

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of the Youngstown Diocese

Personal Experience

O.H. 1575

REVEREND ROBERT E. BRENGARTNER

Interviewed

by

Patrick H. Downey

October 17, 1992

REVEREND ROBERT E. BRENGARTNER

Reverend Brengartner was born on September 2, 1916, in Cleveland, Ohio. As a youngster, he always dreamed of joining the navy. But he also enjoyed being an altar boy and admired the priests at Cathedral Latin High School. Therefore, he went to John Carroll University for two years and the seminary for six years. At John Carroll, he studied Greek, Latin, and a variety of subjects that prepared him for the seminary, which he compared to marine boot camp. He was ordained on February 28, 1942, by Bishop McFadden at St. John's Cathedral, Cleveland.

While at Holy Rosary, Lowellville, 1942-1944, World War II was reaching its zenith and Reverend Brengartner's first inclination to join the Navy returned. The Youngstown Diocese required a priest to be ordained for three years before becoming a military chaplain. Reverend Brengartner pointed out to Bishop McFadden that his former classmate in the Cleveland Diocese enlisted while only two years ordained. The result was a blessing and dispensation granted to him by the Bishop. He went through boot camp at William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, and was stationed at a submarine base in Pearl Harbor, from 1944 to 1945. After World War II, he was sent to St. Rose, Girard, 1946-1950 and to Sacred Heart of Youngstown for most of 1950. At that time, the Korean War "blossomed" and the former chaplains were asked to return to their respective service branches. He passed through basic training again, but at Camp LeJeune in North Carolina. Afterwards, he went to the Mediterranean for mock naval training exercises. While at St. Peter's in Rome, he baptized

twelve marines. After serving in Korea, Reverend Brengartner remained in the navy through most of the Vietnam period until 1971. He returned to the U.S. and was appointed Pastor of St. Patrick's, Kent, Ohio, where he remained until retiring in 1982. He now resides at St. Mary's rectory in Massillon.

Reverend Brengartner received many military honors and belonged to several religious organizations. He received the Legion of Merit and thirteen ribbons for service during World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. He was monitor for the National Council of Catholic Women while at St. Patrick's. During his first assignment at Lowellville, he provided transportation and taught CCD [Confraternity Christian Doctrine] classes for the youth. He still receives letters of thanks from some of them. Since 1984, he has visited the Indian River School, a maximum security prison for juveniles in Massillon, Ohio. He provides volunteer Bible meetings there regularly, and holds Christmas and Easter masses annually. Reverend Brengartner continues to enjoy working with people and relishes a good game of golf.

-Patrick Downey

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INTERVIEWEE: REVEREND ROBERT E. BRENGARTNER  
INTERVIEWER: Patrick H. Downey  
SUBJECT: Seminar, U.S. Navy, Diocese, Vocations, RCIA  
DATE: October 17, 1992

D: This is an interview with Reverend Robert E. Brengartner, for the History of the Youngstown Diocese project, by Patrick Downey, on October 17, 1992.

Okay, father, maybe you can tell us where you were born and what your environment was like growing up.

B: I was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on the west side; St. Rose's parish. I went to St. Rose School for all the eight grades, graduating from St. Rose's in 1930. It was a great school. Monsignor O'Connell was there. We always used to call him P.J. O'Connell. [There were] wonderful associates there. Also, I remember Father Paul McNally and Father Ed Kirby and Sister Gilbert who was in the order of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Sister Gilbert was the eighth grade teacher but also our serving teacher.

I had always wanted to join the navy when I was growing up because I had been around the lake [Lake Erie] all the time. I read books on Annapolis. I wanted to go to Annapolis. When I got to St. Rose's and started serving Mass, that notion went out of my mind. I wanted to become a priest after serving Mass. So, I think being around the altar, around the priests, having such a wonderful mentor, Sister Gilbert, who had encouraged about thirty young men to join the priesthood in her time there, I just wanted to be a priest.

