

Tiny 1858 church clings to tradition

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'Have collar, will travel' is Rev. Gurath's motto

By Dorothy Bliskey

When Fond du Lac native Father Guy Gurath gets into his 1991 white Mustang convertible, he is probably on his way to conduct a summer Mass in any one of 10 Wisconsin counties. He zips back and forth from one assignment to another with ease, doing what he loves most — preaching God's word as an interim pastor.

"It's a fun car...I call it my white knight," Gurath said.

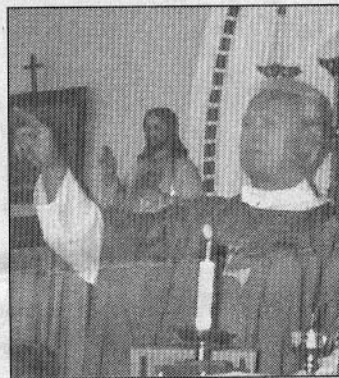
For the past two years, Gurath has been a temporary pastor and a grief minister for 10 counties in the Milwaukee archdiocese.

"I enjoy the variety of ministering I've been involved in," he said, noting that in addition to the current assignment in the Waupun-Brandon area, he has served at churches in Juneau, Oakfield, Byron, Beaver Dam, Plymouth, West Bend and Sheboygan, to name a few. With his home now in Cedar Grove near Sheboygan, he is a good hour's drive from most of the churches he serves.

There was a time during his 36 years of preaching when he ventured further to preach — to Austin, Texas, and Los Angeles.

"California was quite an experience," Gurath said. "In that particular church, members of the congregation included celebrities like Lawrence Welk, Archie Bunker (Carrol O'Connor) and Bobby Vinton."

St. Joseph in Fond du Lac has always been his home.



Standing at the altar in the 142-year-old church, Father Gurath preaches during a Sunday Mass.

Gurath was raised, along with nine brothers and sisters, in a house at 375 E. First St. He attended St. Lawrence Seminary in Mount Calvary and St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee and was ordained in 1964. Interests in mass communication led him to enroll at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for two years. He also took coursework in radio and TV film at Loyola University in Los Angeles.

It's no wonder Gurath's voice sounds like a radio or TV announcer.

Gurath also serves as a talk show host on Milwaukee television's Sunday morning show, "Look In."

"To catch the show, you have to get up very early," Gurath said.

As for the car he drives, his only comment is, "Have collar, will travel."