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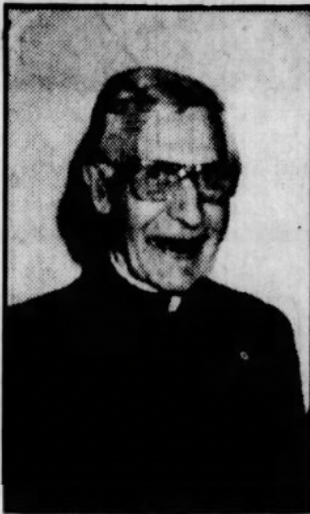
Thursday, December 15, 1994

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Parish mourns Fr. Molenschot

Beloved Belledeau pastor dies in Alexandria at age of 89

Avoyelles Parish has lost one of its most beloved clergymen. Rev. Adrian L. Molenschot, retired pastor of St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church in Belledeau, died at 10:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 7, 1994 at Heritage Manor Nursing Home in Alexandria. He was 89.



Fr. Adrian Molenschot
*Longtime pastor of
St. Martin of Tours*

Funeral services were held at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 10 at St. Martin of Tours Church, with Bishop Sam Jacobs and Rev. Timothy Marceau, OSB, officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery in Belledeau under the direction of Escude of Mansura.

While his only survivor is his sister, Rhea Swaans of Holland, Fr. Molenschot was a true "father" to his parishioners, who mourn his

death as deeply as though they were also members of his family.

Rev. Molenschot was a native of Neigemen, Holland. Born May 19, 1905, the fifth child of Thomas Henry and Joanne Willhemenia Molenschot, he was ordained a priest on Feb. 20, 1932. He came to America in 1947, and was assigned to the Alexandria-Shreveport Dioceses under Bishop Charles P. Greco, serving first as pastor in Moreauville.

In the summer of 1950, Bishop Greco sent the young priest to the tiny mission parish of St. Martin of Tours in Belledeau, where he served with a fierce dedication and unswerving faith until his retirement in June of 1989.

During his 39-year stay in Belledeau, Fr. Molenschot made an indelible impression on the community. He was deeply involved in one of his greatest loves - a ministry of music, forming a choir, building a choir loft and obtaining an organ for the church. He also directed the choir at St. Joseph's Church in Marksville for several years, and performed at various concerts in the area.

Another of his favorite avocations was the Boy Scouts. He was scoutmaster of Troop 3 from 1950 on, and was awarded the Scouters Key in 1950, the Silver Beaver in 1959, and the St. George Award in 1978. He was also a Brotherhood member of the Order of the Arrow. Under his guidance, 43 boys in his troop reached the rank of Eagle Scout.

His commitment to his people extended even to their livelihood. Farming cotton and sweet potatoes was the mainstay in Belledeau and Fr. Molenschot undertook the pro-

cess that eventually led to the establishment of the sweet potato canning plant in his community.

As pastor, Fr. Molenschot saw the need for a new church in Belledeau, to replace the wooden structure. Plans were drawn and the church was finally completed in 1966. A new rectory was built in 1973, replacing one that was deteriorating. Fr. Molenschot then turned his attention toward building a parish hall, but before this could come about, tragedy struck.

On Feb. 3, 1979, while Fr. Molenschot was offering Mass, a fire engulfed the rectory, destroying not only the building but all the

vital church records as well. Gone were his cherished pictures, as well as a Dutch bible he had read since his childhood. Fr. Molenschot must have felt at that moment that God was testing his faith.

Only two weeks later, a fire in the church itself caused extensive damage to the building and heartrending sorrow to its pastor's soul.

Already beginning to feel the advancement of age, a frail Fr. Molenschot nevertheless rallied to the needs of his flock, ministering to their spiritual needs while negotiating for the repair of the church and rectory and for the construction of the parish hall.

Fr. Molenschot has been the recipient of many honors, including "Clergyman of the Year" award from the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus in 1987; and "Lifetime Avoyellean" by the Journal, given in 1988. He has been feted on the occasion of his 50th anniversary as a priest, and by St. Joseph's Catholic Church for his contributions to the choir. When he retired, he was showered with gifts and well wishes from people around the parish.

Last week, God called his faithful servant home. Fr. Molenschot will be sorely missed by all who knew him.