

# Msgr. Francis A. Glenn

KATHLEEN M. WASHY

If Msgr. Francis Glenn were alive today, he would be celebrating his 70th anniversary as a priest. He was a living history of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, active from his earliest years. Msgr. Glenn identified himself as an altar boy in a photo that was used in a 1992 Catholic Historical Society speech by Dr. Tim Kelly from St. Vincent's College, titled "Pageants and Parades, Popular Public Catholic Rituals." His early beginnings in the church led him on to priesthood. After studying at Duquesne University and St. Vincent Seminary, Msgr. Glenn was ordained by Bishop Hugh Boyle on June 12, 1938. Msgr. Francis Glenn celebrated his first Mass at All Saints Church in his hometown of Masontown. From 1938 through his death in 1998, Msgr. Glenn was dedicated to the Diocese of Pittsburgh and he became known for his historical knowledge. He always had a warm smile for those around him and had tremendous insight into local church history.

Msgr. Glenn's early career was serving as parochial vicar at several different parishes: Assumption, Bellevue (1938-1947); St. Mary, Beaver Falls (1947-1949); Epiphany, Uptown (1949-1953); and Resurrection, Pittsburgh (1953-1955). During his service to Epiphany, Msgr. Glenn also served as the assistant chaplain at Mercy Hospital. He went on to work in the Diocesan Purchasing Office from 1955 through 1957. While working for the Purchasing Office, he served consecutively as chaplain for the Sisters of St. Joseph, Baden and the Little Sisters of the Poor, Brighton Heights.

By 1957, Msgr. Glenn was named the founding pastor at St. Bonaventure Church in Glenshaw, where he served until 1965. His last position was that of pastor at St. Paul, Butler, where he served from 1965 until his retirement in 1989. During this last assignment, Msgr. Glenn was instrumental in the White Ribbon Against Pornography Campaign. In 1987, he delivered a sermon that inspired Norma Morris to establish the White Ribbon Campaign and he worked together with Norma and others in the early years of WRAP.

Along with all of these positions, Msgr. Glenn held the job for which he became well known – Diocesan Archivist, a role in which he served from 1949 to 1969. He had an infinite interest in the history of the Catholic Church in the region, so much so that he was a charter member and former president of the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. He was the author of Shepherds of the Faith 1843-1993: A Brief History of the Bishops of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, which was published by the Diocese of Pittsburgh in 1993. Msgr. Glenn remains a part of the history of the Diocese of Pittsburgh in spirit and through his legacy of the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.