So, that's where all my studies of Latin at Carroll. . . . I leaned towards the seminary. [I studied] Latin, Greek, and whatever else we needed.

I played basketball and all the sports that a kid would play at St. Rose's, of course. I belonged to the Columbian Squires. It was like the Knights of Columbus. Then, I went on to Cathedral Latin for four years. I went out for basketball and football and those things. I lived on the Westside. It took me an hour and a half to go to school by bus each day and an hour and a half [to go] home. So, there wasn't much time to be playing. I enjoyed the school. I was in the intramural sports, basketball and whatever we had. The brothers of Mary were those in charge of the school. They were beautiful people. I enjoyed Cathedral Latin very much. It seems I spent half of my life on a bus, though. But, it was worth it.

I went to John Carroll a couple of years to prepare for the seminary.

D: What was your seminary experience like?

B: It was something like boot camp in the Marine Corps. It was a tough, tough. . . . It was good in a sense that we all stayed. Everyone in my class--we had nineteen young men studying for the priesthood. We all became priests. Everyone except for those who died--about eleven in the meantime.

But, no one has left the priesthood. That was the experience of pretty much of those at that time who were in the seminary. It was very strict. We had a lot of fun, though, with it. You made your own fun. So, we got through it. I always compared it to boot camp. Being in the Marine Corps, I know how tough that was, but I'd rather go through boot camp than go through the seminary again. It was pretty tough. They were pretty strict. [There were] no visiting rooms, no talking in the corridors, no smoking. I didn't smoke anyway, so that was no problem for me; but it was pretty strict. We were in there all around the clock, except we got out a half a day on Thursdays to go home. We'd go home, maybe to bring our laundry home or something, to get some good food for a change, to eat at home. [We had] maybe a half of an afternoon to teach Catechism. So, that was our life. But, it was very enjoyable. I enjoyed it and so did all my classmates.

D: When you got out of the seminary, where was your first assignment? What was it like?

B: We were ordained in 1942, February 28. Usually, young men were ordained in June, but because the war had

started in 1941. . . . We were deacons then, in the seminary, in 1941, so they moved our ordination up from June to February. So, I was ordained by Bishop McFadden in St. John's Cathedral in Cleveland. Of course the diocese was Cleveland then. So, my first assignment was in Lowellville. I never heard of Lowellville, I didn't know where it was. But, a friend of mine, Father Rikeland drove my folks and myself down to Lowellville for my first assignment to see where it was. Down in the valley.

So, that was interesting. I think he told my mother that Lowellville was a nice country place, good fresh air, trees, and all this. Then, as we're going through Youngstown, we are going by the mills with all the yellow smoke pouring out. My mother said, "Where is this now? How did this get here?" Lowellville was really a lovely place. It's a suburb of Youngstown. It's a nice place to live. So, I enjoyed it. Father John Cunningham was my first pastor. I tell you, I've been blessed with good pastors and priests.

So, I enjoyed being in Lowellville except that all the young men were gone. We had blackouts, as if we were expecting planes to fly over at any time, and rationing, of course. I was the chaplain for the Altar and Rosary Society and the Young Ladies of Deli, and all that, but I realized that I was missing the guys.

Then, I think it came to me with the war. We were at the height of the war then. They needed chaplains. My first inclination came back again to go into the navy, so that's when I volunteered. I had an interesting talk with Bishop McFadden. I had asked him about joining the navy. He says, "That's wonderful." He was such a beautiful bishop. He made you feel at home. He was a great guy. [He said,] "How many years have you been ordained?" I said, "Two."

