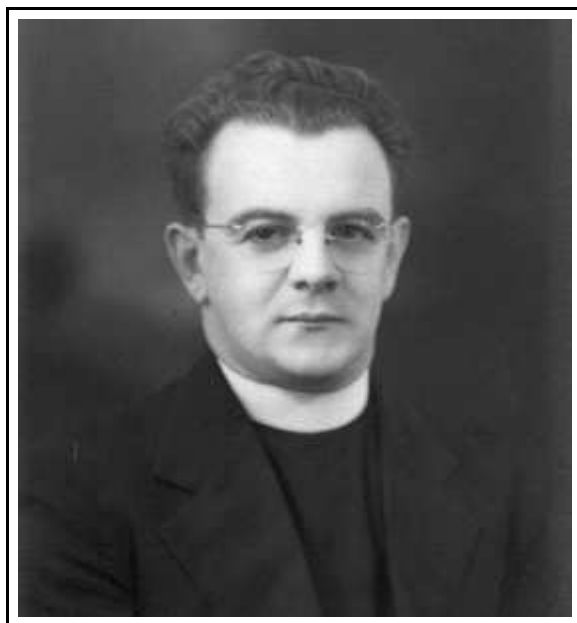


Book of
MEMORIES



Father
Edward L. Hebert
1912 - 1967

FOREWORD	1
EARLY YEARS	2
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	3
STOREKEEPING	4
LOVE OF LITERATURE	5
MILITARY TRAINING	6
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION	7
RECREATION	9
THE ABAIR-HEBERT FAMILY	13
DECISION	11
DEPARTURE	12
SEMINARY	13
ORDINATION	15
FIRST MASS	16
ST. SYLVESTER'S	17
ST. JOSEPH'S	19
ST. ANNE'S	21
TESTIMONIAL	22
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST	23
ILLNESS	24
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI	25
25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION	26
FLORIDA	28
SEMI-RETIREMENT	30
FINALE	31
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	39

FOREWORD

The purpose of this booklet is not to catalogue a chronological series of events in the life of Father Edward L. Hebert but, rather, an attempt to capture the true spirit of this rare human being whose only aspirations were to be a good parish priest and to serve God in the best possible way that he could.

Included herein are the comments of only a few of the many people he encountered. They are, in fact, first person narrative accounts of the life and times of Father Eddie dating back to the day he was born. This is not a complete story of his life, but it is good indication of his whole persona. He had a relatively short life, but the positive effects that he had on the lives of the many people he touched are immeasurable and enduring.

Leo R. Abair

EARLY YEARS

Edward Lawrence Hebert was born on June 25, 1912 in Burlington, Vermont the son of Edward M. and Eva Langlois Hebert. He was always called "Eddie" to avoid confusion, since his father was generally referred to as "Edward."

At the time of his birth, Eddie had four siblings:
Gladys, 10 years old, Bertha, 7 years old,
Clement, 5 years old, Beatrice, 3 years old.

The family lived in a house at the top of the hill on Colchester Avenue in Burlington, just across from the Green Mountain Cemetery. Eddie's father ran a grocery store at the foot of Colchester Avenue near the Winooski Bridge.

Bertha (sister) ...

I always remembered the day Eddie was born. We were all sent to Memere Hebert's home in Winooski for a day long visit. When we returned, we were told that we had a new baby brother. I remember saying that I would never visit Memere again.

Gladys (sister) ...

We moved to Winooski in 1913 when Pa started working in the Woolen Mills. Our house was located at 4 Weaver Lane. This was the first house we had ever owned and it was to be the family home until the early 1940s.

I remember Eddie growing up when we lived on Weaver Lane. He was a very inquisitive child and constantly pestered everyone with questions. Mother was always so patient with him trying to answer his questions. She taught him letters and numbers and later taught him how to read. Mother seemed to be the only one who catered to Eddie's endless curiosity.

I recall Eddie reading the newspapers all by himself when he was only 6 years old. This was during the time when the United States was engaged in World War I and the war reports were very exciting to Eddie.



He was the only child we knew that could read before he went to school. Often, when we had company, my father would make Eddie read aloud. This annoyed him very much.

In order to help feed our large family, Pa kept two cows, chickens, and a garden. Everyone had chores to do. When Edward was about 9 years old, one of his chores was to fetch the cows from Mr. Dion's pasture in the late afternoon. People on the sidewalks were always amused to see Eddie, who was about four feet tall, wearing a straw hat, a small whip in one hand and a book in the other, reading intently as the cows led him through the middle of the streets of Winooski to our barn for milking.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Edward's elementary education was completed at St. Louis Grammar in Winooski, a private boarding school conducted by the Sisters of Providence, which also catered to day students. The school provided a French and English elementary course requiring nine years of training. Eddie completed the course in six years.

Eddie was graduated in June of 1926 with top honors and was class valedictorian. He was awarded a four-year scholarship to St. Michael's High School in Colchester, which, at that time, was part of St. Michael's College.



Eddie in Center

He later transferred to Cathedral High School in Burlington when the high school program at St. Michael's was discontinued.

His attendance at Cathedral High School as a commuter student from Winooski was the first of hundreds to follow, including his brothers Archie, Bob, and myself.

STOREKEEPING

In the year 1926, Pa accepted a position as manager of a chain grocery store. It changed our whole lifestyle. No more cows or chickens to tend, no garden to weed. The store, which later evolved into one of the First National Stores, was located at the Southwest I corner of Howard Street and St. Paul Street in Burlington.

Pa bought his first car, a black Model T-Ford sedan, thus starting the daily trips from Winooski to Burlington which were to continue for many years.

Storekeeping was always a labor of love for Pa. However, managing a chain store in accordance with strict company policies involved more administration, inventories, records, and reports than he had ever had to contend with as an independent grocer.

Eddie, who had just graduated from grammar school, spent the summer helping his father organize the store in accordance with company manuals. Absorbing written instructions and solving math problems came very easy for Eddie. I'm sure that Pa appreciated all the help that Eddie gave him.



Archie, who was so innovative, and Bob, who was so industrious, soon joined the staff to make the store a model of efficiency which was to prosper for many years.

Eddie worked after school hours, Saturdays, and vacations throughout his high school and college years. This continued until the time he entered the seminary.

Archie and Bob humorously maintained that Eddie entered the seminary as the only avenue or escape from Pa's store.

LOVE OF LITERATURE

The history of Eddie's profound interest in reading dates back to Gladys' account of his preschool abilities. By the time he was 12, I'm sure that he had read every Horatio Alger, Tom Swift, and Frank and Dick Merriwell book available.

During his high school and college years, he accumulated and maintained a collection of beautifully bound classical books and kept them in the two book cases in the archway of our home. They included "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare," "The Iliad," "Don Quixote" and many more.

I asked him one day if he had read all the books in his library. He responded by reciting, in olde English dialect, a page from some Shakespearian play. This was very aggravating to me. I was still having problems with memorizing the Apostle's Creed.

The rapid rate at which Eddie could absorb written material and the vast amount of information that he could retain was incredible. Today, I suppose, he would be called a 'speed reader.' This was further evidenced by the fact that, although he always received superior grades in school and college, no one in the family ever recalled seeing him open a school book at home.

The Winooski Free Library was located on East Allen Street, just across the road from the entrance to Weaver Lane, where we lived. Eddie was a very frequent visitor of the library from a very early age.

The librarian, Miss Welch, was a prim and proper middle-aged lady who wore granny glasses and supervised the activities of the library from behind her desk, deftly wielding her date stamp.

Miss Welch seldom smiled except when Eddie came in. She called him "Master Edward" and always kept him supplied with 'proper books.'

Bob (brother) ...

