

Father O'Shea's Diocesan Reflections

Priestly vocations from one P.E.I. family:

Years ago P.E.I. was referred to humorously as having two major exports, potatoes and priests. Vocations to the priesthood were indeed plentiful with a number of Island families having two or more priests.

From the marriage of James Monaghan and Isabella Curran came the following six sons who were priests:

Martin Monaghan

Born in Kelly's Cross Parish in 1899. He graduated from St. Dunstan's University, studied theology at the Grand Seminary of Quebec and was ordained in St. Dunstan's Cathedral by Bishop Louis O'Leary in 1925. After three years as curate in Souris, he was named pastor at Amherst, Magdalen Islands, remaining there until his death at the Charlottetown Hospital in 1937. Burial was in his former parish at Amherst, M.I.

Gavan Monaghan

Born in Kelly's Cross Parish in 1900. He graduated from St. Dunstan's University, studied theology at the Grand Seminary of Quebec and was ordained in St. Dunstan's Cathedral by Bishop Louis O'Leary in 1924. He then studied for two years in Rome where he merited a PhD in philosophy. He taught at St. Dunstan's until 1931 by which time tuberculosis forced him to a three-year rest period at a Quebec sanatorium. He resumed teaching at St. Dunstan's and in 1941 he transferred to the Diocese of Oklahoma City - Tulsa where he served awhile as superintendent of Catholic schools, then as pastor in two parishes in that diocese. He died in Oklahoma City in 1959 with burial in Holy Name Parish, Chickasha, Oklahoma.

Alfred Monaghan, S.J.

Born in Kelly's Cross Parish in 1903. He graduated from St. Dunstan's University and then joined the Jesuits in 1923. Following the Jesuit regime of novitiate, further studies and teaching, he studied theology at Milltown Park Seminary in Dublin, Ireland where he was ordained in 1935 by Bishop Wall. His first ministries in Canada included teaching in Kingston, director of retreat house in Oakville and associate pastor in Winnipeg. For eleven years he was associate pastor in Phoenix, Arizona and for his last seventeen years a preacher of missions stationed in Toronto. He died at Brebeuf College, Toronto in 1979 with burial in the Jesuit Cemetery in Guelph, Ontario.

"Remember your leaders, those who spoke the Word of God to you."

(Hebrews:13,7)

St. Clair Monaghan, S.J.

Born in Charlottetown in 1906. After studies at St. Dunstan's University he joined the Jesuits in 1926. Following novitiate, further studies and teaching, he studied theology at Immaculate Conception College, Montreal and was ordained in the Gesu Church there by Bishop Deschamps in 1939. He served all his priestly life in Canada, teaching at St. Paul's College, Winnipeg and at Brebeuf High School, Willowdale. In 1980 he became guest master at the Jesuit Hospitality House in Toronto, remaining there until retirement. He died in Toronto in 1997 with burial in the Jesuit Cemetery, Guelph.

Joseph Monaghan, S.J.

Born in Charlottetown in 1908. After studies at St. Dunstan's University he joined the Jesuits in 1927. Following novitiate, further studies and teaching, he studied theology at Immaculate Conception College, Montreal and in 1940 he was ordained in the Gesu Church there by Archbishop Charbonneau. After brief periods at teaching in Montreal and parish ministry in Vancouver, he was transferred to the United States. There he taught awhile in Dallas and was engaged in various Jesuit ministries in Oregon and California. For his last nearly twenty years of active ministry he was pastor in three Arizona parishes. He spent his retirement in Los Gatos, California where he died in 1993 with burial there.

Maurice Monaghan, S.J.

Born in Charlottetown in 1910. Following studies at St. Dunstan's he joined the Jesuits in 1932. After novitiate, further studies and teaching, he studied theology at Immaculate Conception College, Montreal and at the Jesuit seminary in Toronto. In 1945 he was ordained in the chapel of the latter institution by his first cousin, Archbishop James McGuigan of Toronto. Fr. Maurice taught at Campion College, Regina and at Loyola College in Montreal with a brief term at the Loyola Retreat House in Oakville. He died in hospital at Guelph in 1963 with burial in the Jesuit Cemetery there.

Addendum

James Monaghan, the father of these six priests, was born in Kelly's Cross Parish where he farmed and taught school for a number of years until 1905. He had two brothers who were priests, one a Jesuit and the other a pastor on P.E.I. James' wife was Isabella Curran from St. Teresa's and she also had two brothers who were priests, Fathers Peter and Tom Curran, both having served as rector of St. Dunstan's College and pastor on P.E.I. James and Isabella moved with their family to Charlottetown in 1905 and resided at 193 Weymouth Street. James worked with the CN Railway while in Charlottetown, retiring in 1937. They then moved to Boston to live near family members. James and Isabella died twelve days apart in Boston in 1957 and are buried there. Besides the six priests, they had four daughters and two other sons.

February 2, 2016