

Father Jim assigned to Fox River Valley parish



Father James (Jim) Leary

by **BILL GLEISS**
Democrat Editor

Father James Leary, pastor at St. Patrick Church in Sparta for the past 11 years, will be reassigned at the end of June.

The popular Leary, a member of the Capuchin order based in Detroit, will head St. Joseph Catholic Church in Appleton, a downtown parish of 1,220 families in the Diocese of Green Bay. His new mission involves a role in the administration of the Catholic school system in

Appleton as well.

In Sparta, Leary succeeded the late Father Mark Walljasper, who he credits with a smooth transition for a flock of 1,100 families and pledges to do the same for the clergyman who replaces him.

Leary has no idea as to that cleric's identity, but he suspects a diocesan priest and not a member of a religious community will fill his shoes.

Originally from Stevens Point, but with family in Tomah, Leary did charitable work in Detroit, including service in a soup kitchen, before the opportunity arose to head a parish with a \$760,000 annual budget.

Without a doubt, the most profound achievement of the departing priest's tenure was the fund raising and construction of a new school on South "L" Street, costing \$2 million.

The building came into existence during two phases, replacing a facility which served the parish for 78 years.

The old school, razed just last week, did not come down easily with the west wall of the foundation being especially stubborn, said Leary. Wrested from the rubble was a time capsule in a perfectly preserved copper box.

Among contents included

(See FR. JIM Page 5)

Fr. Jim

(Continued from Page 1)

1932 editions of a Catholic newspaper, Milwaukee Journal, The Sparta Herald reporting Walter Kohler's election as governor of Wisconsin and The Monroe County Democrat informing that the GOP had nominations for all county officers but register of deeds.

One of the local papers also ran a piece introducing the late dentist, Dr. James Flood, to the city.

Another document, a parish financial report, was the most revealing of all, disclosing the school, church, rectory and convent operated on a seemingly unbelievable \$10,000 budget.