When Eddie was in high school and college and working in the store, he seldom had time to go to the library. Whenever there were two books left on the corner of the living room table, that was my cue to return the books to the library and pick up two new ones. To the best of my recollection that was a daily chore.

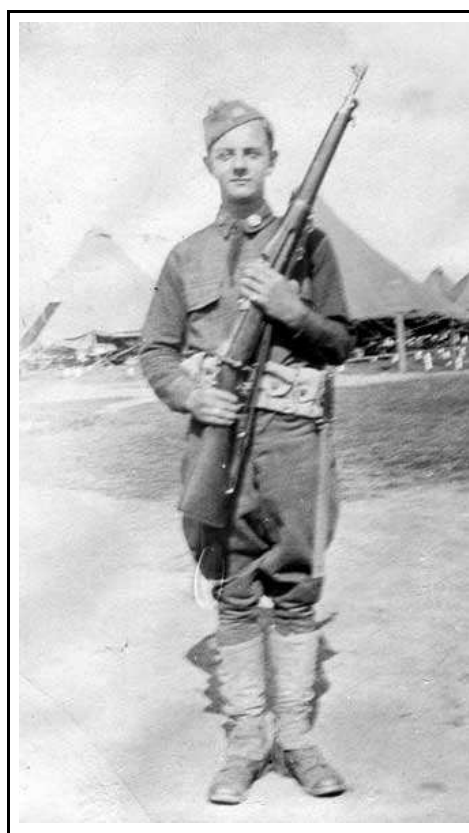
I made the selection of books for Eddie and he never complained. He always seemed to enjoy reading whatever I brought home, but he loved mysteries best. I often went to the Fletcher Free Library in Burlington to pick up books for him. This routine continued for many years.

MILITARY TRAINING

In the summer of 1929, Eddie joined the C.M.T.C. (Citizen's Military Training Corps). This program was established after World War I to qualify selected young men as second lieutenants in the U.S. Army Reserves, subject to call upon in the event of war or emergency.

Eddie attended the camp at nearby Fort Ethan Allen. Training was conducted by army personnel stationed at the Fort.

It was difficult to imagine Eddie as a military type but, as I recall, he was quite proud of his marksmanship medals in both the Springfield 1903 .30 caliber rifle and the .30 caliber Browning machine gun.



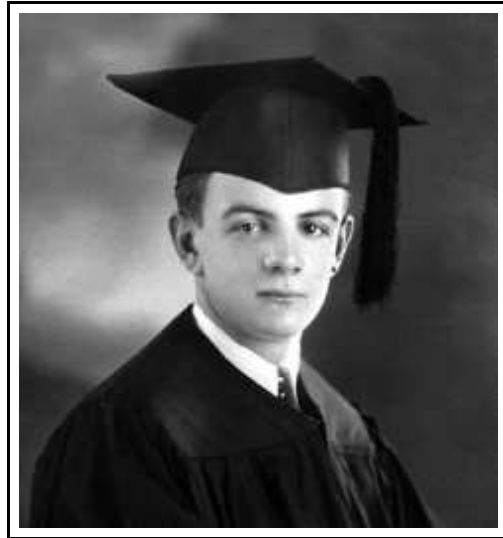
Eddie at C.M.T.C

This C.M.T.C. tradition in the Hebert family was started by the oldest brother, Clement, and was subsequently followed by Eddie, Archie and Leo.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Eddie graduated from Cathedral High School on June 12, 1930. Many members of the family were in attendance. Parents and special guests had reserved seats in the orchestra. I managed to find a seat among strangers in the balcony or the high school auditorium.

I was 12 years old at the time and it was the first time that I realized that Eddie was really an outstanding individual.



There was a great deal of applause when Eddie was introduced as the class valedictorian by the principal, Father Robert F. Joyce. Eddie seemed quite small and shy as he approached the rostrum, but when he delivered the valedictory address so clearly, without hesitation or making reference to notes, he seemed like a giant to me.

EDDIE RECEIVED SEVEN AWARDS:

FIRST HONOR HIGHEST ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
PRO MERITO HONOR SOCIETY ABOVE 85 AVERAGE FOR FOUR YEARS
PRIZE FOR LATIN HIGHEST AVERAGE FOR LATIN
PRIZE FOR CHEMISTRY HIGHEST AVERAGE FOR CHEMISTRY
CERTIFICATE OF HONOR SCHOLARSHIP ,APPLICATION CONDUCT
4- YEAR SCHOLARSHIP U. V .M HIGHEST SCHOLASTIC STANDING
4- YEAR SCHOLARSHIP ST. MICHAEL'S HIGHEST SCHOLASTIC STANDING

Every time they would announce "Edward Lawrence Abair" during the presentation or awards, I would say "He's my brother", "He's my brother." Finally, some one sitting in the back of me said, "Yes, we know, he's your brother," and everyone around me laughed. They quieted me down, but they did not dampen my spirits.

I have had many occasions to be proud of Father Eddie throughout his lifetime, but none were more memorable than the night of his high school graduation.

*R. Howard O'Conner
12 Adams Street
Burlington Vt. 05401*

November 6, 1991

Dear Leo,

I have your letter about Father Eddie, and I am happy to furnish whatever information I can to supplement the material that you have assembled.

Because Eddie lived in Winooski, we did not have the opportunity to socialize very much except for those occasions on which there were extracurricular activities. Since we were enrolled in the same course, we attended all classes together, and became very congenial friends. I recall that Eddie was always ready to share with any member of the class the knowledge with which, he was heavily, as well as "heavenly" I endowed. As a matter of fact, I still recall, after all these years, how often his name was called at graduation to receive awards.

We also attended the same classes at St. Michael's where we continued our friendship and where, of course, he again excelled in all subjects. It was at St. Mike's, however, where we did join in an extracurricular activity: we stood on Route 15 and thumbed rides, sometimes in sub-zero weather! For safety's sake, I would not recommend such activity today.

Thank you for letting me share in Father Eddie's memory.

*Sincerely,
/s/ Hookie*

"Hookie" O'Conner is a tall, handsome, scholarly gentleman who attended Cathedral High and St. Michael's with Eddie. He shared honors with Eddie at graduation. He was an outstanding athlete in both high school and college and was dubbed "Hookie" by a sportswriter for the indefensible 'Hook Shot' he developed early in his basketball career.

RECREATION

Bea (sister) ...



Throughout his adult years, Father Eddie spent much of his time off with his brothers and sisters. He maintained a close relationship with my husband Earl and me. During his high school and college years, he spent much of his leisure time with us.

There were many outings to the beach and countryside, and also camping trips. His quiet, easy-going personality made him pleasant company. He enjoyed playing cards and games, and was quick to chuckle whenever someone made a joke, even a bad one.

He spent much time with his friends Lucian Metevier and Reggie Plamondon, whom he had known since grammar school, and Harry Sullivan from Cathedral High School, and Joe Gannon.

He enjoyed female company, but never became seriously involved with anyone particular. Some of his friends were Josephine McKenzie, Minnie Breiner, and my sister-in-law, Viola Alderman.

Minnie ...

I saw Eddie occasionally, even when he was home on vacation from the Seminary. He was always so pleasant, witty, courteous and such fun to be with. We were both amused that some people were concerned about our seeing each other when he was studying for the priesthood. We both knew where his priorities were. I will always remember him as a completely unselfish person and one of the best friends I ever had.



- Mrs. Minnie Breiner Blondin

Bea ...

Sunday nights were our favorite get-together times. Root beer, popcorn, and candies were always available. The radio was the centerpiece of amusement. Eddie Cantor, Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy all gave us many hours of entertainment.

