

Father O'Shea's Diocesan Reflections

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

From the marriage of Philip Rooney and Ellen McKenna came the following five sons who were priests:

Joseph Rooney

Born in Iona in 1887. He taught in Island schools for a few years before graduating from St. Dunstan's College. He studied theology at the Grand Seminary of Quebec and in 1916 he was ordained in Vernon River by Bishop Henry O'Leary. After two years on the faculty of St. Dunstan's, he went overseas in 1918 as chaplain in the Canadian Army, serving in France. In 1919 he returned to the teaching staff at St. Dunstan's College for a two-year period. He was then pastor at Morell from 1921 to 1940 and at Cardigan from 1940 until his death. Father Joe died at the Kings County Hospital in Montague on January 7, 1942. Funeral Mass was celebrated by Bishop O'Sullivan in St. Dunstan's Basilica with burial in Cardigan.

Alphonsus Rooney

Born in Iona in 1891. After graduating from St. Dunstan's College he studied theology in Rome and was ordained there 1916 for the Diocese of Helena, Montana. He spent his first sixteen years at Mount St. Charles College (later Carroll College) of which he was vice president for the last six years. In 1932 he became the first president of Great Falls College (now a university). He also served a time as superintendent of Catholic education for the diocese. In addition, he did two years of post-graduate study at the Catholic University in Washington. In 1941 he was appointed pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Butte where he remained until his death. Fr. Rooney died in St. James Hospital, Butte on February 8, 1952. Bishop Gilmore celebrated the funeral Mass in St. Mary's Church, Butte with burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Butte.

James Rooney

Born in Iona in 1893. He attended Prince of Wales College and taught in Island schools for three years. He then entered the Civil Service in Ottawa where he remained two years. Following graduation from St. Dunstan's he studied theology at St. Augustine's Seminary, Toronto and was ordained in St. Dunstan's Cathedral in 1921 by Bishop Louis O'Leary. He was curate at the cathedral for four years, also serving as secretary to Bishop O'Leary for much of that time. In 1925 he transferred to the Diocese of Oklahoma (where fellow Islander Francis Clement Kelley had just been named bishop). He was pastor of St. Monica's, Tulsa from 1926 to 1929, of Sapulpa from 1929 to 1941 and of Immaculate Conception, Tulsa from then until his retirement in 1967. Father Rooney died at Mercy Hospital, Oklahoma City on April 8, 1984. Funeral Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Salatka in the chapel of the Centre for Christian Renewal, Oklahoma City with burial in Resurrection Cemetery there.

Eugene Rooney

Born in Iona in 1899. After graduating from St. Dunstan's College he enrolled at the Grand Seminary of Quebec and was ordained in the chapel of St. Joseph's Seminary, Edmonton in 1923 by Archbishop Henry O'Leary for service in the Archdiocese of Edmonton. He spent his first year as assistant at Tofield with missions. In 1924 he was appointed pastor at Westlock where he remained until his retirement in 1973. When the Diocese of St. Paul was established in 1948 Westlock became part of that new diocese. Father Rooney died in hospital at Westlock on March 20, 1975. His funeral Mass was celebrated in St. Mary's Church, Westlock by Bishop Raymond Roy with burial in the parish cemetery.

Patrick Rooney

Born in Iona in 1901. After graduating from St. Dunstan's College he studied one year at the Grand Seminary of Quebec. He then transferred to St. Joseph's Seminary in Edmonton and was ordained at St. Joseph's Cathedral there in 1926 by Archbishop Henry O'Leary for service in that archdiocese. He spent his first year at Warspite and then for short periods as pastor in Vilna, Smoky Lake and Warspite. In 1935 he became pastor at Clandonald and in 1947 parish priest at Lacombe where he remained until 1965 when ill health brought on his retirement from the active ministry. That year he returned to P.E.I. Father Pat died at the Charlottetown Hospital on April 3, 1973. His funeral Mass was celebrated in St. Joachim's Church, Vernon River by his brother, Father Eugene, with burial in the parish cemetery.

Mr. and Mrs. Rooney had a family of fourteen, ten born in Iona and the youngest four in Vernon River Parish to which they moved in 1903. Two daughters became nuns. Eileen joined the Sisters of Mercy and lived all her religious life in New York state where she was a successful teacher, living to the age of 90. Catherine joined the Sisters of Notre Dame and served her community in a variety of leadership roles in Maritime Canada, including a 30-year period of teaching at Mount St. Bernard College in Antigonish. She died at age 89 and is buried in Charlottetown. Another daughter was Mrs. Doyle in Earnscliffe, mother of a large family, and the fourth girl died in infancy. One son died at age 23 in that frightful flu epidemic of 1918. Four other sons lived long married lives. Mr. and Mrs. Rooney were married for 54 years. Philip died at the age of 84 and Ellen at 96, the latter's birthday of interest being July 1, 1867, the very day that Canada was born.

***“Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father in heaven.”***

(Matthew 5: 16)

October 4, 2016