

History of St. Joseph Parish continued.

1925 – 2003

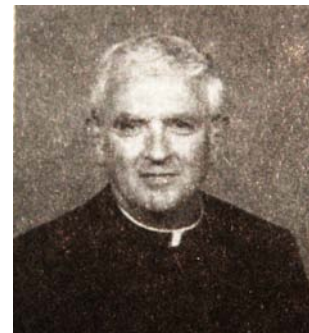
Some of the many who worked with

Father Smith 1970 - 1981



ather Andrew Wawrzycki.

Father Wawrzycki was apparently quite young. Because of his youth, Father Smith is said to have remarked, “I never thought I’d live to hear the patter of tiny feet in the rectory.” Fr. Wawrzycki loved to ride his motorcycle. A McGovern supporter, he was likable and is remembered for his wisdom. Father is now located in Eustis, Florida where he is on extended sick leave.



ather F. Joseph Harte

Father Harte arrived in November of 1974 and was reassigned from St. Joseph in February of 1975. He was assigned to a new mission church, Holy Family, in Bay Hills. He had been leading a Lenten discussion series on the sacraments, so he planned to return to St. Joseph to continue the series. He remembers the people of St. Joseph as being friendly, caring and loving. He was particularly impressed by a group of young people in the parish at that time. Father Harte is now the director

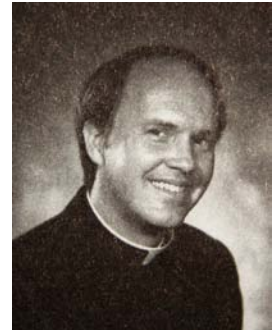


of the Universe National Shrine in Orlando which developed from the mission church, Holy Family.



ather David Acker

Father Acker first came to St. Joseph as a Deacon and then returned after his ordination in 1974. He brought to the priesthood a devotion to scholarship and a love of teaching. As a seminarian, he was introduced to the work of the Dominican Sisters of St. Rose of Lima, who care for those afflicted with cancer. This brought Father to an awareness of the need for a Hospice program in Winter Haven. (The Hospice program began in England in 1967.) Fr. Acker and those who worked with him, such as Mary Lou Joines, were active in developing Good Shepherd Hospice, which became a reality in 1979. Father Acker also initiated the soup kitchen during Lent. Parishioners were asked to partake of soup and a slice of bread and contribute what they would have spent on a meal at home or in a restaurant. Not only did the 20 – 30 gallons of soup prepared generate funds for charity, the soup also helped parishioners identify with the millions in the world who go to bed hungry every night. This practice is still present today as the “bring a sandwich, soup will be provided” gathering on Lenten Wednesdays.



ather Francis E. Le Tourneau

came to St. Joseph from Daytona, Florida where he had retired. He had been involved in campus ministry at the University of Maine for many years following which he had worked in a parish. On a doctor’s advice, he retired to Florida where he was living with his brother. When his brother took over security at the Episcopal-Catholic Apartments in

1975, Father became an associate pastor of St. Joseph. He celebrated his 50th anniversary as a priest at St. Joseph and died December 2, 1997.



ather Eamon Tobin

One of the first tasks Father Tobin assumed when he arrived at St. Joseph in 1980 was the visitation of all Catholic homes of Winter Haven. Sometimes the visits would last fifteen minutes and sometimes last two hours, depending on the needs of those being visited. (These visits are remembered by some to this day.) Later he followed his visits by organizing other parishioners to visit the homes of inactive churchgoers. Fr. Tobin was described as being tall and lean. He had red hair and green eyes and spoke with an Irish brogue. He remarked on the deep appreciation people have for the priesthood and the value they place on the presence of a priest in their lives. He created a library in the social hall and supplied books for it. He mentioned books frequently and seemed to know the right book to give to the right person. Father Tobin directed the RCIA and the charismatic prayer group.

