

IN THE PARISH SPOTLIGHT

By Bernie Beglane

“What a pleasant surprise to find that Father Paul, my priest friend for 48 years, was caring for our Mission Church.

“It was an unexpected reunion after the two of us spent so many years in various ministries.”

To be sure, Monsignor Dennis Regan was full of joy upon learning of his appointment as pastor of St. Rosalie’s Parish last June.

Once Father Dennis began discovering all the components that went into the Hampton Bays parish, there was added joy upon learning that Father Paul Dahm was taking care of the spiritual needs of the parishioners who worshipped in the Mission Church.

The two met at St. Philip Neri School, Haverhill, MA, in 1958 where the Diocese of Rockville Centre assigned them to study Latin and Greek.

From there, the studies continued at St. Bernard’s Seminary, Rochester, NY.

Father Paul, who grew up in St. Catherine of Sienna Parish, Franklin Square, began thinking of the priesthood while a student at Chaminade H.S., Mineola.

“My grandfather was a banker for National City,” explained Father Dahm, “and I figured I should follow in his footsteps.” As a result, the teenager enrolled at Fordham upon graduating from the Marianist Brothers’ school. Once his degree in economics was earned from the Jesuit Fathers’ institution there was a two-year hitch in the Army during the Korean War.

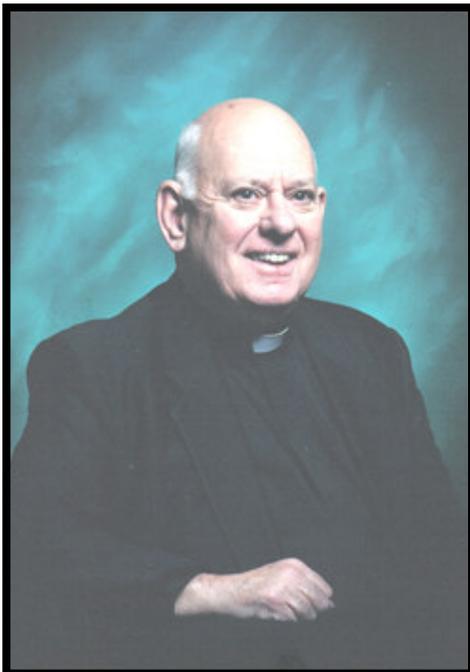
“My father (also Paul and now deceased) was a musician and played the oboe with several symphonies and the Goldman Band and taught me to play it, too,” explained the priest.

“I was in the Fordham Marching Band, and after I completed my basic training at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, I was sent to Berlin, Germany.

“One day while I was on KP (Kitchen Police) duty, the leader of the 298th Army Band wanted to know if anybody played a musical instrument. I volunteered that I did and wound up being assigned to that unit.”



As a private first class in the Army and stationed in Germany, Father Paul Dahm played the oboe.



Father Paul Dahm



The Janzen brothers, grand-nephews of Father Dahm... Joseph, Luke, Matthew, Christian and Eric.... are frequent visitors to the Mission Church in East Quogue.

Upon discharge and with the GI Bill education benefits awaiting him, Father Dahm, knowing full well that he did not want banking as a career, went back to his thoughts at Chaminade---the priesthood. "I met with Monsignor George Graham at the Chancery in Rockville Centre and told him I wanted to become a priest. "In turn, he told me to get my transcript from Fordham, a copy of my parents' (his mother was Adele) marriage certificate and my baptismal certificate."

That was just about the time that our diocese was formed after having been within the boundaries of the Diocese of Brooklyn. Ordination took place in 1962. His first

assignment was St. John the Baptist Parish, Wading River, where he remained 14 years.

That was followed by the chaplaincy at Good Samaritan Hospital, West Islip, where he worked in association with the Montfort Fathers.

Father Dahm then came down with spinal stenosis, causing him to retire and undergo surgery at Good Samaritan.

It was then that Monsignor William Gill, pastor emeritus of St. Rosalie's, asked Father Paul if he would take over the Mission Chapel.

"I call it the 'Little Church with the Big Heart,' he continued. "The people are wonderful."

In addition to his assignment in East Quogue, Father Dahm also assists at St. Mark's, Shoreham, and Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Southampton.

"Retired priests are very valuable what with the shortage," he stated, "and I am very, very happy to help."

Father Paul also is active in many local groups. He is the Director of the Board of Birthright of the Hamptons and is the Faithful Friar of the Fourth Degree of the Knights of Columbus Assembly on the East End.

He also finds time to play a nine-hole round of golf once a week with Father Gill.

And now he has been reunited with Father Dennis, his friend from seminary days.

"I can't believe it's been almost 50 years," concluded Father Dahm.

"He has been a very good friend...and a wonderful priest."



Father Dahm, left, with his confreres at Good Samaritan hospital where he was the first priest from the Diocese of Rockville Centre to serve as chaplain.