

**'GAVE HIMSELF FULLY'**

# Bluffs priest found dead in Kansas City

**By WILLIAM SIMBRO**

REGISTER RELIGION WRITER

The Rev. Michael Irwin, a Roman Catholic priest who served 13 years in Mississippi and returned to his native Iowa because it was home, was found dead of a heart attack in his Kansas City, Mo., motel room Tuesday. He was 49.

A memorial Mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m. Friday at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Council Bluffs, where he had been pastor since 1989. The funeral liturgy will be celebrated at 10 a.m. Saturday at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Des Moines, the parish in which he grew up. Burial will be in Glendale Cemetery in Des Moines.

"He gave himself so fully to people," said Mary Lybarger, secretary at the Council Bluffs church. "There are 586 families in this parish and he touched them all."

He was pastor of St. Peter's Catholic Church in Des Moines from 1987 to 1989 and was associate pastor of St. Augustin's Catholic Church in Des Moines from 1984 to 1987. After his 1970 ordination, he spent 13 years teaching in Catholic high schools in Vicksburg and Natchez, Miss.

In a 1984 interview, Father Irwin said he went to Mississippi for "idealistic motives" during a time of social change in the South.

He graduated from Dowling High School, studied at Rockhurst College in Kansas City and the University of Missouri, and received degrees from



**Father Michael Irwin**  
*D.M. native*

Conception Seminary in Conception, Mo.

Father Irwin is survived by his parents, Will and Mary Irwin of Des Moines, and a sister, Mary Jo Irwin of Los Angeles.

Visitation will begin at 5 p.m. today at St. Peter's Church in Council Bluffs, with an 8 p.m. vigil service. Visitation will be after 3 p.m. Friday at Holy Trinity Church in Des Moines, with a 7 p.m. vigil service. Memorial gifts may be made to either the St. Peter's or Holy Trinity parishes. Dunn's Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.