THE ABAIR-HEBERT FAMILY 1932



EDWARD L., ARCHIE A., CLEMENT A., EDWARD M. (FATHER)
BERTHA SOURMAIL, BEA ALDERMAN, GLADYS MERCHAND, EVA O.(MOTHER)
ROBERT F., LEO. R.

ABAIR-HEBERT

The spelling of the name 'Hebert' or 'Abair' has varied since the time of Horatio, 1852-1919, who, according to Gladys, spelled his name H-E-B-E-R-T when dealing with the French speaking community and A-B-A-I-R when dealing with the English. This was done to preserve the French pronunciation. This tradition was carried on by his son Edward M., Father Hebert's father.

Father Eddie's birth certificate reads 'Abair "' but his Baptismal Certificate reads 'Hebert.' He went through graded school as 'Hebert' and through Cathedral High and St. Michael's College as 'Abair.' He entered the Seminary in Montreal, and was ordained as 'Hebert,' although he was generally called "Father Abair ."

DECISION

After Eddie had completed 2 years at St. Michael's College, he felt that a change was in order. His marks were exceptionally high in math and the sciences, and he spoke of the possibility of entering a technical college or transferring to the Engineering College at the University of Vermont in Burlington.

In the middle of the summer of 1932, Mother called us together one evening to announce that Eddie had informed her of his plans to enter the seminary in the fall to commence his studies for the priesthood. I had never, ever seen Mother so happy. Her dream had finally come true.

This had come as a complete surprise to Mother as well as the rest of the family. We realized that, because of his special gifts, Eddie would excel in whatever field he chose, but Theology had never been discussed, even as a possibility.



Although Eddie's revelation may have appeared to be a last minute decision, I am sure that he had been contemplating this possible course of action for many years. In retrospect, considering his placid lifestyle, close relationship to his family, and firm religious conviction, we should not have been so surprised at his announcement.

I remember feeling anxious to get back to school that year because I was sure that the nuns would give me preferential treatment knowing that my brother was studying for the priesthood. This was not to be. The nuns remembered 'Edouard' very well and realized that any similarity between Eddie and myself was purely physical.

DEPARTURE

On the evening of September 15, 1932, the family gathered at our home on Weaver Lane to say 'au revoir' to Eddie. He was to depart the following day for the Seminary of Philosophy in Montreal.

There were the usual refreshments; popcorn, root beer, apples and cider. Eddie visited and exchanged stories with each member of the family and then started a game of cards. Archie took out his trumpet and I accompanied him on the piano. We all ended up around the player piano singing some of the old piano roll standards.

Clement decided to take a group picture and set his Kodak Brownie on the dining room table. He inserted a bright light in the floor lamp and soon found that he couldn't get everyone in the picture. It was decided that only the immediate family would be included in the picture. Jeanette, Bertha's daughter and the eldest grandchild, was quite upset because she was not allowed to be in the picture.



CLEMENT, BERTHA, GLADYS, BEATRICE, ARCHIE
ROBERT, MOTHER, EDWARD, FATHER, LEO

The married members of the family, their spouses and children said their goodbyes that evening. Eddie, who was a softie, stood up very well and told them all that he hoped to be home for the holidays.

The next morning when Pa was set to drive Eddie to the Essex Jct. Railroad Station to board the Central Vermont for Montreal, Mom cried as she said goodbye to Eddie. She was so happy and proud, I couldn't understand why she was crying. It reminded me of my first day of school when she cried as she was getting me ready to leave with my brother, Bob. I asked her why she was crying and she said, "Because when you go through that door I won't have a baby anymore."

I suppose she realized that when Eddie left, somehow, he would then belong to God and his Church.

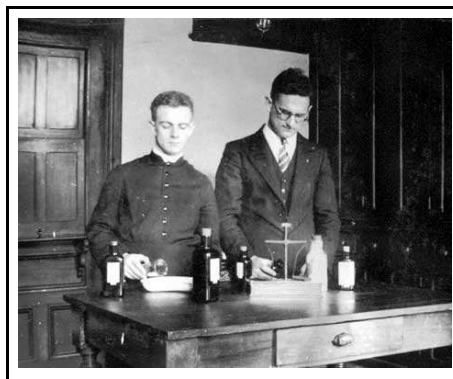
SEMINARY

There was much excitement when Eddie came home for summer vacation after his first year at the seminary. I was quite interested in getting the inside story of what went on during his first year. I finally got him alone one day, and these are the things that I remember him telling me:

There was great comradeship among the seminarians. Many of them spoke only French, and this helped Eddie in his communication and comprehension skills. Although Eddie had mastered the French courses at all levels of his schooling, English was generally spoken at home and he felt that this close association with French speaking students had sharpened his conversational skills.

Although the faculty members were very competent, as he had anticipated, he found them much more patient and compassionate than he had expected. Religious subjects were taught by priests but many of the science and other non-religious subjects were taught by lay instructors.

He had auditioned for, and was a member of their special liturgical choir. He also took part in all their athletic activities, but playing baseball in cassocks had its limitations.



His comments about the other aspects of living at the seminary were something like this:

The nights were a bit too short.
The rooms were a bit too small.
The beds were a bit too hard.
The bathing and shaving water was a bit too cool.
Other than that, everything was just great.

Eddie had a rare sense of humor and I expect that he was pulling my leg a bit. He did add that he had not entered the Seminary to have a good time.

Before seminarians left for summer vacation, they were individually counseled by their spiritual advisors. Eddie told me that the final words spoken to him by his advisor were:

"BEWARE A-BAIR !"

On many appropriate occasions, in future years, he would say to me, or I to him:

"BEWARE A-BAIR !"

After 2 years at the Seminary of Philosophy, Eddie was transferred to the Grand Seminary in Montreal where he would complete the last 4 years of the required training to prepare for his ordination.

Early in December of 1935, Mother became gravely ill. Every fall season she had been tormented by asthmatic attacks exacerbated by the high pollen count. Normally she would recover as winter approached. This year, she failed to recoup and her condition progressively weakened.

Eddie was summoned from the seminary as her condition became critical. She rallied somewhat when Eddie arrived and they spent some precious hours together. I'm sure they both realized that these might be their last. The situation was distressful for all members of the family, particularly for Eddie. Life without Mother seemed unthinkable.



Mother passed away the evening of the 13th of December with most of her family nearby. I had never seen Eddie so distraught. He quickly recovered and was providing the spiritual support that his father needed at that time. Eddie was only 23, but he was held in such high esteem and respect that we all relied heavily on him for the strength and stability to see us through this crisis.

After an emotional funeral service at St. Francis Xavier Church in Winooski, Mother was laid to rest in the church cemetery.

We wondered if Mother's passing would have an effect on Eddie's design for his future. If anything, it seemed to strengthen his resolve to pursue his chosen vocation with renewed vigor.

He returned to the seminary to conclude the studies required for his ordination.

Eddie completed his education at the Grand Seminary with same high degree of scholarship that he had achieved at all institutions of learning that he had ever attended.

La Presse, Montreal's leading French language newspaper, named Edouard L. Hebert as one of the 10 highest rated scholars in all colleges located in the Montreal area.

ORDINATION

Father Eddie was ordained to the priesthood in Montreal on June 11, 1938 by Bishop Georges Deschamps of Montreal at the Cathedral of St. James.

