

# FORTY YEARS

## Holy Cross Father Pearson observing 40th anniversary of ordination

BY VINCE LABARBERA

FORT WAYNE — Holy Cross Father John H. Pearson will celebrate his 40th jubilee as a priest in September when Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades presides at the Jubilarian Mass in Fort Wayne.

“Actually, our community only marks 25th and 50th jubilees,” he said, “but it’s an honor to be able to celebrate my 40th with the diocesan priests. I’ve spent most of my priestly life working in this diocese.”

Born Jan. 7, 1945, the son of the late Jack and Violet Pearson, he attended elementary school at St. Cajetan Parish, located on Chicago’s south side. His high-school education was at Holy Cross Seminary, Notre Dame, from which he graduated in 1963.

Father Pearson made his novitiate in the Congregation of Holy Cross at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Jordan, Minn., from Aug. 15,

1963, to Aug. 16, 1964, when he made his first profession in the Congregation of Holy Cross. From September of 1964 to June of 1968 he completed undergraduate work as a seminarian at Moreau Seminary, Notre Dame, graduating magna cum laude and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa at graduation.

He also studied theology at Moreau Seminary and the University of Notre Dame, graduating with a master of theology degree in May 1971.

That fall he was sent to St. Joseph Parish, South Bend, and while serving there was ordained a transitional deacon in April 1973. He was ordained to the Priesthood on Sept. 15, 1973, by Holy Cross Archbishop Lawrence Graner, former archbishop of Dhaka in what now is Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan.

“I have fond memories of (this) holy man who spent most



FATHER JOHN H. PEARSON, CSC

of his life as a missionary,” he added.

“I celebrated my first Mass on Sept. 16, 1973, at St. Joseph and stayed there as associate

pastor until July, 1975, when I was transferred to Little Flower Parish, South Bend, as associate pastor,” Father Pearson said.

“In the summer of 1982, the congregation agreed to permit me to study law at the University of California, Berkeley, with the idea of my ultimately teaching at Notre Dame,” he said. “After I received my law degree, I served one year as a law clerk in Birmingham, Ala., in the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. I clerked for the late Judge Robert S. Vance, who was a very strong influence on my life,” he said.

At the end of that one-year period, for the next nearly four years Father Pearson served as a lawyer at the firm of Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher in Los Angeles for further training before returning to Notre Dame in 1990 where he taught in the university’s law school for 15 years. During that time, Father Pearson

also served as the chaplain to the 600 graduate student residents at Fisher, O’Hara-Grace apartments at Notre Dame.

Following a sabbatical during which he studied at Notre Dame and also completed a renewal program at North American College, Rome, he returned to the Michiana area to serve as chaplain at Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, for the past seven years, where he hopes to continue in that capacity “for a good long time.”

“I live at Moreau Seminary and take great joy in sharing the lives of the wonderful young men studying for the Priesthood in the Congregation of Holy Cross. When I was ordained, I couldn’t imagine what it would be like to be a priest 25 years — they seemed kind of old — much less 40 years! God has truly blessed me,” he concluded.

## Father Bob D’Souza celebrates 40 years as priest

BY MARK WEBER

FORT WAYNE — Father Bob D’Souza, currently parochial vicar at St. Jude Parish, Fort Wayne, and celebrating 40 years of Priesthood recalls his plans for a career in engineering when he was ready for college.

That changed on a day when his pastor, Father Lawrence Fernandes, invited him to go for a walk. The priest was on his way to administer Last Rites to a dying parishioner, and when Bob D’Souza witnessed the compassion of the priest and the peace of the one who was slipping into the next life, he too, benefitted from the sacrament to the point where he had an interest in the Priesthood. In time, he mentioned this to his pastor, who suggested a retreat, which became the first actual step toward the seminary.

By 1976, Father D’Souza was the director of India’s Boys Town in Calcutta, an institution for 600 homeless orphan boys. At the time, he was apathetic toward his

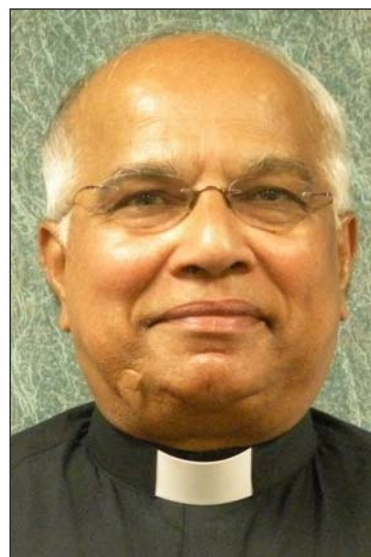
Priesthood, a mood recognized by Mother Teresa when she visited him. She told him that she could see that he was troubled, and asked how she could help.

Father Bob described his unhappiness with his vocation and that he considered dropping out.

Mother Teresa asked him if he spent time in personal prayer each day, and he admitted that he did not. She told him that his lack of personal prayer allowed him to escape from God, and advised that he spend an hour a day in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament realizing that his Priesthood was a gift and that he should ask for a new understanding of what the Lord wanted him to do with his life.

Since that time, the daily hour of prayer has become part of his spiritual regimen, allowing the gift of his Priesthood to grow as he shares it with others.

And he shares it in a way that connects with the deathbed visit that directed him toward Priesthood. Since 1997 when he arrived in



FATHER ROBERT D’SOUZA

Fort Wayne and became associate pastor at St. Jude Parish, Father D’Souza has been Catholic chaplain at Parkview Hospital where he visits 40 to 50 Catholic patients daily dispensing “vitamin C” in the form of “comfort, Communion, Confession,” as needed.

He finds this work deeply restorative personally as well as to those he serves, especially to patients who have drifted away from the faith and are receptive to a return to the sacraments.

Father D’Souza recalls a different kind of hospital he visited years ago; this one was a leper colony in Shantinagar. He went there every Sunday to say Mass for the sisters, but was reluctant to have contact with the lepers until one day when Mother Teresa told him that, “These lep-

ers need you. They want to talk to you.” After that, he was able to visit them without fear.

Mother Teresa’s example of how she treated the poor, the sick and the dying are imprinted in the heart of Father D’Souza, who reveals that whatever he does as a priest is influenced by her wonderful admonition, “Do something beautiful for God.”

On Sunday, July 7, after the 11 a.m. Mass, a reception will be held at St. Jude Parish to honor Father D’Souza’s jubilee.



Congratulations and  
Prayerful Best Wishes to  
**FATHER ROBERT D’SOUZA**  
as he celebrates the 40th anniversary  
of his ordination to the priesthood.

THE STAFF, FACULTY, STUDENT BODY AND PARISHIONERS OF  
ST. JUDE PARISH, FORT WAYNE

*Congratulations to all the Jubilarians*  
TODAY'S CATHOLIC