



IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHURCH

## North City Pastor Is Versatile Clergyman

(Editor's Note: This is another in a series of articles on Lake Charles area clergymen.)

By TOM CASWELL  
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Rev. Herbert Schuster C.S.

Sp., pastor of the Catholic parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, is apparently a vigorous and talented man.

Brick mason, designer, landscape gardener, humanitarian and clergymen, this priest of the order of the Holy Ghost Fathers is a vital part of a thriving Negro parish in North Lake Charles.

"This parish belongs to its people—they have certain needs," says Father Schuster.

"The rectory was built in 1963-64 by professional workers of the parish who offered their services for a fraction of what they make on the job," he explained.

"I dug the foundation for the rectory, laid it, and set the tiles on the floor. I am sometimes called 'the brick-and-mortar priest,'" Father Schuster said.

In addition to helping with the physical labor of construction, Father Schuster aided in

designing the rectory. "I've always been interested in building—in color, shape and design," the priest said.

"Landscape gardening is another of my avocations," Father Schuster said. "I recently laid out a landscape garden on a section of the church property."

"A special project of mine is the rodeo sponsored by the church twice yearly. It is a very good show, and it provides funds for the parish," Father Schuster said.

The pastor was named outstanding rodeo promoter of 1964 by the Texas Rodeo Cowboys Association.

"White persons often ask me about attending our rodeo," he said. "I tell them that our colored people want them to attend. The performances are for everyone."

For the past year and a half, Father Schuster and his assistant, Rev. Joseph F. McDonough, have been leaders in a community action council on racial problems. Members from various churches in the area—both white and colored—meet regularly to discuss racial issues and to work toward solutions.

Father Schuster said that better Negro schools are desperately needed in this area.

When schools graduate inferior teachers, these teachers, communicate this inferiority to next generation of students, and the cycle is repeated, the pastor said. In addition, school officials must provide more classrooms and better facilities, he said.

For a harmonious community relation, both whites and Negroes must work hand-in-hand for the betterment of all people, Father Schuster said.

"Negroes must strive for excellence—especially in their children's education," the priest said.

"I tell my people that the granting of equal rights means that they must assume equal responsibility and obligations. If they are granted the right to attend white schools they must accept the responsibility of maintaining good grades."

He added that he did not approve of some of the methods used by some of the civil rights leaders. The solution to the racial problems lies in hard work, not in demonstrations, Father Schuster said.

Father Schuster was ordained into the priesthood 10 years ago. He came to Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in 1960, succeeding Rev. Harrel McNeal, who built the church in 1937-38.

The pastor is proud of the church's school. All grades from three to seven are presently taught. An eighth grade will be added in September, Father Schuster said.

At the present, four nuns of the Religious Sisters order are lay teacher instruct in the school.

Looking to the future, Father Schuster said that a convent for the teaching sisters and an addition for the school are slated for construction between 1966 and 1968.



REV. HERBERT SCHUSTER  
Order of Holy Ghost Father