

34 priests get new posts

By KIM LARSEN
Of The Gazette Staff

Thirty-four priests serving the Catholic Diocese of Great Falls-Billings have received new appointments from Bishop Thomas J. Murphy.

Several of the assignments affect Billings parishes.

The changes:

- The Rev. Harold Arbanas, administrator of St. Pius X Parish, Billings, was granted a sabbatical leave.
- The Rev. Kirk Morgan, pastor of St. Raphael's in Glasgow, was named co-pastor of St. Pius X in Billings.
- The Rev. Bill Cowley was assigned as full-time chaplain and teacher at Billings Central Catholic High School. Ordained in 1973, Cowley has been associated with the high school all but two years when he served in a Glasgow parish.
- The Rev. David Dwyer, pastor of St. Joseph's Parish, Great Falls, will become rector of St. Patrick's Co-Cathedral, Billings, Nov. 13, when Monsignor Andrew J. Berek retires. Dwyer will continue as vicar general (administrative deputy) to the bishop.
- The Rev. Charles Gorman, co-pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Billings, was assigned to the Newman Center and Sacred Heart Renewal Center, both in Billings.
- The Rev. William Hagan, co-pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul, Great Falls, was named co-pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle, Billings.
- The Rev. Mike Kirkness, Newman Center chaplain in Billings, was named pastor of St. Philip Benoit Parish, Soledad.
- The Rev. Kevin Malek, who has served at both St. Pius X and St. Patrick's in Billings, has been named associate pastor of St. Joseph's Parish, Great Falls.
- The Rev. Martin Fisher, O.S.B., pastor of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parish, Pompeys Pillar, has been assigned to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Billings.
- The Rev. Walter Jauer, S.J., pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, has accepted a new assignment in Puerto Rico.
- The Rev. Jack Kiefer, associate pastor of St. Joseph's in Great Falls, was named pastor of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Pompeys Pillar. He will continue as co-director of the Curial Movement.
- The Rev. Emmett Hoffmann, O.F.M. Cap., was reassigned from St. Bernard's Parish, Billings, to full-time ministry with the Tokawitwa Conference.
- The Rev. David Reichling, O.F.M. Cap., was assigned to St. Bernard's, Billings.
- The Rev. Jerry Gottenhos, O.M.I., was assigned to Little Flower Parish, Billings.
- The Rev. Tom Beggis, who has served at St. Leo's in Lewistown and Our Lady of Lourdes in Great Falls, was named pastor of St. Matthias Parish, Moore. He will continue as vicar for ecumenism.
- The Rev. Jim Birkmaier, co-pastor in Lewistown, was appointed pastor of

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Immaculate Conception Parish, Wolf Point.

- The Rev. John Coody, pastor of parishes in Malta and Saco, was named pastor of St. Mary's in Chester.
- The Rev. Jerry Connolly has taken over pastoral duties of Sacred Heart Parish, Bridger, after a year's sabbatical leave.
- The Rev. John Dinske, who last served as pastor in Moore, will become pastor of St. Cyril's Parish, Geysor, upon completion of liturgical studies at Notre Dame University in August. He will continue as executive secretary of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission.
- The Rev. Robert Fox, administrator of Blessed Sacrament Parish, Black Eagle, since 1978, was named pastor of St. Raphael in Glasgow.
- The Rev. Tom Harney, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Bridger, was named pastor of St. Joseph's in Great Falls.
- The Rev. Dennis Kesse, pastor of St. Benedict's Parish, Roundup, was granted a leave of absence.
- The Rev. Joe Marmion, administrator at St. Cyril's, Geysor, was named pastor of St. Benedict's, Roundup.
- The Rev. Frank Kelly of Sacred Heart Parish, Glendive, was appointed priest-moderator of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.
- The Rev. Jay Peterson of St. Leo's, Lewistown, was appointed chairman of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission.
- The Rev. Charles Means, who has had several pastoral assignments, was named pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish, Black Eagle.
- The Rev. Jim Reynolds, who was assigned to teaching and duties at the College of Great Falls, was granted a sabbatical leave to continue his education.
- The Rev. John Sexton, associate pastor of St. Leo's Parish, Great Falls, was named pastor of St. Mary's Parish, Malta. He will continue as director of vocations for the Diocese.
- The Rev. Rene Petit, O.Praem., pastor of St. Mary's, Chester, was granted a sabbatical leave for studies.
- The Rev. Charles Robinson, O.F.M. Cap., assigned in Lane Deer, has been reassigned to St. Charles Parish, Pryor.
- The Rev. Randolph Graczyk, O.F.M. Cap., assigned to the Pryor parish, was granted a sabbatical leave for studies.
- Brother James Gleason, O.F.M. Cap., was granted a sabbatical leave for studies.
- Brother Larry Scherdt, O.F.M. Cap., and The Rev. John Guimond, O.F.M. Cap., were assigned to minister to Native Americans.

Anticipating questions from parishioners disappointed over losing their pastors, Murphy said priests are not or-

dered to serve one community or parish exclusively.

"Changes in assignment offer the priests the opportunity to share their gifts and talents with many communities throughout their priesthood within a diocese," Murphy said. "Each priest has different charisms to offer and each parish community has unique needs and challenges."

Murphy expressed concern about pastors having to take on more multiple assignments in the future because of a priest shortage.

All parishes presently served by a resident priest will continue to have this service, "but there has been a severe reduction in available priest personnel to staff some parish communities," Murphy said.

He noted five priests will retire by July 1983 and that 13 will be eligible for retirement by July 1985. Only six men presently are studying for the priesthood to serve the Great Falls-Billings diocese. If they do not drop out, they will be ordained by 1985.

"There is no candidate for priesthood entering First Theology this year," Murphy lamented. "The religious communities serving our diocese are also having great strains placed on them to continue having personnel available to staff parishes and institutions."

Of about 100 priests serving the diocese, about a third are members of religious communities, such as the Benedictines and Capuchins, from other parts of the country.

Those communities are having difficulties themselves and cannot send more members to the diocese, Murphy said.

"The reduced number of available priests places great stress and more responsibility on those presently active within the diocese," he said.

Murphy said the priest shortage could be alarming, but could also be a challenge. He encouraged parishes to use the services of full-time non-ordained personnel and to pray for vocations to the priesthood.

Religion news

The Gazette welcomes news on religious activities which will be of interest to readers outside the group's own membership. "In the Churches" will publish announcements of sermons and talks to be given by persons other than the church pastor.

News items should be typed if possible, and sent to Kim Larsen, Gazette Newsroom, PO Box 2507, Billings, MT 59103, or brought to the newsroom. Give the name and phone number of the person sending the information. Reports must be received no later than 4 p.m. Thursday for Saturday's paper.

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