So, he called Monsignor Prokop. He [Monsignor Prokop] was his [Bishop McFadden] secretary at the time. He asked how many years you had to be in parish life to join the navy. He said, "Three years," so the bishop looked at me like, "that's too bad." I said that I was only there two years. But, the holy spirit was with me and I said, "Well Bishop, my classmate, Father Mead from Cleveland, was just accepted into the navy." Of course he had just come from Cleveland as the auxiliary bishop. Now, he was the bishop of Youngstown. He said, "What they can do in Cleveland, we can do in Youngstown," so off I went. He gave me a dispensation, you might say, on the spot, of three years to two years. So, off I went to the navy.

My first assignment then was Pearl Harbor. I was at a

submarine base at Pearl. It was still blackouts and all the dangers of war at the time. We never got news of what was going on. I enjoyed being there with the guys. I'd go out on submarines for trial runs. They would bring a submarine in for repairs and then I would go out in the morning after Mass and join the fellows for the day. We'd make dives and they'd test the subs to see if the patches were holding up with scotch tape or whatever.

So, that was my first experience in the navy. I was there when the war ended in 1945. All wars were over, or supposed to be, so I came home. I came home to a wonderful assignment. Bishop McFadden assigned me to St. Rose's in Girard. One of my best friends, a priest who became my best friend was Monsignor Norm Kelly. He's the greatest guy in the world. We buried him a couple years ago. He was a loss to me. So, we were there together from . . . I think around 1946 when I got out of the navy until 1950. We had a great time there together playing Santa Claus. I'd be Santa Claus. He'd be Santa Claus' helper. We'd go around to the families and have fun. We made a good time.

Also, we would vie with each other and see how many converts we could work with. It would amount to maybe fifty a year that we would instruct over the year. Each of us. It was great. It was a great parish. I loved it.

So, then I was changed to Sacred Heart in Youngstown in 1950. However, Korea had sprung up, so they were asking former chaplains to come back. So, about the end of 1950 or so, with the bishop's permission, I joined the navy again. It was around 1950 or 1951. We had to go to boot camp again. We went to boot camp twice.

When we joined the navy, I forgot to tell you, we went to William and Mary in Williamsburg. That was a great place. I think we spent three months, the priests and chaplains, for training. So, we go through all the history of the service and what is expected, and so forth. Then, of course, for the physical drills, we would have a marine sergeant who kept us in shape everyday running hurdles and jumping in pools of . . . not boiling water, but we would pretend that oil was on fire there and you had to dive in and spread it apart to get out of it. So, it was a great experience.

Then, after that, I went to Camp LeJeune, which is my first love with the marines. I went to the Marine Corps at Camp LeJeune. So, at LeJeune, I was with the 8th Marines. We went to . . . a couple of times on practice runs where we would go ashore and hit the

beach, simulating war somewhere. It was rather interesting. The biggest point at LeJeune at that time was that the 8th Marines went on the Mediterranean assignment.

So, all the marines went aboard five ships. Fortunately, I was able to go with them as the Catholic Chaplain and I spent about eight months in the Mediterranean visiting places. While I was there, I had given instructions to a number of marines--I think about twelve of them. I was able to bring them to St. Peter's in Rome to be baptized. Then, the bishop confirmed them, too, at the time. So, it was quite exciting. We made landings in Spain and in all places.

I came back from there and then volunteered to go to Korea. So, I wound up in Korea then in 1952 and 1953.

D: So, a lot of the time you spent overseas during the early portion of the diocese?

B: Yes. That's right.

D: From when you were in the diocese, can you go back and remember how it was formed, organized, the people, the spirit of the times, and so forth?

B: Yes. That's what I thought you were going to ask about. Yes. This was kept top secret about the diocese being changed. We didn't know anything about it. I never heard of it. I don't think any of my friends talked about it. There may have been some rumors, but I can't remember that. All I know is that one day, we woke up and saw in the newspaper or a friend would call and say, "Hey, we're in a new diocese. It's Youngstown." So, we were frozen in the Youngstown Diocese.

