



**CUTTING THE CAKE** — Father Michael Dermody makes the first cut into the cake decorated with religious symbols, in celebration of his 25th anniversary as a priest. The cake was served following a barbecued chicken dinner held

Sunday, June 12 at St. Dominic's Parish Hall in Orland. The dinner followed a concelebrated Mass at the church, attended by a standing-room-only crowd of well-wishers. The top of the cake is adorned with a replica of a priest.

## Fr. Dermody fetes 25th anniversary

By Virginia Webster  
Staff Writer

Twenty-five years ago this month, a young Irishman took his vows, entering the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church. Michael Joseph Dermody was ordained June 8, 1958 in his homeland of Ireland; on Sunday, June 12, he was honored at a 25th anniversary celebration of his ordination, by hundreds of well-wishers at St. Dominic's Catholic Church in Orland, where he serves as pastor.

A concelebrated Mass was held at the small, Spanish-style church, which was filled to overflowing with persons wanting to share the joy of this very well-loved man. Father Dermody's brother, Father Thomas Dermody, pastor of St. John the Baptist Church in Chico and Father James McKnight, pastor of St. Monica's Church in Willows, concelebrated the Mass and were joined by several other priests, who sat in the aisle seats of the pews, attired in their vestments.

Following the Mass, a dinner was held in the parish hall. Family members, friends and members of the religious community attended the dinner, offering songs and praise to the priest.

Master of ceremonies during the dinner, Jasper Liechsteiner, told the guests, "Orland has never had a 25th anniversary, at least as far back as I can remember. It's been a happy nine years having Father Dermody here, and I hope he will be here longer."

Father Dermody, loved by Catholics and non-Catholics alike, was lauded by Charles K. "Chick" Price, who offered congratulations to the priest on behalf of the non-Catholic community who know Father Dermody as a kind, understanding person. Price paid the priest a high compliment when he said, "You are a friend."

Regina Barnum, a parishoner, gave Father Dermody a round-trip ticket to Ireland, along with extra money, which was donated by "all the little people, donating little money."

Barnum told the priest, "This is from the hearts of everybody in the parish. We love you and thank God for your vocation."

Barnum added, "God willing,

and the Bishop, you'll come back and stay with us forever."

Francis Zuppan also gave Father Dermody a check from parish members, saying, "Thanks for the health, happiness and spiritual guidance."

Dennis Ryan, on behalf of the Knights of Columbus in Orland, also gave the priest a gift.

Following the presentations of gifts, songs and speeches by various guests, Father Dermody thanked everyone and said he didn't like being in the limelight and had tried to "hitchhike to Corning, but no one would take me."

On a more serious note, Father Dermody told his guests there is much talk about a priest receiving a "calling" from God. "I don't think I ever heard God say anything," he said. He added his decision to become a priest was a result of what he learned from his parents and family.

Father Dermody explained he grew up during a time when there was "not much money," due to the depression and the fact that Ireland had just become a free nation. But, it was his parents' "acceptance of life" and of "what God wrought" that was a guiding factor in his life.

"Their faith" led to his vocation. The priest expressed his gratitude to those in his past who helped him through his earlier years. Immediately following his ordination, he came to America and began his ministry in Auburn. From there, he served various churches in the northern portion of the state, eventually arriving in Orland nine years ago. "My life was enriched from people in past parishes," he said.

And, priests in his early years helped him in his early years helped him in his vocation, as well as the Sisters of Mercy in Auburn.

Of his brother, Father Thomas Dermody, the priest said, "He's one of the best friends I ever had — and we're golf partners."

Father Dermody ended his remarks by telling his guests, "The fact that you're a priest doesn't make a difference. You have your ups and downs, just like being married. But, friends make a difference. Thank you for loving me for being a human being. Thank you for being my friend."