

Priest leaving Chico for a 'fresh breeze'

By Carri Geer
Staff Writer

After serving for more than 13 years as the pastor of Chico's St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, the Rev. Thomas Dermody has announced his resignation.

Dermody said only two other priests in the 112-year history of the church have served longer.

"I think every priest after that length of time needs a little fresh breeze in their lives," he said.

His resignation will be effective Nov. 28, when he will head to Australia for two months of travel before returning to his homeland of Ireland to study in a "priestly ministry course" at the Marianella Pastoral Centre in Dublin for eight months.

"I needed to study and refresh my mind again on what's going on in the church and so on, and take some time off for myself. So I am taking a sabbatical for 10 months for study and travel," Dermody said.

Dermody said he will return to the Diocese of Sacramento in September, which stretches from Vallejo to the Oregon border, to be assigned to another parish.

"Being a pastor of St. John's has been a

tremendous, gratifying experience," he said. "This has been a lovely community to live in. There's a lot of life down around St. John's with the university students, and I hope that my next parish will be as useful and as lively — and as caring."

Dermody, a native of Kilkenny, Ireland, was appointed pastor of St. John's Church in May 1976 after 14 years as a priest in Sacramento.

That summer he received a master's degree in marriage, family and child counseling from the University of San Francisco.

He is a graduate of St. Keiran's Seminary in Kilkenny, and was ordained June 3, 1962. He said he came to the United States as a volunteer after reading an advertisement from the Sacramento Diocese.

Dermody's brother, Michael, is pastor at St. Dominic's Catholic Church in Orland, and his great-uncle, James, was pastor at St. John's in Chico from 1917-1937.

In 1978 Dermody worked with Maureen Dion in writing the centennial history of the parish.

With his academic training, Dermody has created programs for engaged couples and marriage enrichment. He also spearheaded the training of deacons for the parish when the diaconate program was first initiated in the diocese and provided candidates for the program.

Farewell Mass for pastor

DURHAM — A Mass of farewell for Rev. Thomas Dermody, pastor of St. John the Baptist Church in Chico and the St. James Catholic Church in Durham, will be said at 9 a.m. Sunday at the St. James Church.

Members of the community who know Dermody are also welcome to attend.

A signature book will be available for those who wish to sign. The book will be presented at the reception, which will follow the service. ■

During his pastorate at St. John's, he has guided the expansion and improvement of the complex with additional classrooms, meeting rooms, handicap access ramps to the church and cafeteria, and new parish offices.

Memberships have included the Council of Churches, the Juvenile Justice Commission, Enloe Hospital's Bioethics Committee and the Rotary Club.

A farewell reception will be held in Dermody's honor from 2-4 p.m. on Nov. 26 in the Notre Dame School gymnasium. ■



Rev. Thomas Dermody