So, anybody who was in Youngstown stayed there. I was happy because I liked the priests there. The priests of Youngstown were known for their comraderie. I enjoyed being with them all the time. We got together a lot; playing golf, visiting, having parties together for different parishes, which was something I don't think they had in Cleveland at the time, so much. I knew Youngstown did. I was happy to be there, even though I lived in Cleveland. A lot of the priests from Cleveland were disappointed. They wanted to go back to Cleveland. They felt that Youngstown would have been just one of their assignments out of the way. Eventually, they wanted to go back to Cleveland to have a parish there. So, there were some Cleveland priests that were disappointed. There were a lot of Youngstown priests that were delighted, particularly, those around this area. You're close to your diocese where everything is.



I had mentioned to Father Cope, the pastor here, that you were coming down this afternoon. Father Cope was raised in north Canton. He said they were happy with Cleveland because they never got to Youngstown. He didn't even know where Youngstown was in the old days. There was no reason to go to Youngstown. The Diocese was Cleveland.

So, if they had any dealings to do, they went to Cleveland. So, I was surprised to hear that myself. I thought it was closer. He says it's closer to go to Cleveland than to get to Youngstown from here. Those living in the vicinity of Youngstown, naturally, were overjoyed about it. So, I loved it. We had good bishops: Bishop Malone; Bishop McFadden, the first bishop; then, Bishop Walsh and so forth. But, I was away for twenty years, and so, I'd just get home to see them once in awhile, until when I came back in 1970. Of course, Bishop Malone was bishop then. Then, I became pastor of St. Patrick's in Kent.

D: What do you think were some of the reasons for creating a new diocese in Youngstown?

B: It was too big. Cleveland was too big.

D: Was it administration?

B: Well, the bishop had me go from one part of the diocese to another to confirm and so forth. That was hard. There were some places in the West. They gave that and more. Here, it wasn't necessary. The pope, evidently with the help of the bishops and so forth, was able to divide the diocese up. Cleveland goes all the way to Lorrain and to Ashtabula and all the way down there. Then, all the way up here. So, that's quite an area for one bishop to handle. So, I'm sure they were happy to split it. It was better for the administration and for the people too. So, we were all happy.

D: How about the community? Was there a lot of wide support for the new diocese in the community?

B: As I say, certainly the people in Lowellville, where I was stationed at the time when this happened. . . . We were only ten miles as it were from Youngstown. It gives you prestige to have your own diocese. Cleveland was like another country if you were living in Lowellville. So, Yes. I think everybody was happy. The only ones who weren't happy would be those who were closer to Cleveland. Youngstown was real far away for them. They all got used to it. We're used to being obedient. So once they said, "You have a new diocese," [Our reply was,] "Well thanks be to God."

D: Were there any problems then, in maybe setting up the diocese to run smoothly from the start or during that period?

B: Well, as I say in 1944, I left. I don't think so. I hadn't heard of any. It was rather smooth. Of course I wasn't on the inside at the time. As I said, I never heard any difficulties about it. It went rather smooth. I'm happy we'll be celebrating fifty years of the diocese. I think that's great.

D: Who were some of the major figures. . . ? I know you mentioned Bishop McFadden from Cleveland.

B: There was a Monsignor Trainer. Did you know of him? He was at the Cathedral. He was prominent. He was like the bishop, almost, in a sense. That was the large church there. Monsignor Trainer was a wonderful man. Then there was a Monsignor Nash from St. Edward's. He was a well-known figure. They were all powerful in the area. There were a lot of others. Father McCan. . . .

As I say, I left and I didn't get involved with all of those unfortunately. But, as I say, it was a great place. I enjoyed it very much.

D: What was a typical day like? Perhaps you can just go through a typical day on your first assignment.

B: Like, at Lowellville?

D: Yes.

