

Father Delane Celebrates Fifty Years as a Priest

There was a time in the Catholic Church in Montana when the stereotype of a priest was a man with an Irish brogue and background to match and a peppery opinion of all things secular.

And thousands who carried that image of a priest probably got it from the Rev. John Delane, whose roots are deep in the auld sod even though he hasn't lived in Tipperary Town for more than a half-century.

Father Delane, retired and living among friends at Carroll College, celebrated his 50th year as a priest in the Helena Diocese this week. At age 77,

he was the guest of honor at an anniversary celebration held Wednesday at St. Mary's Church in Helena.

He was born in Tipperary Town in Ireland on Feb. 3, 1892, and remained in Ireland until he completed his theological studies at St. Patrick's Seminary in Tipperary in 1919. Upon ordination, he was assigned to the Diocese of Helena in Montana, where he has served since Oct. 1, 1919.

The Most Rev. J. P. Carroll, Bishop of the Diocese of Helena at that time, assigned him to Mt. St. Charles College (the forerunner to Carroll College) as teacher of chemistry. In 1920, he became chaplain to demobilized soldiers at Galen and Warm Springs hospitals. He also served as chaplain of Montana State Prison.

Over the years, he has served as assistant pastor or pastor in parishes in Helena, Anaconda, Butte, Philipsburg, and Madison County. His latest pastorate was at St. Mary's Church in Helena, where he served from 1942 until he became ill in 1956 and retired.

His 50th anniversary was celebrated Wednesday at St. Mary's Church with an offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Concelebrants with Fa-

ther Delane were the Rev. H. J. Courtney and the Rev. B. J. Sullivan.

Participants in the offeratory procession were Mr. and Mrs. Michael Ryan of San Francisco, cousins of Father Delane. The Most Rev. Raymond G. Hunthausen, Bishop of the Diocese of Helena, attended the mass.