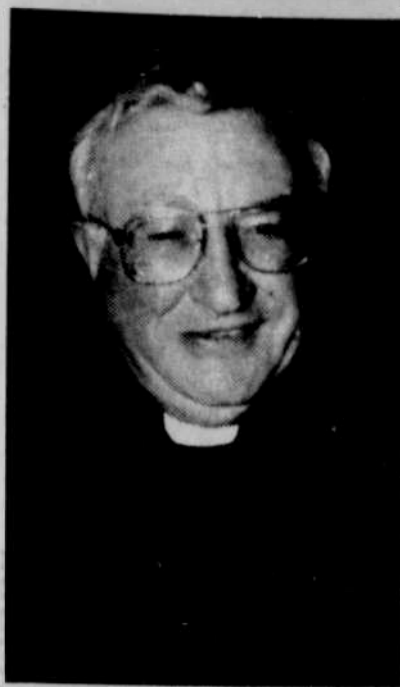


## Father Condon celebrates 40 years in priesthood



Father Gerry Condon

By April Sykes

The love of working with the homeless started a career in the priesthood that would span 40 years. And the caring this beloved parish priest invested over the years is returned by the parishioners in St. Patrick's and St. William's churches—indeed the whole community. The church and the communi-

ty helped Father Gerry Condon celebrate those 40 years with a party held June 17 at St. Patrick's.

"I would never have believed it 40 years ago," says Father Condon of his lengthy career. Father Condon, born and raised in Dublin, Ireland, first decided to go into the priesthood after working with the homeless in Dublin. "I think that through that I thought it would be a good thing to bring the Gospel of the Lord to other people," he said.

Following his work with the homeless, Father Condon attended Melleray College in County Waterford, majoring in religion. After graduation he went to seminary at St. Patrick's Seminary at Thurles in County Tipperary. At that time, many young men chose to go into the priesthood. Seminary at St. Patrick's was geared to ministering in other countries and two other students there at the time also planned to come to Eastern Oregon. Father Condon says that his mother accepted him traveling so far away because

so many young people emigrated from Ireland then.

Father Condon contacted an organization in Chicago, the Catholic Church Extension Society, which helps to finance churches in very small areas and asked them to give him names of places that needed clergy. He received around a half dozen names and the first to answer him was the Bishop of Baker, Frances Leipzig, who said there was an opening in Baker.

Father Condon was 28 years old when he arrived. He was never assigned to Baker though. His first assignment was at Lakeview on the California border. That parish took in the whole county and he and another priest served four churches, alternating time between them.

After three years in the Lakeview Parish, Father Condon's Bishop had him on the road, pinch hitting at different places, the first of which was Heppner. Father Condon took over here while Father Gaire, Heppner's parish priest, returned to Ireland because his father was dying. Father Condon served in Heppner that time for 2½ months.

After his stint in Heppner, he went to St. Bridgit's in Nyssa to cover for two priests who had gone to Mexico to study. From there he went to Redmond for three months. The priest there was sent on special assignment by the Bishop. After Redmond, Father Condon went to Condon and stayed there a year.

Father Condon was then assigned to St. Mary's in the Wasco Parish. After nine years there, he was assigned to Merrill, which is on the California border south of Klamath Falls. He stayed there for four years. Then the bishop needed someone in Ontario. After eight years there, he transferred back to Lakeview as pastor and stayed there six years, before he moved to Prineville, where he remained for four years.

During Father Condon's service in Prineville, he learned that one of his two sisters was diagnosed with cancer. He obtained a leave of absence and

traveled back to Ireland. His sister died a short time before he was to return to the U.S.

Upon his return, he was assigned to Heppner. During his stay in Heppner Father Condon became eligible for a sabbatical, so he was able to return to Ireland for a while. After the sabbatical he decided to return to Heppner, where he has remained. He has been in Heppner for five years. Father Condon says that the sabbatical is a good thing and allows for contemplation about one's life and future decisions. Some people opt for retirement, but he says he just wasn't ready.

Father Condon says that he has gotten "sufficient satisfaction" out of his career. Perhaps the greatest satisfaction, he says, was his involvement in organizing church renewal weekends. He was trained to coordinate the renewals and conducted a number of retreats at Ontario and several other parishes. This experience was all the more satisfying because he was able to work with the priest who had been involved in putting together the "marriage encounter" groups. "It was very rewarding," says Father Condon, "because it was so beneficial."

