

September 9, 1996

Father Russell Simms



Father Simms was born March 14, 1902, at Port Huron, Mich. He was educated in the elementary and secondary schools at Port Huron. He earned a bachelor's degree in English Literature at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. After converting to Catholicism, he took his philosophy studies at St. Mary's College, St. Mary, Ky, and his theology studies at St. Meinrad Seminary, St. Meinrad, Ind.

He was ordained at the age of 40 on May 26, 1942, by the Most Rev. (later Cardinal) Joseph E. Ritter, bishop of Indianapolis, for the Diocese of Wichita.

Father Simm's first assignment was assistant pastor at St. Mary's Cathedral. He then served as chaplain at the Sisters Adorers Motherhouse and Resurrection Chapel, an auxiliary defense chapel, both in Wichita (1943-44).

He was appointed first resident pastor at St. John, Clonmel in 1944. His other pastorates included: Mary, Help of Christians, Loretto (1947-52); Sts. Peter and Paul, North Ellinwood (1952-60), and St. Mary, McCracken (1960-72). While at McCracken he built a new rectory.

Father Simms retired Aug. 1, 1972, at the age of 70. Once asked, "Father Simms, what would you like people to say about you in 2000 A.D.?" He replied: "He looks his age!" During his retirement he lived with his sister. They resided in Michigan and later in Florida.

Father Simms died Sept. 25, 1996, at Health Park Care Center in Fort Meyers, Fla., at the age of 94.

Father Charles Sullivan celebrated the funeral Mass at St. Columbkille Church in Fort Meyers. Burial was in Lakeside Cemetery, Port Huron, Mich.