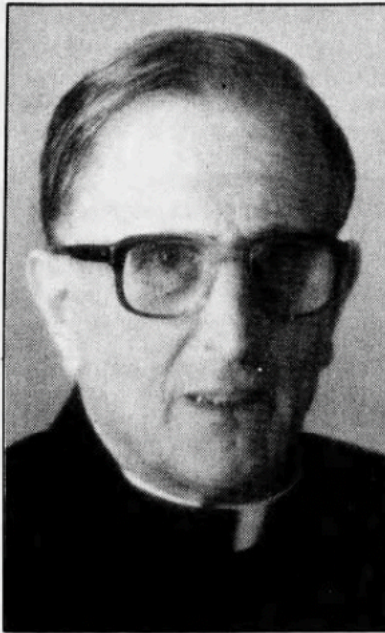




The Rev. John Leonard

The Rev. John Leonard Retiring After 40 Years

A reception is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 20, to honor the Rev. John Leonard, a Roman Catholic priest retiring from the active priesthood after more than 40 years in the Natchez-Jackson and Jackson dioceses of Mississippi.

Leonard, 72, was born in Athlone, Ireland, and moved to the United States in December 1948, six months after being ordained at St. Patrick's Seminary in Carlow, Ireland.

He has been stationed at St. Paul Catholic Church in Vicksburg twice, from 1949 until 1952 and from 1986 until this year.

His assignments in Mississippi also took him to St. Mary's Catholic Church in Jackson, Bay St. Louis, Belzoni, Cleveland, Shaw, Batesville and Yazoo City.

Leonard, who is staying in Vicksburg for now, will travel and "be available if anybody needs me," he said.

The reception, sponsored by St. Paul Catholic Church, will be from 4 until 6 p.m. at the Coral Room of the Vicksburg Hotel. Current and former parishioners and friends are invited.