B: Let's say, Saturday, I can remember that. . . . We used to have our Catechism classes on Saturday. We didn't have a school, of course, even to this day, but we had CCD classes. I would go out into the sticks and pick up the kids in my little car. [I'd] jam in as many as I could, the youngsters that were living up in the hills. When you get to Lowellville, you see, it's sort of in the valley. There are big hills on either side. So, I'd go up in the hills and lock one door and shove them in from the other. We got as many as we could. I still have received notes from some of these dear people who have kept in touch with me to this day remembering the good times they had coming to Catechism.

We had confessions afternoon and evening. There were two priests that we all heard too. A lot of people were coming to confession. We must have had more sinners in those days. Then, your Mass schedules, and so forth. . . . Then, during the week, you would be

busy with families and you would have office calls. There would be a lot of people coming in for problems, one thing or another. A lot of were taking instructions too, during the week. We would give them instructions at different times that would be available to these people to make it easier. If they worked at night, we'd have them in the morning or in the afternoon or evening. Then, there were the various societies there that you took care of and guided and so forth; Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, I think, and all of that. So, you kept busy all the time.

D: I know you were only around a short period of time after the formation of the diocese before the war and so forth, but do you remember some of the organizations that were just being set up just after the formation [of the diocese] for the community and so forth? Was there a lot of building construction going on? Maybe you can elaborate on just what you can remember.

B: The Knights of Columbus were always there, whether they were Cleveland or Youngstown, you see. The Knights were centrally located then, in Youngstown, but they were there before when the diocese belonged to Cleveland. So, there were the Knights of Columbus, the Knights of St. John, the Catholic Women's Organization, the National Council of Catholic Women, and so forth. These were all operative whether we had a new diocese or not, because they were right there. I didn't notice anything new developing at all. Maybe, Father Nesbit can help with something like that. He was president all during this time. I didn't see anything starting new. We had everything we needed. It was all there.

D: Over the years, what kind of improvements have you noticed in the diocese?

B: Well, of course, we have a new Cathedral. I think there have been new churches built throughout the diocese, in Warren and different areas. We have new churches. I think because it's more centrally located, we're closer together. I think the people get to know their bishop better as a friend and as a person they can approach. The church was very active when we belonged to Cleveland, so a lot of the organizations that were here--they were of course, continued. I have seen improvements in churches and schools. That's about all I can think of.

D: So, pretty much all of the social organizations were already formed beforehand?

B: Yes. I believe so. Yes. Like your Catholic Charities and that, they would have to have them here. So, I

don't think there was anything lost in that.

D: How about in recent times? Perhaps since you have gotten back from your tour in Vietnam--have you noticed any changes in social programs? Even since Vatican II, perhaps you've noticed. . . ?

B: Well, the RCIA is very important now as a means of giving instructions to young people that are coming into the church. It's called the Right of Christian Initiation [of Adults].

D: What is that for?

B: I'll tell you. I was in Kent. We were still having individual instructions. I would say around 1980 that became prominent. Then, actually, they made laws that everybody is to have RCIA in their parishes, where before, we were giving individual instructions. I had convert classes. Now, it's called RCIA. That was a difference.

The Knights of Columbus are so active around here, but I think they were always active. The National Council of Catholic Women. . . . I was a moderator for them when I was back in Kent.

D: What would that organization do?

B: What?

D: The last organization.

B: The National Council of Catholic Women?

D: Yes.

B: That takes in the whole nation in the sense that they do have meetings in Washington with the delegates going to various diocese. The women who belong to it would be women from the women's organizations of the parish. Women of the Altar and Rosary--those women would be affiliated with the National Council of Catholic Women. When it was necessary, they would have their own particular meetings and so forth. So, that was a very good thing.

D: What were some of the greatest changes you've seen with the growth of the diocese over the years? [Is ther] maybe even a particular decade where you've seen large differences than in the past? What really sticks out in your mind?

B: Well, it must be pretty dull in my mind right now be cause I'm not impressed with anything new. I think

we've always had a great diocese. I just can't seem to think of what was of any big change. Do you have anything that may prompt my thinking in that regard?