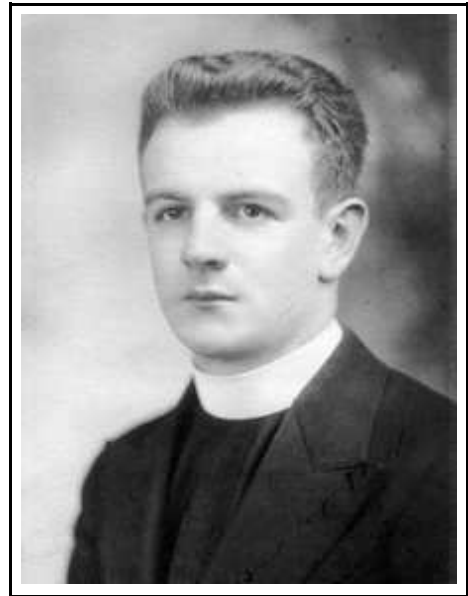
Jeannette (Niece) ...

The family gathered at 4 Weaver Lane in Winooski on the early morning of Father Eddie's ordination. Mom and Dad, Aunt Gladys and Uncle Fred, Aunt Bea and Uncle Earl (who now lived there), Uncle Clem and Aunt Pris, Uncle Archie and Aunt Harriet, Uncle Bob and Aunt Edna, and Uncle Leo and Mary Leddy (who was not my aunt yet) were all present. I was 11 years old and the only grandchild allowed to go.

Pepere and his wife, Aunt Alice, drove up in his big black Buick and we all convoyed the 100 mile journey to Montreal. I was allowed to sit in the front seat with Pepere and Aunt Alice.

The ceremony was so impressive. I remember the endless parade of priests, garbed in gleaming robes of red, gold, and white who then surrounded the altar of this magnificent cathedral. There were burning incense and glowing candles.

The candidate priests approached the altar in their white surplices, heavy corded ropes around their waists. One by one they were touched by the Bishop who was donned in resplendent albs.



When the Bishop placed his hands over Uncle Edward's head, I realized that he was no longer 'Mon Oncle.' From now on he would be 'Father Edward.' I felt so proud to be in front with Pepere and Aunt Alice, and so privileged to have been included in this momentous occasion.

After the services, we gathered at Aunt Regina's home in Montreal for the long awaited breakfast. In those days it was necessary to fast before receiving Holy Communion, consequently everyone was practically famished by the time we arrived. Everything seemed perfect. Our hosts were so gracious. Father Eddie looked handsome in his Roman Collar and cassock.

In deference to our hosts we all spoke French. Aunt Edna and Aunt Mary said very little since neither of them could speak a word in French.

FIRST MASS

The day after his ordination, Father Eddie said his first Mass at St. Francis Xavier Church in Winooski. The church was beautifully decorated and it was filled to capacity. Father Eddie seemed so young, vibrant, and confident as he celebrated the most sacred of all rituals. He was assisted by Father L'Ecuyer and Father Marcoux. Father Eddie used the gold chalice which was presented to him by the members of his family who were so proud of him.

His sermon was short and poignant. His voice quivered slightly when he paid tribute to his mother, who had passed away when he was in his fourth year at the Seminary.

We all had felt her spiritual presence especially during these last few days. It was her strong faith in God and devotion to the Blessed Mother that had precipitated these events.

After Mass, we gathered at Pa and Aunt Alice's home on Caroline Street in Burlington. A banquet-type breakfast was set up in a vacant store located on their property which had been renovated.

The master-of-ceremonies and principal speaker was Father L'Ecuyer, pastor of St. Francis Xavier's Parish in Winooski. Many great predictions were made by various speakers for this highly-intelligent, highly-motivated, and devout new priest. All members of Father Hebert's family were virtually guaranteed entrance into heaven by Father L'Ecuyer.

Father L'Ecuyer said that, as the time approached for the Mass to start, Father Eddie was nowhere to be found. The other priests were beginning to be concerned. Finally, at the last moment, Father Eddie arrived in good spirits, ready to commence the ceremonies. Later it was discovered that he had been praying at his mother's grave in the cemetery adjacent to the church.

Approximately 65 relatives and friends of Father Eddie's attended the breakfast ceremonies.



ST. SYLVESTER'S

The Diocese lost no time in dispatching Father Eddie to his first assignment as assistant to Father Damas Carrier, pastor of St. Sylvester Parish in Graniteville, a small mining community in the hills of Vermont.



Bob (Brother) ...

Father Eddie told me of one of his first tasks as a priest. A young child had fallen to the bottom of one of the deep quarries in Graniteville. Father Eddie was summoned to administer the last rites. They rushed him to the area and quickly lowered him to the scene of the accident. The child was badly mangled and did not survive. Father Eddie was later involved with consoling the next of kin and subsequent related activities.

The incident proved to be quite traumatic to Father Eddie who had never been witness to such violence. He called it his 'Baptism of Fire.'

Carol (Niece) ...

The following account, concerning Father Eddie while stationed Graniteville, was given to me by Father Paul Bouffard. I met Father Bouffard when he visited the sick at the Vermont Medical Center in Burlington, where I'm employed as an R.N. When he learned that I was Father Hebert's niece, he would relate wonderful stories about Father Ed. I asked him if he would write his impressions of Father Eddie so that I might keep them. Father Bouffard passed away the following year.

When my Dad told me he was writing a short biography about Father Eddie, I told him I had something that I was sure he could use.

Father Paul Bouffard.

Carol,

Father Edward L. Hebert was ordained 6/11/38.

He came to Graniteville in June of 1938, the month he was ordained. I was an altar boy at the time and his coming was like a breath of spring. He organized a youth club and brought the young parishioners together in sports and various activities.

When I was 15 years old, I went through the most stressful period of my life. My beloved mother, who was only 39 years old, was terminally ill. Father Hebert came to our home every day to bring Holy Communion to mother. He prayed with her and visited with her every day until she died on August 18, 1939.

Mother always looked forward to Father Hebert's daily visits. In her agony, he brought her peace and hope. For this I shall be eternally grateful.

His great faith in God and deep devotion to his parishioners inspired me to the study of the priesthood. He was the essence of love and compassion for the sick.

From Graniteville he went to St. Joseph's in Burlington in March of '41 and kept watch over me in the school years of '41-'42 while I was at St. Mike's College.

He went to St. Anne's in Milton in '43, where I often visited with him. He always treated me like a son.

From Milton he went to St. John's in Enosburg Falls, then to St. Francis of Assisi in Windsor.

Health failing, he retired, living with Father David Roche at St. Ambrose Parish in Bristol where he died.

My most precious memory of Father Hebert is the celebration of his 25th anniversary of his priesthood, held in Windsor in June of 1963, when I was pastor at Gilman. Many people gave tribute to the good works he had performed throughout his years of service to God, the Church, and his parishioners.

ST. JOSEPH'S

In March of 1941, Father Eddie was transferred from St. Sylvester Parish in Graniteville to St. Joseph Parish in Burlington as an assistant to the pastor, Msgr. Pariseau.

In addition to the normal responsibilities of an assistant, he continued his method of operation started at Graniteville. He vigorously supported all the youth programs and paid particular attention to the sick and elderly.

Father Omer Dufault.

HOLY CROSS CHURCH COLCHESTER

22 Sept 1992

Dear Leo,

I first met Father Edward Hebert at St. Joseph's in Burlington. It was my first assignment as a priest, and Father Ed, who was an assistant there, immediately took me under his wing. He let me know that I was an important and integral part of everything that was going on in the parish. That provided the confidence and assurance that I needed at that time.

He was the busiest priest I ever knew. He took all his assignments very seriously whether it was chaplain of the Boy Scouts and the Ladies Clubs, coordinating youth activities, or visiting the sick. He was a perfectionist in the manner that he celebrated Mass.

I admired the way he respected and treated everyone. I never knew anyone that enjoyed being a priest as much as Father Ed. If he taught me anything, it was that there is true joy in being a priest.

