

Rev. George A. Landry, pastor of St. Patrick's church in Gibson, holds the breviary and wears the Roman collar which are distinctive marks of a Catholic priest. Well versed in theology and scholastic philosophy, the forty-year-old priest is not immune to the hammer and saw. Pictured beside his Master, a reproduction of the Messiah, Father Landry cares for the spiritual welfare of over 200 families at both St. Pat's and at the St. Anthony's mission at Bayou Black. "I had been active in sports," he admitted, grinning, "but I walked into the path of an automobile, and kind of bummed-up my leg."

Priest Has Hands Full in Gibson With Masses, Sacraments, Labor

St. Patrick's church lies 22 miles west of Houma, just off U. S. 90 along Bayou Black. Not an imposing structure in this rustic settlement, but nonetheless it is the station of the priestly career of Rev. George A. Landry — a former New Orleanean who has dedicated his life to the spiritual welfare of the area surrounding Gibson.

"Father's working on the garage," pointed one of the carpenters who was attaching pine sheeting to two-by-fours to make a rear addition to Saint Pat's.

A quick glance at Father's car and boat implied that he must have been taking a coffee-break. Somewhere in-between the banging of the workmen's hammers, two bolts of lightning struck — foreboding the wet results of a long, hot summer's morning. And the semi-tropical foliage began to glisten with rain drops.

"Hi," greeted Father Landry, appearing at the front door of the rectory. "Looks like we're in for it."

Hamer and Saw

Actually, the priest who had taken his share of the carpenters' burdes in the sultry mid-morning air looked as though he'd already "had it." The bespectacled clergyman, wearing a white tee-shirt and khakis could have well been another manual laborer — save for the sage countenance evident in those who have studied the depths of theology and philosophy.

"We're enlarging the sacristy," explained Father, pointing to the workmen. "How about a cup of coffee while I get my cassock and collar on?"

Father returned in a huff, not showing much of his forty years — and as though he'd just returned from an occupation less arduous than that claimed by hammer and saw.

Father Landry cares for the spiritual requirements of quite a few souls — "All together," he said, "there are approximately 200 families in Gibson and at St. Anthony's mission at Bayou Black. There is no priest at the mission, so I say Mass every Wednesday and Sunday there."

Of course, at Saint Pat's, the Roman Catholic service is celebrated every day, and there are many baptisms, marriages, last rites and confessions to administer to his parishioners who might total between one and two-thousand. On Sunday, he travels 16 miles to the St. Anthony mission for his second Mass of the day.

Five Years in High School

When Father Landry finished grammar school in 1934, he was too young to enter the seminary. "Because of that," explained the priest, smiling, "I had to spend five years in high school."

He went on to say that he entered St. Benedict minor seminary in 1935 (when he was promoted to the eighth grade) for three years; then, in 1937 he left Covington for Notre Dame major seminary in New Orleans where he was ordained in 1943 as a priest of God.

After being conferred the sacrament of Holy Orders by *Joseph Francis Rummel, archbishop of the Archdiocese of New Orleans*, the newly ordained priest was stationed at St. Cecilia's in New Orleans. Following, he has administered to Catholic parishioners at Mater Dolorosa, New Orleans; Sacred Heart, Baton Rouge; St. Eloi, Bayou Dularge and St. Rose, New Orleans.

On March 10 of next year, Father Landry will have been pastor (and his own assistant) at St. Patrick's for three years.

God Equals Goodness

"The greatest spiritual need of the world in general," he admonished, "is the knowledge of God. Actually, God is synonymous with goodness, and if we can appreciate that, there would be no danger of going contrary to his moral laws." The guideposts of conscience, he continued, are the only means of determining right from wrong when ignorance clouds the more positive appreciation of goodness treated philosophically.

Tragic Marriage?

"There are too many marriages contracted on immature levels," he went on to say. "And ignorance of God's beauty results in moral infractions which point to tragedy."

Removing his collar, Father Landry was ready to get back to work. But the dark clouds threatened and the sprinkling looked as though it meant business.

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