



ST. MARGARET'S HONORS FORMER PASTOR
... Msgr. Toner, Crosby and Father Bell

1,000 Parishioners Honor Msgr. Toner

By **ART HOPPER**
Journal-News Staff Writer

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Michael J. Toner, Protonotary Apostolic, pastor emeritus of St. Margaret's R. C. Church, Pearl River, was guest at a tea in his honor yesterday afternoon which was attended by approximately 1,000 former parishioners and friends of all faiths in the cafeteria of the church school.

He retired a few weeks ago after 28 years as pastor of St. Margaret's and more than 57 years in the priesthood. He is continuing residence in the rectory at St. Margaret's. His successor is Rev. Michael Vincent Bell, formerly pastor of the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Port Jervis, N.Y.

"**MSGR. TONER** knew the meaning of the word ecumenical 25 years before it came into common usage in the rest of the country," said Rev. Edward B. Buller, pastor emeritus

of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Pearl River. "He never was the concept of the conventional priest.

"He and I started the Pearl River Religious Council 27 years ago, and we have never been called just Catholic or Protestant, but have been known as interested residents of the community at large as well," concluded Dr. Buller.

"How do you find another man of Msgr. Toner's calibre, stature and Christian understanding?" asked Rt. Rev. Charles Walsh, pastor of the Highland, N.Y., church. He was Father Toner's first assistant in 1938.

"I've had several bosses since then but I still consider Msgr. Toner as my pastor," added Msgr. Walsh.

Other former assistant priests at St. Margaret's present yesterday included Rt. Rev. Msgr. John Brooks; Rev. Donald Whelan and Rev. John Carson, the Bronx; Rev. Francis Ansbro, Peekskill;

and Rev. Bernard Corrigan, New York City.

FORMER parishioners who are now priests who attended the tea included Rev. Ronald Bullingham, Rev. Joseph Dooley, Rev. John Farly and Rev. David Riley.

Other clergymen participating were Rev. Wilbur O. Daniel, Naurausaun Presbyterian Church; Rev. Elmer W. Wilkens, Pearl River Methodist; Rev. Benson B. Fisher, St. Stephen's Episcopal; and Rabbi Milton Weinberg, Pearl River.

Msgr. Toner will celebrate his 82nd birthday Tuesday and a cake, topped with a doll dressed in the robe of Msgr. Toner's titular rank, was served. The doll was dressed by Mrs. Ann Jillson.

James L. Crosbie was the master of ceremonies. The tea was arranged by Mr. and Mrs. James Shankey and Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Hughes, with help from Mrs. Mary Watson.