

Rev. L.M. Hennessy Dies; Teacher Was Noted Broadcaster

The Rev. Linus M. Hennessy, OFM, the Franciscan high school teacher who became the first Catholic broadcaster on evangelist Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network, died Monday (May 9, 1983).

Father Hennessy, 64, died in St. Joseph Intercommunity Hospital after three weeks' illness. He lived at the friary of Bishop Timon High School, where he taught for more than 25 years and where he taped his Bible radio program, "Comfort My People."

The Irish-born friar, often known as "Father Linus," with the soft brogue used radio, television and the telephone to spread his message, beginning in 1977. Daily radio broadcasts were on WXRL and WHLD locally and his weekly TV programs were on Channel 7 and cable channels in Buffalo and Rochester.

Volunteers will continue telephone outreach, in which callers receive spiritual consolation, said Hamburg attorney John Panara, who learned German from the priest at Timon and handles legal matters for the "Comfort My People" ministry.

"He had thousands of listeners," Mr. Panara said. "And whenever he had meetings and breakfasts, 500 to 600 people would attend."

His Channel 7 programs recently had been picked up by cable systems elsewhere, and he was seen or heard in New York City, in upstate communities, and in Toronto, Colorado and Iowa.

Roberet Chambers, principal of the Bishop Timon High on McKinley Parkway, said Father Linus taught religion and German before leaving in 1971 for a six-year stint as chaplain for juvenile delinquents at St. Elizabeth's Priory in Denver.

Upon his return in 1977, the friar became chaplain at Timon and taught Bible study and conducted prayer services. He also worked with Boys Town and was chaplain at the Erie County Holding Center.

Father Linus once taped his TV programs at Full Gospel Tabernacle, a Protestant church in Orchard Park. More recently he had rented



Rev. Linus Hennessy

studio facilities at WUTV, while continuing his radio work in a homemade studio at Timon.

His affiliation with Mr. Robertson's CBN ended abruptly in 1980 after a disagreement over Father Linus' teaching on Catholic veneration of the saints.

He then began two new programs, one on Channel 7 applying the Scriptures to human problems, the other on WXRL Radio with Bible meditations. At one time he was spiritual advisor to the Disciples of the Lord, a Catholic-charismatic prayer group in Clarence.

Born in County Cork, he entered the Franciscan order in Killarney and was ordained a priest in 1942 in Galway. He taught in St. Bernardine College, Buckingham, England, then did mission work in Australia. He came to Buffalo in 1964.

Father Linus is survived by two sisters, Sheila Hennessy of Dublin and Arlene Buckley of County Limerick, Ireland.

A prayer service will be held at 8 p.m. tomorrow in the Loomis, Offers and Loomis Funeral Home, 1820 Seneca St. A Mass of Christian Burial will be offered at 9:30 a.m. Friday at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 450 Abbott Road. Burial will be in St. Bonaventure Cemetery, Allegany.