We remained good friends no matter where he was stationed. I often dropped in on him, sometimes unannounced, and it was always a pleasurable experience. One day, when he was stationed in Enosburg Falls, I showed up at his church. He asked me what I was doing there. I told him I was there to attend the wedding of a friend of mine that was about to take place. There was a quick change in lineup and I ended up performing the ceremony. I thought that was just great.

If Father Hebert were alive today he'd be 80 years old, just about my age. I'm sure he'd be doing the same thing that I'm doing; being a priest and placing myself at the disposal of the diocese. They sure keep me busy.

You were right, Father Ed, there's great joy in being a priest.

Thank you Leo for letting me share in Father Ed's memories.

*Sincerely yours in Christ,
/s/ Father Omer*

Mrs. Paul Bonnette. Dec 20, 1991

Dear Leo:

I had the pleasure of knowing Father Heberl while he was stationed at St. Joseph's. He was a fine priest, always cheerful and willing to help anyone, regardless of their problem.

He had a special place in his heart for children of all ages. I feel he had an influence in the vocation of Bishop Gelineau, with whom he spent much time.

I believe he was the one who established basketball and Boy Scouts at St. Joseph's School.

Paul and I spent many pleasurable evenings with Father Hebert and other parishioners playing cribbage and bridge.

Father Hebert was a humble priest, a great example of spirituality to all who knew him.

Sincerely,

*/s/ **Blanche Bonnette***

On April 13, 1942, Father Edward L. Hebert performed the wedding ceremony that joined the lovely Miss Mary Elizabeth Leddy and Leo R. Abair, his youngest brother, in matrimony. The wedding took place at Christ the King Church in Burlington.



Father Charles Towne, Pastor of Christ the King, graciously and enthusiastically allowed Father Hebert, from St. Joseph's parish, to perform the ceremony.

Agnes (cousin) ...

Father Edward stopped in to see us in Winooski during the Christmas Season of 1942 and told us that, on the 7th of January, he would be transferred to St. Anne's in Milton as pastor.

The current pastor, who was being transferred, was taking his housekeeper with him. This left Father Edward desperately looking for a qualified replacement.

I recommended a close friend of mine and of the family, Blanche Lord, who was currently unemployed. I don't recall informing Father Edward that Blanche didn't know how to cook but, regardless, she was hired. Blanche soon learned to cook and became an outstanding housekeeper. She remained with Father Edward until he retired from his pastoral duties.

ST. ANNE'S

Father Eddie was assigned as pastor of St. Anne's parish in Milton, Vermont on the 7th of January 1943. Milton was primarily a farming community with a population of about 2000. He was thirty years old, which was considered to be quite young for a pastoral assignment.

Mr. Raphael Morris.

16 Oct 1992

Dear Leo,

Your phone call brought back a flood of great memories.

I first met Father Edward when I was teacher at Milton High School. At the time, I was I involved in all church activities from teaching religion to singing in the choir and ringing the church bells. We developed a firm friendship, which deepened as time progressed.

Father Edward was the center of a circle of friends and their families that included the Dr. Maurice Villemaire, Charlie Villemaire, Reggie Cross, the Gelineau's from Burlington, and my family. We made many trips to New York, Boston, and Montreal. We saw many baseball and hockey games, and made many fishing excursions. Each one was a story unto itself. His congeniality and badgering sense of humor made every outing memorable experience.

Father Edward meant many things to many people. He truly loved his parishioners. He visited and consoled the sick. He was deeply concerned about the needy and often gave them financial support. He formed a youth organization and supplied their room with a pool table, a ping pong set, and other recreational items.

His Midnight Masses were executed with perfection, having special decorations and choral arrangements. There was standing room only at his special services.

When my mother died in Amsterdam, New York, I can never describe the emotion I felt when Father Edward appeared in the sacristy as the funeral services commenced.

Father Edward's greatest gift to me was the way he influenced my thinking about my relationships with other human beings as friends and my concept of the reality of God.

Thank you for letting me be a part of Father Hebert's memory book.

*Sincerely,
/s/ Willie*

Raphael Morris

TESTIMONIAL

In June of 1954, Father Eddie received word of his scheduled transfer from St. Anne's in Milton to St. John the Baptist in Enosburg Falls. He had mixed emotions about this impending move since he had developed so many close relationships with his parishioners.

A testimonial dinner was given to honor Father Hebert's 11 year pastorate at St. Anne's. The event was sponsored by a coalition of parish organizations.

Dr. Maurice Villemaire, president of the Holy Name Society, was master-of-ceremonies.

Many parishioners and prominent citizens praised Father Hebert for his many contributions to the parish and to the community. Many incidents were recounted where Father Hebert had used his unique sense of humor to ease tensions in various situations ranging from family counseling to Farmer Co-op meditations.

A skit was performed about Father Hebert by a group of children from catechism classes, directed by the teaching nuns. Their performance was both moving and entertaining.

An emotional farewell was given by Father Hebert in which he related many of the highlights and humorous incidents of his eleven year tenure at St. Anne's. He thanked all the parishioners and friends who had supported him so vigorously in all his efforts.

After the ceremonies, Dr. Villemaire directed the entire assemblage to the church parking lot where he presented Father Hebert the keys to his brand new Pontiac, a gift from the parishioners of St. Anne's and other friends.

Father Hebert responded by expressing deep gratitude to a very special congregation and added "... you have given new meaning to the expression '... and we wish you GODSPEED in your new endeavors,'" while shaking the keys to the new car over his head.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Father Eddie was transferred to St. John the Baptist Parish in Enosburg Falls, Vermont on June 23, 1954.

The character of the congregation was markedly different from that in Milton. Being located closer to the Canadian border, Father Eddie was called upon to use his French language training much more often than he had in many years.

Mrs. Mary Poissant.

*Enosburg Falls, Vt.
Mar 12, 1992*

Dear Leo:

Received your letter and think it is a wonderful idea to write a biographical sketch of Father Ed. He was not only our pastor, but a very dear friend.

When I think back to when he was here, I remember the beautiful Christmas and Easter services we had. Bishop Gelineau often came, before he was a bishop.

Father Ed used to come to our house on Saturday evenings after he had heard confessions. He, Bernard Pierre, and I would play '500.' Bernard had a habit of 'rehashing' the hand just played, and he would tell me, "if you had only played this or that, we might have made it. " One night Father came to play cards and said, "Bernard, let's not have any 'post mortems' tonight. " Bernard laughingly said, "O.K. Father. " About half way through the evening, Bernard started to say something about the hand we had just played and Father looked at me and said, "Mary, go call Bill Spears!, " our undertaker. We never forgot that one!

It was while he was here that a census was taken of all Catholics (practicing and fallen away) in Vermont. Bernard and I had to visit a certain number of homes on our street and a few in the country. We were surprised at the number of people who had "fallen away. " When we spoke to Father about it, he said something I shall never forget: "Don't ever take your faith for granted. It is a very precious gift and pray every day that you may never lose it."

Please remember me to Mary and good luck in your undertaking.

*Sincerely,
/s/ Mary*

ILLNESS

In the summer of 1957, Father Eddie experienced a series of nagging chest pains and decided to have a complete physical exam. He drove from Enosburg Falls to Burlington and checked in at the Bishop De Goesbriand Hospital. He was told that he would have to remain in the hospital until the tests were completed.

I visited with Father Eddie the following day at the hospital. He was in Bishop Joyce's private room. He said that the preliminary tests were normal, but it would take time for the electrocardiogram and blood tests to be evaluated.

Bishop Joyce stopped in to see Father Eddie while was there. I had never met a bishop before, and I wasn't sure whether I was supposed to kiss his ring, but he quickly put me at ease by shaking hands. The close relationship between Bishop Joyce and Father Eddie originated as principal-honor student at Cathedral High School. Bishop Joyce seemed quite concerned about Father Eddie's condition. I wondered if he knew something that we didn't know.