Of course now, there is a shortage of priests. We always had maybe three associates here, with a pastor. Now you have one associate and a pastor. They are taking care of even more people. The school has grown. I think our Catholic education. . . . St. Mary's is up to around five hundred ten students, which is a growth. . . . in Canton here, their school has grown also, I know. So, I think there has been a growth in the Catholic schools. Although, we've closed some schools, which we couldn't afford. But, others have grown.

D: What do you think are some of the reasons for the--maybe recent, or not so recent--shortage of priests entering the priesthood?

B: One thing is that parents haven't sent us any boys. You know what I mean. All priests come from families. There are so many, I suppose, sociological reasons--maybe materialism, where young people are attracted to better jobs, let's say being a doctor, or a lawyer, making money. That might be a reason. I don't really. . . . It's something that everybody is trying to figure out. Why are vocations down? We need to pray harder and to beat the issue. Parents need to encourage their youngsters in becoming priests and sisters. Sacrifices need to be made. If the Lord is calling you. . . . A vocation is a call. It's true. I could avoid that call. It isn't like I say, "Hey Robert. . . ," but it's saying this is what you are to be. So, this is a call that the Lord gives us and gives to religious. I feel sure that he's giving the call but maybe some people are neglecting it, not listening. I don't know. It's one of those real major problems.

D: Some of them may be coming from the home environment too, where families aren't really. . . ?

B: Yes. I heard something the other day that seemed to make sense. Where we had a commitment for life, say in marriage. . . . When I was growing up, the commitment in marriage was for life until death do us part. I didn't know anybody divorced. If they were, it was kept secret. Now, it's like half the people that get married get divorced. It looks like young people are not willing to make a permanent commitment.

So, if you can't make a permanent commitment to marriage and make it to the priesthood or the sisterhood. . . . That may be one of the things. I

don't know what causes that. Again, the way the people are being reared and the freedom that the people are exercising, you know, to make their own judgments, even though it's not right to go against the church. But, matrimony, I think, is one of the biggest changes I've seen in my priesthood since the diocese formed and the number of divorces that have come about. The lack of permanency to marriage, which is sad. That is what is ruining the families. Right now, for eight years I've been the Catholic Chaplain of Indian River School. Did you ever hear of Indian River School?

D: No. I'm not familiar [with it].

B: Well, it's like the Ohio Penitentiary for juveniles. So, it's the maximum security institution of Ohio. It is located right here in Massillon. You go out Erie Street here. It's on the right. It's a nice sounding name. Indian River School. One of my friends stopped in there. He wanted to use the bathroom. He didn't realize it was a penitentiary. This is what I find: all those youngsters for the most part are there because of broken homes. [They have] no mothers or fathers. Nobody cares for them. They're street kids. That's one bit of trouble.

There seems to be so much of that now. When I started the institution, it had about one hundred seventy-five. Now it has over three hundred. [It is] way overcrowded. That's a shame.

D: What are some of your responsibilities with that?

B: Indian River School?

D: Yes.

B: Well, right now, we have a little team we take out; Sister Barbara, Bill Kramek, and another person, I forget his name right now. But, we form a team and we present a Bible study on Wednesday evenings for anybody that wants to come. We get twenty, thirty, forty. . . . It's open. This way, I'm able to check the Catholic census there. I find out who's Catholic and interview them privately. [I] find out where they stand and offer to help them. A lot of them haven't been baptized or haven't made their first communion. So, we try to help them while they're there in these ways.

Then, we have Mass on Christmas and Easter for them. So unfortunately, you might say, there are very few Catholics. So, when I go up there on Christmas or Easter, I'm lucky to find that out of all the kids we have that come to classes, maybe only five or six are

able to receive communion, that have made their first communion. So, this is what we're trying to do. [We are] teaching youngsters up there to try bring them closer to the Lord. They want to change. They really do. Everyone in there. They fear getting out many times, because they are going to get back in the same gang, in the same predicament, in the same household and so forth.

