

# The Rev. Joseph Balent, 67, fire department chaplain, dies

The Rev. Joseph J. Balent, 67, a chaplain of the Minneapolis Fire Department and pastor of St. Cyril's Catholic Church in northeast Minneapolis, died of cancer Saturday at Abbott Northwestern Hospital.

Balent was born and raised in Minneapolis. He was ordained Oct. 7, 1944, in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and served from 1945 to 1956 as an assistant pastor at St. Cyril's and from 1956 to 1966 as pastor at St. Mathias' Church in Wadena, Minn.

In 1966 he was appointed pastor of St. Cyril's, where he served until his death.

He had been a chaplain for the fire department for about 15 years. The chaplain's job is to help victims and families displaced by fire, visit injured or sick firefighters and preside at the department's social functions.

"He liked to help people and he was good at consoling people after fires," his sister, Anne Balent, said yesterday. "If there were any deaths, he had a way of approaching them."

Fire Chief Tom Dickinson said Balent "was a very active chaplain.

"He was always on the pager," Dickinson said. "He had his own scanner and he used to monitor all the fire

calls. When a call came in, he'd be there, no matter what time of the day or night it was."

Balent was a member of Knights of Columbus Council No. 435, Northeast Fats Club, Minnesota 100, St. Joseph's Lodge and Slovak Men's Club.

In addition to his sister Anne, he is survived by sisters Dorothy Balent and Marge Seiple, all of Minneapolis.

Visitation will begin at 2 p.m. Wednesday at St. Cyril's Church, 1315 NE. 2nd St., with mass at 10:30 a.m. Thursday. The family suggested that memorials be sent to the church.