

## **Fr. Dietz was a 'humble' priest**

**DETROIT** — Fr. Francis X. Dietz was a "very gifted, spiritual leader," said Fr. John Wynnycky, who served with him in the early 1990s at St. Veronica Parish in Eastpointe.

Fr. Dietz died May 1. He was 89.

"I knew him from my first assignment," Fr. Wynnycky said. "He was a holy man, and very kind and gentle."

Fr. Wynnycky said he learned what it meant to be a pastor from Fr. Dietz. "He had a rapport with people and he was very approachable. He was always there for people, always smiling."

Fr. Dietz's nephew, Gene Hamlin, 63, cared for his uncle for the past several years. "He was a humble person," he said.

He said while his uncle was at the nursing home, he was given a "very nice walker, the kind you sit on, but he wouldn't use it, and I couldn't understand why."

After speaking to his uncle, he found out that Fr. Dietz was embarrassed by it. "He said none of the others in the nursing home had anything that nice, just the regular ones. So as a priest, he just didn't want it."

Fr. Dietz was not materialistic and he lived his whole life as "that type of priest. He had a million friends among his parishioners."

Born in 1915, Fr. Dietz was ordained for the Archdiocese of Detroit May 18, 1940. He served as associate pastor of St. Alphonsus, Dearborn; St. Veronica, Eastpointe; St. John (temporary), Ypsilanti; St. Agatha, Redford Township; and St. Mary Magdalen, Hazel Park.

He received the Fr. Farrell Award in the fall 1977, and is a former columnist for The Michigan Catholic's "Here's the Answer" column.

In addition, Fr. Dietz served as chaplain at Immaculata High School, Detroit; vicar of the Farmington Southfield Vicariate; and was a member of the College of Consultors and Presbyteral Council.

He served as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Auburn Hills; St. Bede Parish, Southfield; and Our Lady of Refuge Parish, Orchard Lake, where he remained until his retirement in July 1986.

He is survived by many nieces and nephews.

A funeral Mass was celebrated May 5 at Our Lady of Refuge Church, Orchard Lake. Burial was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Southfield.

Memorials to Catholic Extension Society, 150 S. Wacker Drive, Floor 20, Chicago, Ill. 60606; or Propagation of Faith Missions, 75 Greene Ave., P.O. Box C, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202.

— *Michelle Samartino*