The next day, I visited with Father Eddie again and this time the news was not good. The experts had agreed that Father Eddie had suffered a mild heart attack and would have to remain in the hospital for treatment and more tests.

Subsequent tests revealed that Father Eddie had suffered mild, but irreparable, heart damage. Prognosis depended heavily on his change of lifestyle. Recommendations included a reduction in workload, programmed rest periods, and mild exercise. Father Eddie was also instructed to stop smoking and not to play golf on hot days. Father Eddie's prediction was, "I won't die in a rocking chair."

Father Eddie was 45 years old when he experienced his first heart attack. He had many attacks in the years to follow and each episode seemed increasingly severe. Although his physical condition gradually deteriorated, his indomitable spirit, sense of humor, and his unwavering faith in God were never diminished.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Father Eddie was transferred from St. John The Baptist in Enosburg Falls to St. Francis of Assisi in Windsor on June 23 ,1962.

The assigned assistant, Father Forrest W. Rouelle, proved to be exactly what Father Eddie needed to successfully complete his mission at St. Francis.

Father Rouelle's positive management style complemented Father Eddie's low-key business approach to problem solving. I recall Father Eddie telling me that no matter what the problem was, Father Rouelle was already on top of it. Whether it was planning a fund raising lawn party, carrying out parish visits, or making necessary installation repairs, Father Rouelle already had a plan and was ready to go.

St. Francis was responsible for providing religious services to the inmates at the State Prison in Windsor. Father Rouelle, who was a former Golden Glove Welterweight Champion of Vermont and New England, served the position as chaplain very well. I understand that his reputation preceded him.

Father Forrest Rouelle.

November 8, 1991

*St. Mary Of The Sea
Newport, Vermont*

Dear Leo,

It was so nice hearing from you, and hearing that you desire to keep your family in touch with Father Hebert.

Father Ed was the best pastor I ever had. He was very concerned about his area of responsibilities and had a deep respect for brothers of the priesthood. He treated associates as equals. I remember when I asked him, " Father, what do you expect of me? " and he replied, "Use your gifts, but if it's going to cost money, talk to me first."

He gave his associates, and me personally, freedom to be truly pastoral. He was enthusiastic about everything I did. He was always worried about his associates working too hard, so he introduced me to golf. I can still hear him chuckle when my ball would first go right, or left, but never straight down the middle.

I remember Father Hebert as a holy man, truly meek, truly humble. Loving his people and always ready to find an excuse for the failings of others, yet being rigorous in his own discipline. I still pray for Father Ed, sometimes I pray to him. Thanks for the chance to remember.

*Sincerely;
In Jesus through Mary and Francis of Assisi,
/s/ Father Forrest
Father Forrest W. Rouelle*

25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

A weekend affair celebrating the 25th anniversary of Father Edward L. Hebert's ordination was sponsored by the parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi on the 8th and 9th of June 1963.

On Saturday, Father Hebert was honored by the various parish societies and individuals. Sunday was set aside for Father Hebert's family members.

The information concerning the Saturday celebration was furnished by Miss Agnes Hebert, Father Hebert's cousin.

- Saturday -

The silver Jubilee celebration was a complete surprise to Father Hebert, who was greeted by singing of "Happy Anniversary."

Dr. Michael Daly welcomed Father Hebert on behalf of all the parishioners. Father Rouelle recited "The Feast of the Sacred Heart." This was followed by two musical selections by Thomas Terry and John H. Daignault. Antonio Clark presented Father with a card and purse on behalf of the Junior CYO. The CYO was represented by Margaret Moye who recited "The Beautiful Hands of the Priest." Mrs. Beatrice May presented a Spiritual Bouquet from the members of the St. Mary's Parents Club.

John Daignault conveyed to Father Hebert the appreciation of all parishioners for his deep devotion to the parish and his untiring efforts as their pastor. As a token of love, a hand painted card commemorating the occasion and a purse was presented as a gift from the whole parish.

Father Hebert responded by expressing his deep felt appreciation for the celebration and the expressions of love. Refreshments were served by a committee representing the Catholic Daughters, the Knights of Columbus, and the St. Francis Women's Club.

- Sunday -

A Solemn High Mass was celebrated by Father Hebert at 10:30 Sunday morning. He was assisted by Father Bouffard and Father Rouelle. The altar was decorated with spring flowers and the choir was directed by Dr. Daly. Father Eddie's relatives numbered 55, and came from New York, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont.

Dinner arrangements were made by Miss Blanche Lord, assisted by many ladies of the parish. After dinner, entertainment included the following:

An address given by Eileen Abair, Archie's daughter, expressing the love and affection shared by all members of the family for Father Eddie, and appreciation for his efforts in managing to show up at all family events including, but not limited to: weddings, graduations, baptisms and as funerals.

Susan Abair recited a poem written for the occasion by her father, Archie Abair, Father Eddie's brother.

*Two old timers met one day
And talked of days of yore;
Of folks they knew back when the two
Had lived there long before.*

*"I remember," said the first,
"The Abair Family:
Gladys, Bertha, Clem and Bea,
Eddie, Archie, Bob and Lee.*

*"Weaver Lane was their domain
Besides that, nothing mattered.
In mills and stores they did their chores
But now they've grown and scattered.*

*"Clem and Bob have gone away;
They earn there daily bread,
But Arch and Lee would rather be
Soldier boys instead.*

*"The girls all married, married well;
Not one became a spinster.
And there was Ed, he never wed,
He ended up in Windsor!"*

Marilee and Carol Abair, Leo's daughters, performed an original tap dancing score.

Chris Abair, Leo's son, executed an intricate Russian Cossack dance.

Eileen sang a beautiful rendition of "Ave Maria."

A presentation of gifts and mementos of the occasion were presented to Father Eddie by various members of his family.

Although Father Eddie attempted to keep his final remarks on the light and cheery side, the tears that rolled down his cheeks as he told us what was really in his heart. Many of us shared his sentiments and tears.

FLORIDA

Winters became increasingly difficult for Father Eddie, as his health gradually worsened. On his doctor's recommendation, he decided to take a vacation and planned a visit with his sister, Bertha, and brother-in-law, Francis Sourmail, in Tarpon Springs, Florida.

This proved to be exactly what the doctor ordered. The warmth, sunshine, and recreation was great therapy. He always checked in at St. Ignasius Rectory to let them know he was available, if needed. Winter vacations in Florida became an annual affair and Father Eddie often brought other priests with him to share his winter retreat.

Bertha (sister) ...



We were so happy when Father Eddie wrote to us to say he was accepting our invitation to spend his vacation in Florida with us. My husband, Francis, and Father Eddie suffered their first heart attacks the same year, so we knew what he was going through.

When we were married in 1926, Father Eddie was an altar boy at our wedding. Through the years, when we were raising our family and he was going through school and being a priest, we seldom had a chance to spend a lot of time together. In Florida, it was different. We had much time to visit and become reacquainted. I had forgotten what a strong, yet gentle person he was. He was always so pleasant to be with. Playing cards was one of his favorite pastimes, as it was mine, so we played many games. He loved to win.

One day, shortly after he suffered a minor heart spell, Father Eddie wanted to go to the horse races at Tampa Bay Downs. We were quite concerned because we knew that he was supposed to be in a complete state of rest, but when Father Eddie made up his mind, there was no stopping him. He bet on the Daily Double and his first horse came in. On the second race of the Daily Double, his selection was neck and neck down the stretch and we were all concerned about Father Eddie. Sure enough, his horse came through and he won a bundle. Father Eddie took it in stride and was none the worse for his experience.

