaplain of Bruce School" than any other honor. Neighbors dubbed him "chaplain" after watching him each day this summer take a large number of the Bruce School children on trips to Lynn Beach and other playspots. He visits the school daily to lend whatever help he can to the residents of the building.