Father Condon jokes that his greatest frustration is in learning to use the computer, but adds seriously that he found some of the changes brought on by the Second Vatican Council difficult to adjust to. Changing the Mass from Latin to English was difficult, he says, as was the change in the structure of the church—he was accustomed to having his back to the people, in the capacity of a leader, but that was changed so that priests were to face their congregations to deliver the Mass.

Father Condon sees the clergy's greatest challenge in stabilizing the family. "I see our families disintegrating," says Father Condon. "I think we have to have a strong family structure." He says that two of the biggest threats to the family are the economy, where both parents need to work and children are not cared for by family members, and divorce. "The children suffer the most," he says. Another aspect of concern is the school system. "The school system has become such that there is no moral instruction given in school."

Father Condon says he believes there will come a time in the Catholic church when priests will be allowed to marry. However, he says he doesn't think it will entirely cure some of the problems in the church. But, he adds, the church is working to solve those problems.

In addition to pastoring St. Patrick's Church in Heppner and St. William's in Ione, Father Condon offers counseling and is a licensed hypnotist. He uses hypnosis to help people relax, stop smoking and drinking and overcome their fears. He doesn't claim 100 percent success, but says that it can be helpful. Of particular interest to him is the use of hypnosis for pain control—helping people with chronic pain.

Heppner Gazette-Times, Heppner, Oregon Wednesday, July 5, 1995 - THREE

## MCGG rep attends Case IH sessions



Bob Laughlin from Morrow County Grain Growers of Lexington and Wasco recently joined nearly 800 other Case IH dealership representatives for a first-hand look at the new Case IH 9300 Series STEIGER four-wheel-drive tractors and the Case Corporation manufacturing facility in Fargo, ND.

Laughlin attended the two day product launch including a tour of the 543,000 square-foot plant and special sessions devoted to new 9300 Series features. Laughlin also had the opportunity to get hands-on experience operating the six new STEIGER models: the 9330 at 235 hp, 9350 at 310 hp, 9370 at 360 hp, 9380 at 400 hp, plus the 9330 and 9350 Row-crop Special units with steerable front axles.

"We asked dealers who attended the introduction what their customers would notice first about the 9300 Series," said Kelly Kravig, Case product manager-4WD tractors. "The STEIGER name on the grille and decal was the number one answer. Like Case IH, it's a name their customers equate with reliable, durable four-wheel-drive tractors." He added that Case IH and Steiger have been associated since 1986 when Case purchased the Fargo-based company.

The STEIGER nameplate is not the only change to the 9300

Series. Other changes include increased horsepowers, stronger axles, an expanded choice of transmissions and increased hydraulic system pressure. "These features work together to enable the new Case IH STEIGER tractors to handle a wider range of implements," Kravig said. "With the 9300 Series, farmers can complete multiple functions in a single pass as well as handle row-crop applications. The net result is increased productivity."

According to Kravig, all of the changes to the 9300 Series are customer-driven improvements. These include modifying the seat and controls so they are similar to those on the Case IH MAGNUM tractors, relocating the exhaust for better visibility, and offering an optional storage box for tools and equipment.

"Our dealers tell us that these are the four-wheel-drive tractors their customers have asked for," Kravig said.

Headquartered in Racine, WI., Case Corporation is the second largest maker of agricultural equipment in North America and the largest manufacturer and distributor of light and medium-sized construction equipment in the world. Case products are sold in approximately 150 countries through a network of about 4,100 independent dealers and distributors.

## Lindy Gravelle to appear on TV

Former Heppner resident Lindy Gravelle has been selected to perform in the finals of the Charlie Daniels Talent

Roundup on July 8.

Performances are scheduled for 4 and 11 p.m.

## Bible school to begin at IUCC

"Friendship" is the theme of this year's vacation church school (VCS) at Ione United Church of Christ, held July 10-14 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. daily. The program is open to all children from ages four through those having just completed the sixth grade. There is no charge.

Activities will include wor-

ship, music, stories, crafts, videos, games, snacks, and learning from the Heiffer Project.

The video, "The Secret Garden", will be shown at the church on Sunday, July 9, at 7 p.m. to kick off VCS. This story about the healing power of friendship will appeal to all ages, said a VCS spokesperson. Popcorn will be provided. The public is invited to attend.

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