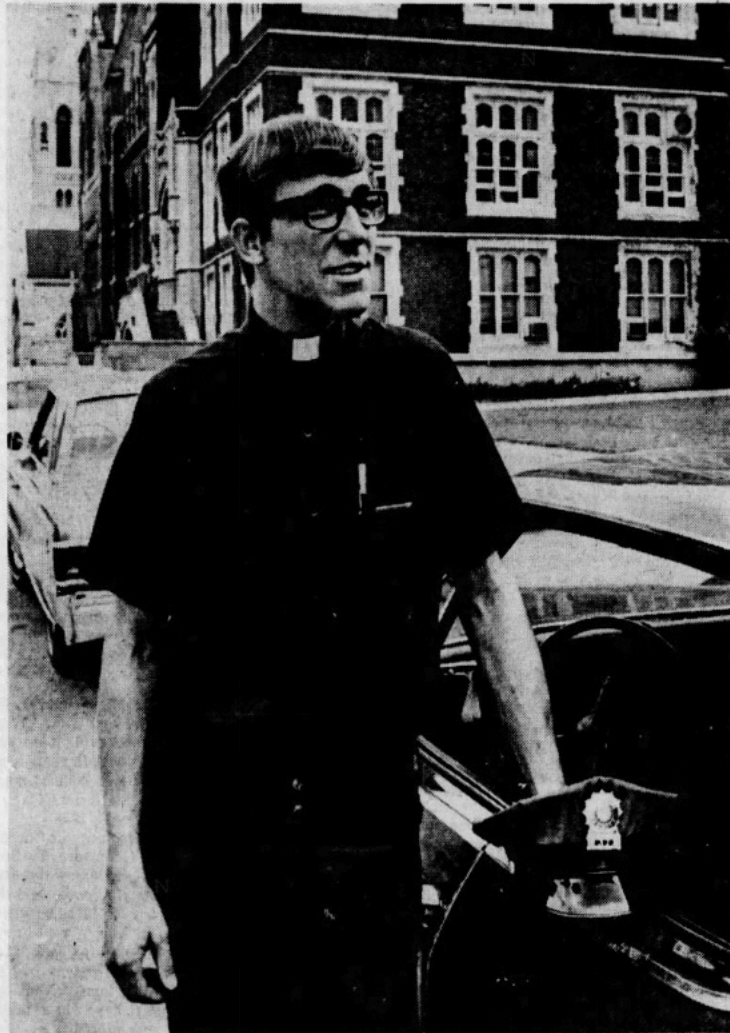




THE REV. James Beine, a Roman Catholic priest, who is taking training as an auxiliary policeman in St. Charles. (Post-Dispatch Photo)

Blends Police, Priest's Work

By ERIC ZOECKLER
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

Although there is a significant difference between them, Jim Beine is trying hard to be a good rookie cop along with the 21 recruits in the St. Charles Auxiliary Police Department.

He has learned to write tickets, direct traffic, make out accident reports and enforce city and state laws. On patrol, he has been scared while stalking an unseen sniper or when answering a ringing burglar alarm at 3 o'clock in the morning.

He has seen fellow officers take abuse not only from rebel-

lious youths, but from establishment adults who Beine feels should know better. But that's where similarities end.

If confronted with an escaping felon, chances are Beine wouldn't shoot to stop him.

Beine probably won't be carrying a weapon. He's no softy, but he believes that love and understanding are as much crime deterrents as threats of

TURN TO PAGE 4, COL. 1

Priest Is Law Officer

■ FROM PAGE ONE

force and use of weapons.

This is because at 28 years Jim Beine is first a priest and second a cop. By joining the police auxiliary, the associate pastor of St. Peter's Church in St. Charles hopes to bring a "better understanding of the policeman's role in society to my students," as well as to serve as chaplain for the auxiliary and the regular police department.

A product of St. Louis' West End, the Rev. James A. Beine was assigned to St. Peter's shortly after being ordained three years ago. Immediately, he became immersed in working with the young, using the required religion classes as a way of learning more about their hopes and hang-ups.

"I sometimes heard about police brutality and the inefficiency of the police force here and that troubled me," he said in an interview, in his wood-paneled study.

"I've only been around the police department for three months now, but I've found a lot of team work and co-operation among the men. The ideal of what anybody would want in their police department is what it is in St. Charles."

He is called Father Jim by most who know him and Police Chief Marvin Grimmer considers him "just another one of the boys" when the priest shows up for weekly patrol duty. But the department's chaplain feels he can fill a need no other officer can.

Approached by Auxiliary

Auxiliary police officers approached Father Beine after the shooting death of Lt. Albert Musterman, a sheriff's deputy last November. "They thought it would be nice to have someone lead prayers in situations like this when fellow policemen come to pay their respects," he said.

But the responsibilities of the job have escalated beyond saying a few prayers. He has completed the eight-week training course to better understand the men he will serve, and to add to the more formal education received at Cardinal Glennon College, St. Louis University and Kenrick Seminary.

While on patrol, he has found officers eager to pour out "their feelings about a job they obviously enjoy doing." As husbands and fathers Father Beine says he finds them always concerned with the threat of death following them every working minute.

As an auxiliary police officer,

Father Beine has agreed to be on call 24 hours a day in case of need by the police department. He expects to be called to help ease the pain of informing persons of the death of a relative.

On the surface, the two roles might appear to be in conflict. For example, will he inform authorities when he hears about a pot party? Will he use a pistol?

Father Beine says he will resolve such questions by being "a priest first."

In three years he has established relationships with many young persons, some of them on the fringe of the expanding drug scene in St. Charles. He looks on police work as a way of reaching troubled youths whom he might, as a priest, be able to help.

Father Beine has followed a policy at St. Peter's of trying "to convince one or two of those involved in a bad situation to stop it or take the initiative to inform the proper people. It's always seemed to work."

He stressed, "If I discovered something under trust, however, I wouldn't feel bad if I did not tell the authorities about it." But that does not mean he is a pushover.

'There Must Be Respect'

"There always must be that certain amount of respect," he noted. "If they (most of his students are teen-age boys) want to come and talk about smoking pot, they won't sit right here in front of me drinking beer."

Although requested to carry a weapon by several officers, Father Beine plans to carry out his police duties unarmed. "Something might be demanded of me to protect the life of an officer," the priest concedes, "but that wouldn't really be a reaction of a priest or a policeman—but a human response."

Already he has felt uneasy about not carrying a weapon. "We were searching for the source of rifle fire down by the river, and I discovered I had the most powerful flashlight. Now, how is a gunman to know I am just the chaplain?" he asked.

Yet Father Beine's first taste of police work blended with religion has been palatable. Eventually he would like to see a chaplain appointed for the county jail and the sheriff's office.

"I think I could do this the rest of my life," he said. "As the officers say: 'It's a whole new world out there you've never seen from church.'"