Francis built an additional room to our house especially for Father Eddie so that he could have more comfort and privacy when he came to visit us. We always called it 'Father Eddie's Room', even long after he left us.

St. Ignatius Church was quite small, but the congregation was growing by leaps and bounds as more northerners, like ourselves, settled in the area. Father Eddie always checked in at the rectory to offer his services whenever needed.

He said masses, heard confessions, and generally made himself available to assist the parish priests. In later years, even when his condition weakened, he continued to help in anyway that he could. I'm sure they didn't realize how sick he was. He always did the best he could and never complained. He could never stop being a priest.

Jeannette (niece) ...

I was visiting Mother and Dad in Florida the day Father Eddie received the letter notifying him that he had been relieved of his duties as pastor of St. Francis Parish in Windsor. He didn't cry, but by the paled expression in his face, it was plain to see that this was one the saddest days of his life. Father Eddie said, "I wish that the Bishop had prepared me for this the last time we were together."

I felt very angry, it seemed to me that the Bishop, who had known Father Eddie for so many years, could have extended his pastorate a bit longer. He had such precious little time left. However, I'm sure that it must have been very difficult for the Bishop, whose primary responsibility is for the efficient operation of the diocese, and not the welfare of the individual priests.

Bertha (sister) ...

The days that Father Eddie spent with us in Florida are among my most treasured memories. It has been 25 years since he left us, but the warmth and joy he brought us will always remain in my heart.

SEMI-RETIREMENT

After Father Eddie's official release from pastoral duties in January of 1965, Bishop Joyce urged him to completely retire for the good of his health. Father Eddie refused to remain idle and put himself at the disposition of the diocese to serve at any place where he might be needed. He did not wish to cease being an active priest.

He spent the coldest months of the year with his sister, Bertha, in Florida. He continued functioning as a priest whether he was in Florida or Vermont.

He served as assistant to Father Patrick T. Hannon, Pastor of St. Bridget's in West Rutland, Vermont in 1965. He served as chaplain at the Loretta Home in Rutland, Vermont in 1966.

In early 1967, he was transferred to St. Ambrose Parish in Bristol to assist Father David P. Roche. This was the first time in many years that he had been stationed near Burlington. Even though he was not in good health, he remained in close relationship with the family members still residing in the area and always managed to show at all family functions.

Gladys (sister) ...

When Father Eddie was stationed at Bristol, he often stopped in to see me at my home in Burlington. One day he told me that he had visited the site where he wanted to be buried. I asked him if he would be buried at the site set aside for priests. He said he wanted to be buried next to his mother and father. He also stated that he wanted a plain casket and a simple marker.

I suppose he was telling me these things because, being the senior member of the family, I might be called on to make such decisions.



FINALE

On the 24th of October 1967, I was attending a staff conference at Headquarters Camp Johnson when a secretary entered to inform me that I had a phone call. I was apprehensive since all calls were normally suspended during staff sessions.

"Leo, c'est Pere St. Onge qui parle, votre frere Pere Hebert est mort ..."

I was shocked. I should have been better prepared, but I just stared in disbelief. Father St Onge kept talking and stating the many decisions that had to be made immediately. After I composed myself, I indicated that Bob LaVigne would take care of all immediate requirements. Other decisions would be made after consultation with other family members.

Father St. Onge, Pastor of St. Francis Xavier's parish in Winooski, offered the parish facilities as host installation for the funeral ceremonies. This seemed most appropriate since this was where Father Eddie was baptized, received his first religious instructions, and celebrated his first Mass.

Father St. Onge was a long and trusted friend. Father Eddie had chosen him as the executor of his will. Father Forrest Rouelle was now assistant at St. Francis Xavier's. Father Eddie was among friends. They made every possible effort to see that Father Eddie's final arrangements were befitting of the priestly life he had led.

Father Eddie's remains were first privately viewed at St. Francis' Rectory. All of Father Eddie's relatives were there, and many of his former parishioners and friends came from all parts of the State. I was so very impressed with the many pleasant memories that Father Eddie had left with them, and how so many of them said that he had affected their lives.

On Thursday at 4:00 p.m., a ceremonial procession was formed and his body was moved to the church to be laid in state for the general public. The Knights of Columbus, in their blue uniforms and with flashing swords, provided an impressive honor guard while the church bells slowly tolled.

There was a Mass at 7:30 in the evening. Hundreds of family members, former parishioners, and friends paid their final respects to this modest priest..

On the following day at 11:00 a.m., a solemn High Mass was concelebrated by Bishop Joyce and 12 priests of the diocese. This was the first Mass of this type that had been celebrated in the diocese. The celebrants depicted Christ and the 12 Apostles at the Last Supper. Their cassocks and other garments were white, rather than the traditional black. The whole ceremony was a joyful celebration of Father Eddie's arrival, rather than a sorrowful observance of his passing. I'm sure that Father Eddie heartily approved.

The church was filled to capacity. Every priest in the diocese was in attendance. St. Onge's eulogy was short but very powerful. Father Eddie was buried at St. Francis Xavier Cemetery next to his mother and father. The site where he had so often prayed.

A few days after the funeral services, Father David Roche called regarding Father Eddie's personal items still located at St. Ambrose's rectory. When I went to Bristol to retrieve Father Eddie's belongings, Father Roche told the details concerning his death.

On Tuesday morning, the 24th of October, Father Eddie celebrated Mass, had breakfast, then went out for his morning walk. This was his regular routine. After he returned, he entered the rectory and removed and hung his hat and coat. He was smiling and speaking as he approached the parlor where Father Roche was seated. As he passed over the threshold of the door, he collapsed to the floor without completing the sentence. Father Roche said, "I'm sure he was dead before he hit the floor."

After I packed Father Eddie's clothing, I stowed his personal belongings in a small carrying case. As I closed the cover and glanced around the empty room to see if I missed anything, I was overwhelmed by a strange feeling. It was as if Father Eddie had never existed. Then and there I promised to do everything I could to keep his memory alive.

That was 25 years ago, and as time goes by, it seems that fewer and fewer people remember the warm, gentle, and unselfish person he was and whose sole purpose in life was to serve God, His Church and His people.

Hopefully this booklet will help rekindle some of the joy and warmth that everyone who knew him felt in his presence, and perhaps serve as an inspiration to those who never knew him.

The following tribute to Father Edward L. Hebert was provided by His Excellency, Louis E. Gelineau, Bishop of Providence.

The endeavor to capture the spirituality of Father Eddie's 30 years of priesthood, as contained in this Book of Memories, could not have been better summarized nor emphasized by the moving and powerful words of Bishop Gelineau.

We, the family of Father Hebert, are deeply grateful.

My Memories of Father Edward L. Hebert
by
+ Louis E. Gelineau
Bishop of Providence

As we approach the 25th anniversary of the death of Father Edward L. Hebert, I am pleased and honored to be able to share some of my reflections about this great priest. Of all the priest I knew in my youth, and there were many, Father Hebert had what I consider to be the greatest influence of all in leading me to the priesthood. My association with him in my youth gave me the image of the priesthood in which I made the clear decision I wanted to share. Father Hebert was a happy priest. He was dedicated to his priestly ministry and found great satisfaction in serving people. He showed that he was honored to be called to the priesthood. He projected for me the model of the kind of life I wanted for myself.

