



Rev. Francis Huselbeck

Priest Also Is Chaplain

BY JOAN M. DEVLIN
Staff Writer

Pastor's Profile

"It was always in the back of my mind . . . being a priest. I sort of just grew into it."

This was the reflection of Rev. Francis E. Huselbeck, parish priest for St. Ann's Church in Fort Ann and Roman Catholic Chaplain at Great Meadow Correctional Institution in Comstock.

Born in Albany some 43 years ago, with a sister in the religious life, Father Huselbeck never changed course and is a man well-satisfied in his calling.

He tells, however, about one stumbling block he had to overcome. It was Latin. He had a pretty difficult time with it, and says, "In those days, one qualification you had to have before setting out for the seminary was at least three to four years of Latin, and I just wasn't good enough at it."

By the end of his senior year in high school, he knew he wanted to enter the priesthood, so he spoke to his pastor about his problem.

"He was a wonderful man and I felt very close to him. He told me, 'Not this year — you haven't got enough Latin.'"

"After that, I had help from another priest who challenged me to take post-graduate Latin. This time, I did, and the ball kept rolling after that," recalled the priest.

Laughing, he said, "Naturally, I enjoy the new liturgy in English immensely. To me, it's beautiful in English and has more meaning."

He takes his busy schedule very seriously, however, because he must. The parish priest at Fort Ann is traditionally the Roman Catholic chaplain at the prison in Comstock.

"From the first time I walked into the prison, I felt enthusiastic about my role there," he said.

He feels, too, that the job is very rewarding in many ways. The priest is there every day, sometimes during the morning and sometimes during the afternoon, and he is responsible for any needs . . . not just spiritual, but personal as well . . . of the inmates.

Rev. Huselbeck said the prison chaplains aid any inmates, "with emphasis on the 'any' — not just Catholics. He said he and his friend and colleague, Rev. Warren Churchill, who serves as Protestant chaplain, both serve all of the men.

Before coming to Fort Ann, Father Huselbeck graduated from St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester. His first assignment was to Our Lady of Visitation in Troy as an assistant pastor, where he served for 1½ years. He has held the same position in St. Columba in Schenectady for over three years.

"Then in one year's time, I was moved around three times." He added, ". . . winding up in jail, where I've been happy doing time ever since!"

When and if there is time for hobbies, they are quiet ones. He likes gardening very much and does it in the backyard, behind the rectory, growing tomatoes and other vegetables. This is partly because he also likes to cook.

He likes the quiet places of Lake George, or other "rest of

the way places where I can just relax, read, or pray."

Most of all, he is proud of his close relationship with all in the parish, and the good feeling he has with other "Christian brothers" in the area.

Post-Star, February 2, 1974