

OBITUARIES

Cotati pastor Patrick Gleeson stricken on trip

The Rev. Patrick Gleeson, an Irish priest with a distinctive and resonant voice, died Monday while on a trip that would have taken him home to Thurles, County Tipperary, Ireland. He was 66 years old.

Father Gleeson was Pastor Emeritus of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Cotati. He had been at the church since 1985.

He was stricken at a New York airport and died at a hospital in Jamaica, N.Y. The Rev. Stephen Canny at St. Joseph's said Father Gleeson was en route to Ireland to complete details connected with the estate of his sister, Margaret Gleeson, who died in December. He was executor of the estate.

Gleeson was born and educated in Drom, Thurles, County Tipperary, Ireland. He was ordained for the Diocese of Sacramento in 1947, prior to arriving in the California capital from Ireland.

Father Gleeson's first California assignment was as pastor of Our Lady of the Redwoods Catholic Church in Garberville in Humboldt County from 1950 to 1967. He was assigned as pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Calistoga in 1967 and served until 1975, when he became pastor at St. Apollinaris Parish in Napa. Moving to St. Joseph's in 1985, he retired in 1989.

Father Canny said Father Gleeson officiated at his last Mass a week ago. As pastor emeritus, he had offered two to three Masses a week despite being in poor health. "He still took his turn," said Father Canny.

He continued to serve the church despite several operations, including a quadruple heart bypass. He had suffered two strokes, lost the sight in one eye and was losing vision in the other. "Still, he felt obligated to make the trip for his sister," Father Canny said.

During his youth, Father Gleeson was an accomplished athlete. He was a member of County Team Tipperary, which won the Irish championship for hurling, a sport much like field hockey. He also became a fine golfer after he was ordained.

"He even had his pilot's license when he was in Garberville. He used to tell us of some of his flying exploits," Father Canny said.

While in Garberville and Calistoga, Father Gleeson also served as a radio spotter for high school football games.

"He was known for his inability to say no to people in need, particularly when it came to money. We were afraid all the furniture might disappear when the door was open," said Father Canny.

The father also was known for his love for young people, who seemed to gravitate to him.

Father Gleeson is survived by his sister, Ciss O'Brien, Thurles, Ireland, and his brother, John Glee-

son, Drom, Thurles, Ireland.

Friends may call from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. today at the Parent-Sorensen Mortuary in Petaluma, then after 5 p.m. at St. Joseph's in Cotati.

A vigil service will be held at 8 p.m. today at the church. A funeral Mass will be offered at 11 a.m. Monday at St. Joseph's, 150 St. Joseph's Way, Cotati. Burial will be at Calvary Catholic Cemetery in Santa Rosa.

Memorial contributions are preferred to the Building Fund, St. Joseph's Church, 150 St. Joseph's Way, Cotati 94931.

— John Adams