

Msgr. Toner Dies in Beacon

The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Michael J. Toner, 88, pastor emeritus of St. Margaret's R.C. Church, Pearl River, died yesterday at Beacon, N.Y.

Msgr. Toner served as pastor of St. Margaret's from December 1939 until his retirement in November of 1937. Msgr., Toner, who always preferred the more simple and personal title of Father Toner, spent more than 57 years in the active priesthood.

Because of his outstanding service to St. Margaret's Church and school, Father Toner was twice honored by the Vatican. In 1954 he was appointed a domestic prelate, with the title of the Rt. Rev. Msgr. During 1963 he was elevated to the titular rank of Protonotary Apostolic by Pope Paul VI, and given the privilege of wearing the Episcopal (Bishop) insignia of Mitre, Ring and Dalmatic, and of Pontificating at ceremonies on

various occasions during the year.

In 1960 Msgr. Toner, on completion of half a century as an ordained priest, was honored at a Golden Jubilee banquet. Only one other priest, the late Father James Crosby pastor of St. Ann's R.C. Church, Nyack, from 1890 to 1934, celebrated a Golden Jubilee while serving in Rockland County.

Msgr. Toner was a native of Tuckahoe, N.J., but spent his childhood at Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. He was graduated from St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, and was ordained in St. Patrick's Cathedral on May 21, 1910.

A man of scholarly bent, Msgr. Toner was noted for his use of poetry and the classic quotations. At St. Charles College, Baltimore, Md., one of his professors was the noted poet-priest, John Bannister Tabb.

During his pastorate at St. Margaret's the parish and the church grew along with the community. A parochial school was completed in 1953, later expanded by an 8-classroom with a cafeteria. A convent residence for the Sisters who run the school was built while Msgr. Toner was pastor.

When the parish became too

populated, Msgr. Toner worked for the creation of a new parish and a mission church, St. Aedan' Ehrhardt Road, Pearl River.

Father Toner's first parish was St. Mary's in Kingston, followed by several assignments in New York City. At one time he was attached to the old St. James Church on the lower East Side, and the late Governor Al Smith was his neighbor.

His last City parish prior to the Pearl River assignment was St. Martin of Tours in the Bronx.

After his retirement, an apartment was set aside for him in the rectory at St. Margaret's. After 28 years he considered Pearl River his home and his parishioners his family.

The Monsignor leaves no immediate survivors.

His body will lie in state Monday and Tuesday at St. Margaret's Church.

There will be a mass of Christ the High Priest at 8 p.m. Tuesday. A Mass of Resurrection will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Wednesday, with Most Rev. John J. Maguire, D.D., V.G., coadjutor archbishop of New York, the concelebrant. Interment will be in St. Anthony's Cemetery, Nanuet.