Father Hebert was ordained in 1938 and spent the first few years of his priestly ministry in Graniteville. I met him when he was sent by the bishop to his second assignment as an assistant in St. Joseph Parish in Burlington. At the time I was in the seventh grade. I had been very much involved in all of the activities of the school and church. I knew and loved the priests of the parish, the teachers who taught us in Nazareth School, and the whole life of the parish. When I and my family and my classmates learned that Father Hebert was coming to the parish, we naturally asked what kind of a person he was. The story was told that he was very sensitive person and we would love him. To illustrate this, we heard that on the day of his First Mass a couple of years prior to this, he had spent a long period of time in the cemetery praying at his mother's grave. She had died a few years before his ordination. His prayers were that his saintly mother would guide and protect him during his priestly life. This story made a great impression upon me.

When our parish welcomed him in the auditorium of Nazareth School I remember looking down from the balcony and sensing that he was a truly Christlike priest. My secret hope at that time was that I could become friends with him and he could help me to determine my own vocation for the future. My hope and prayer was answered. During my seventh and eighth and ninth grades in school, I and many of the other young men in the parish became very close to Father Hebert. He spent much time with us who were altar servers and was at the school for our intra-mural basketball games, boy scout activities, picnics and outings, and he became a regular visitor at my home where he and my father were. competitors in cribbage. Most influential was the time that we spent together in church. He was always the perfectionist in the liturgy. He trained us to be proud of the reverential manner in which the Mass would be celebrated.

When I was in high school, Father Hebert became Pastor of St. Ann Parish in Milton. I and several of the other boys in our group would go to spend weekends with him in the large rectory he had there. We helped in the ministry he carried on there. We were able to observe him at close view and realize again how serious he was about his ministry and how well organized and directed was his parish. All of this led me to sign up in my third year of high school to become a priest. Because it was war years, I was sent in my fourth year of high school to St. Thomas Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut.

While I was in Hartford, I suffered from a case of serious homesickness. Some of my friends who had signed up and assigned there with me were experiencing the same homesickness and left the seminary to return to Burlington. I was about to do the same, but when Father Hebert learned of my plight, he made a special trip to Hartford to see me. He gave me advice then that I have never forgotten. He and I were both sure that I had a vocation to the priesthood. He said that my vocation would be tested many times by the facing of difficulties such as the one I was now. He convinced me to carry the cross and remain at the seminary for that year. I did so on the basis of his wise advice. I might not be a priest today had it not been for that personal intervention on the part of Father Hebert. I have thought of that lesson many times since. In everyone's life there are challenging times. We cannot run away from them but must face them on the basis of what we know is right and what God wants us to do.

All during my college and seminary years, Father Hebert showed interest in me. He would write to me with encouraging messages. On vacations, I would meet with him and get his good counsel. He was very much apart of the joy of my ordination and first Mass in June 1954.

My first assignment as a priest was at All Saints Parish in Richford. This was a neighboring parish to St. John the Baptist Parish in Enosburg Falls to which Father Hebert had been assigned as Pastor a few years earlier. During my two years in Richford, I made many trips to the rectory in Enosburg Falls. I would go to Father Hebert for confession! and guidance. His interest in me continued to be strong and his influence upon me was profound. There were many happy gatherings at priests at his rectory, and at the Richford rectory were Father Marcoux, the pastor, was the most hospitable to priests. I was truly blessed to have Father Hebert so close to me during those important first years of my priesthood.

In 1956 I was transferred to Winooski and in 1957 went to study canon law in Washington for two years and then returned in 1959 to begin work in the Chancery Office. Because of the distance during this time, our contacts were not as frequent as they had been but they were still frequent enough for us to maintain our strong fraternal bond. It was during the early sixties that I began to feel the sadness of witnessing the change in Father Hebert's health. He developed a heart condition which led gradually to restrict his activities. He was not able to remain as Pastor in Windsor very long before his heart condition required him to retire. I knew how heavy a cross this was for him. He wanted to continue the priestly ministry and activities which he loved so much but his health would not permit it. It was obvious to many that he struggled with all of this. Always, he submitted himself to what the Lord wanted for him, and not what he wanted for himself. During those last years leading up to his death in 1967, he was a great example of what Jesus, himself, proclaimed the night before he died: "Not as I will, Father, but as You will."

I might conclude by listing a few of the outgoing qualities Father Hebert had which made him so influential upon me and others:

1. He had a very keen intellect. He had been a good student while he was in school and he knew his philosophy and theology. He continued to read in the fields of Church sciences. He could recall things that he had read because he had a very keen memory. All of this made him a good debater on any question that was current.

2. He had a great appreciation and love for his priesthood. He knew Christ very well and loved the idea that it was the priestly ministry that would bring people to Christ. He wanted perfection in the liturgy because this was the moment and means by which people were united mostly with Christ. He followed the regulations of the Church about liturgy very strictly. People would indicate they really sensed they had been united with the Lord in a special way because of the special care with which his liturgies were carried on.

3. Father Hebert made friends very easily and kept them once the friendship was established. He was a member of many families since his friendships would bring him into contact with many different families. He loved a good laugh and would even join in humorous things about himself. I remember one time at our Spaulding Bay Camp he tried to rid us of bees by holding a flaming torch under the bee hive. When some of the bees escaped the flames and came after him, he ran into the house and locked the door behind him. We always kidded him about whether he thought the bees could open the door if it had been left unlocked.

4. He had a deep love and respect for the Church. When I became a Monsignor, I was always embarrassed to have him call me "Monsignor" but he insisted upon doing so, especially in the presence of other people.

5. His faith in God was firm. This was mostly evident in two instances: first, when he would be celebrating the Eucharist and second, during the time of his illness. Father Hebert did not live to an old age but he had an impact upon many, many people. He certainly left a lasting impression upon me. I have his picture and memorial card in my breviary where it reminds me of him each day during my prayers. I sense his presence in heaven and the help he obtains for me through God's grace. I have a firm belief that as we are united in spirit now, we will be united in our friendship for all eternity.



Bishop Louis E. Gelineau celebrating his First Mass as a newly ordained priest, being assisted by Father Edward L. Hebert. St. Joseph's Church, Burlington Vt. 6 June, 1954.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I WISH TO GIVE THANKS TO THOSE WHO ASSISTED ME IN ASSEMBLING THIS TRIBUTE TO FATHER EDWARD L. HEBERT AND TO THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED MATERIAL TO ITS CONTENT.

Louis E. Gelineau, Bishop of Providence
 Father Paul Bouffard
 Father Forrest W. Rouelle
 Father Omer Duffault
 Mrs. Blanche Bonnette
 Mrs. Bernard (Mary) Poissant
 Mr. Howard (Hookie) O'Conner
 Mr. Raphael (Willie) Morris

Gladys ... Mrs. Alfred Merchant
 Bertha ... Mrs. Francis Sourmail
 Bea ... Mrs. Earl Alderman
 Archie ... Mr. Archie A. Abair
 Bob ... Mr. Robert F. Abair
 Carol ... Ms. Carol Leddy Abair
 Jeannette .. Mrs Kenneth Lafayette
 Agnes ... Miss Agnes Hebert
 Mrs. Eileen K Bouvier
 Mrs. Susan M. Stanley
 Minnie ... Mrs. Clifford Briener Blondin
 Mrs. Mary Leddy Abair
 Mr. Alan T. Abair
 Mr. Christopher Abair
 Miss Molly Shea Abair
 Mrs. Mairlee Cain Abair
 Mrs. Lucy Shea Abair
 Mrs. Shirley (Sam) Abair
 Ms. Kelly Draper
 Mr. Mark Lombard
 Leo R. Abair

Relationship to Father Eddie

	Sister
	Sister
	Sister
	Brother
	Brother
	Niece
	Niece
	Cousin
	Niece
	Niece
	Friend
Forebearance	Sister-in-law
Publication	Nephew
Computer Specialist	Nephew
Computer Specialist	G/Niece
Proofreading	Niece
Editing	Niece
Typing	Niece
Typing	
Technical Adviser	