D: Would you attribute some of the problems for new priests from the family background and maybe also, economics as well? Do you think it has to do with the economy, or do you think it's more value judgments?

B: You mean for the lack of priests?

D: Yes.

B: I hesitate to say. It doesn't seem that anybody can put their finger on it. If we could, maybe we'd have a solution. We're trying. The diocese is certainly working at that. We're closing churches in some places. You've heard that where there were two priests there is going to be one. Where there is one, he may have to take an extra parish. But, I don't think anybody has the answers.

D: What has been your favorite part with working in the diocese over the years? Maybe one assignment that you really liked? Your favorite assignment, maybe?

B: I think I liked them all because I like working with people. No matter what parish you're in, you have the same people. They are all wonderful people. Some need more help than others. But, it's whatever you can give to them or they can give to you. It's sort of half and half. They give a lot to us too. These people make sacrifices and show a lot of faith. They are an inspiration also. I couldn't say there is any one parish or anything that I like better than the other. I just like working with them all. They're the same. No matter what parish you're in, you have the same work to do.

Now, in the navy, I might say I like San Diego better than any place because of the weather.

D: In your opinion, with what you've seen over the years, what has aided the diocese in its growth and development?

B: It's been a good thing that we have a diocese of our own and such wonderful bishops that we've had beginning with Bishop McFadden and Bishop Walsh and now with Bishop Malone. We're happy. I think the diocese is

growing. But, you know, it's nice to have it centralized in Youngstown. I feel we are still closer to Youngstown than to Cleveland in a sense. I'm very happy with the Youngstown set up with the diocese, and I think all the people are too. We couldn't have a better bishop. The priests are great. I think it has been a good thing for our area. If we were still in Cleveland, you know, you'd be on the outskirts like Youngstown would be really far away from Cleveland. So, it's great.

D: Here's a question of contrast. At its best, describe working in the diocese of Youngstown and the same thing at its worst.

B: At its best and at its worst?

D: Yes.

B: Well, I am an optimistic person. Everything has been great to me. I haven't seen anything that was very bad. I'll tell you, it's been great because we have so much cooperation. We have a good Marriage Tribunal, good Religious Education department. All the departments of the diocese are very helpful. A lot of charities which are reaching out to the poor, and so on. I think the diocese is in good condition. As I said, I appreciate being a part of it. I don't see anything bad, I could call, except for what we can't control. That's the shortage of priests. You can't really help that. That's going to affect the service that we give to people. We are here to serve others, and you can't serve others very well when you don't have the numbers. You can only do so much, I suppose. That's the only bad part I can see, and that's something none of us can avoid.

In another week we are going to have vocations Sunday. Hopefully, we'll get the people back on their prayer bones again to pray for vocations and to work for them, to actively encourage their youngsters, and that we as priests and sisters encourage people--all the kids that we associate with. If they seem to have vocation. . . . You can look at some youngsters and say, "I think they have a vocation," to encourage them along those lines. I think we need to do more of that.

D: Maybe as a rap up, what would you like to be remembered for in your years of service to the diocese?

B: Being a faithful servant. We're called to service. Jesus says, "I've come not to be served, but to serve," So, hopefully, I will be remembered as someone who helped others and who was a servant to others, helping people with whatever problem they have, and being able



to lead them, share with them the Word of God. All I can say is that I couldn't ask to be remembered any more than for trying to be faithful.

D: Can you think of anything that we may have missed about the diocese that you might like to add that you can think of?

B: It's been a great diocese. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the bishops. I've enjoyed the priests and the good sisters that have been helping us in the schools and with all the work. [I enjoy the ] people. All I can say is that I couldn't have written the script better myself. I said before, I'm very happy to be a priest. The Lord has given me this time to serve. I wouldn't want to change.

D: Okay. Thank you very much.

B: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW