

Not-so-retiring priest plugs radio ministry

By RON MARTINEZ
Staff Writer

A former missionary priest with a flair for scriptwriting hopes to retire to a vigorous pace of pushing — in this country and abroad — radio dramas with a built-in message.

The Rev. James L. McShane, 76, a Jesuit at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 421 Clark, is in line for retirement to Fusz Hall in St. Louis, Mo., home of the Jesuit order.

McShane says he and other older priests are facing a mandatory retirement from parish work at age 70 because of a new rule of Canon Law, which takes effect in November.

The Jesuit order operates under strict rules governing priestly conduct and where individuals will do their priestly work.

McShane, 76, obeys the directions of the order but he is unlike many priests who willingly retire to a quiet life in a comfortable seminary-rest home.

For one thing, McShane has well-heeled friends in high places, and he's not ashamed of asking for a helping hand. He's taken classes at Harvard University, taught religious philosophy and worked as a Jesuit missionary in Honduras from 1960-1978.

Such qualifications, coupled with his zeal to carry out Christ's ministry to the poor, have helped pay for several hundred radio programs with a definite message.

And he hopes his ordered retirement in August will give him time to spread the word of God through the Spanish-language tapes played over airways in America as well as Latin America.

He acted as producer for 177 serial-style dramas centered around solving common family problems. The series, entitled "Padrecito," features a parish priest who offers his advice.

In the tapes, a process called "concientizacion" (self-awareness) a technique pioneered

by Brazilian educator Paul Freire, is built in when the listeners, mostly rural peasant Latin Americans, tune in.

The Freire technique incorporated in the taped dramas is aimed at raising the low self-concept that many poor people suffer in the Central American countries where the rich own most of the best agricultural and ranch land, McShane said.

It tries to reverse "the feeling by these people that 'I'm no good,' and to realize their own worth and ability to do things."

The tapes are a part of a rural community's radio school where groups of six or seven poor farmers are taught to read and write through radio programs. There is at least one school per village.

In those communities, television is nearly non-existent.

McShane's tapes and others produced through a Mexico City-based radio company provide dramatic entertainment with a moral message.

McShane said, "The result is that the poor overcome a terrible fear which says, 'I'm no good. I can't accomplish anything. I'm terrible. Instead, they teach each other, 'I'm a man or woman — a person of dignity, worth and ability.'"

While McShane was in Honduras, members of the radio school at Choluteca built 20 miles of road, 20 little adobe schools and dug 50 wells.

Plans by McShane and his contacts in Mexico City and Honduras are to distribute similar tapes to stations throughout Latin America.

So far, two radio stations in Honduras in South America have been his best customers.

McShane managed to collect \$4,000 to pay for 600 inspiring radio "hero"-type religious programs on the life of Christ, Saint Martin de Porres and Our Lady of Guadalupe, to name a few.

More recently, another series of 100 radio soap opera-style dramas entitled, "Tierra Bendita" ("Holy



Staff photo by Chris McLean

Rev. James L. McShane and tapes
Retiring to a radio ministry

Land") were aired this month through the Jesuit-operated 6,000-watt radio station in Progreso, Honduras.

McShane prepared the outlines for the radio scripts for "Tierra Bendita" — episodes which revolve around village life where a priest

acts as a peacemaker. Those scripts were written by Carlos Chacon of Mexico City.

McShane said of the radio schools, "We're on the air 20 hours a day teaching elementary courses, including how to read and write."

Mount Carmel receives new foursome of Jesuits

The Rev. Neal P. Moynihan, S.J., long-time pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 421 Clark, will be one of four priests to be leaving the parish for new assignments or retirement.

Moynihan, 66, who served as pastor at Mount Carmel for 22 of his 27 years at the church, will retire to the Jesuit home in St. Louis, Mo. Moynihan was ordained on June 17, 1952.

A reception honoring Moynihan and the other departing priests is slated for 12:30 p.m. July 31.

A park adjacent to Mount Carmel at Clark and B streets was named in honor of Moynihan, who was noted for his work with youth in the parish.

A new pastoral team of Jesuit priests has been assigned to Mount Carmel to fill the vacancies to be left by Moynihan and his colleagues — Rev. J. Patrick Walsh, current pastor; Rev. James L. McShane, and Rev. Paul O'Connor.

The new team will be headed

by Rev. Robert L. Sullivan, pastor, coming from Belize, British Honduras.

Other members of the team are: Rev. James P. Walsh, associate pastor from Immaculate Conception Parish in Denver and Rev. Harry A. Delaney, 78, assigned to reside at Mount Carmel. Delaney is a cousin of Rev. McShane.

James P. Walsh is brother to J. Patrick Walsh, who has been reassigned from Mount Carmel to be pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Trinidad.

Rev. O'Connor was assigned to parish work in the Missouri province while McShane will do missionary-related work at the St. Louis seminary-home.

The Jesuit Religious Provincial approved Moynihan's move to St. Louis primarily based on health reasons. Moynihan has been suffering the effects of Parkinson's Disease.

A Mount Carmel spokesperson said Moynihan stopped celebrating Mass and hearing confessions about three months ago because of his health.