

JED CARLSON/DAILY TELEGRAM PHOTOGRAPHER

The Rev. Fr. Robert Urban poses in the Cathedral of Christ the King after morning Mass today. The congregation had a prayer ceremony for Fr. Solanus Casey, who lived in Superior in the late 1800s. An effort is on to get Casey recognized as a saint. Urban lived with Casey in the early 1950s in Huntington, Ind.

Local churches pray former Superior man's sainthood

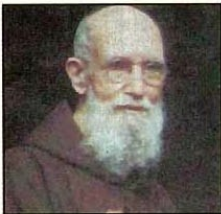
By JAMIE LUND

Daily Telegram Staff Writer

A former Superior resident could become the first American-born saint.

Local parishes are celebrating the 50th anniversary of Fr. Solanus Casey's death with a novena of prayers to bring about the success toward the canonization. The prayers continue through Tuesday.

Born Bernard Casey Jr. on Nov. 25, 1870, near Prescott, Casey was the sixth of 16 children of Bernard and Ellen Murphy Casey. The family moved to Superior in the

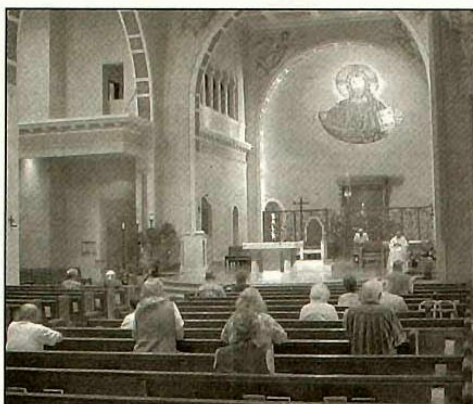


Casey

late-1800s, when Casey was in his late teens. The farm boy worked as a brick maker, a hospital orderly, a prison guard and a streetcar motorman before entering the priesthood.

It was while working as a motorman in Superior Casey witnessed a drunk man stabbing a woman. The incident is credited for Casey's decision to enter St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee at age 21.

Casey was ordained in 1904 as a Capuchin-order "simplex"



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Parishioners at the Cathedral of Christ the King pray for sainthood for Fr. Solanus Casey this morning.

Simple priest could be first U.S. saint

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priest, because of his poor grades. A simplex priest cannot preach or hear confessions, but serves in other ways.

The Capuchin order was known for its vows of poverty.

During this time Casey was given the religious name, Solanus.

Casey worked in parishes in New York and Detroit, Mich.

His work as a door porter and in soup kitchens gave him the opportunity to come into contact with thousands of people over his lifetime. People would listen patiently to Casey's problems, often from early in the morning until late in the evening. Sometimes he missed meals, demonstrating other people's troubles were more important than his own hunger.

Those Casey comforted and prayed with began to notice his prophecies coming true.

There were hundreds of accounts of people healing without an understandable cause. Casey kept journals of the trials shared with him. Word of Casey's successes spread and the compassionate priest continued to listen to the poor and suffering.

Casey died July 31, 1957, at age 86. An estimated 20,000 people from all walks of life came to pay their last respects to the humble father.

Because of the hundreds of favors he performed, a guild was formed to preserve his memory. Many requests were made to seek sainthood. Searching for information and verification of

the favors began in 1966.

This process toward sainthood is long and slow.

In 1987, Casey's body was exhumed as part of the requirement towards sainthood. His body remained largely intact, even 30 years after his death. He was then cleaned, dressed in a new habit and buried in a new coffin in a crypt in the church.

In 1995, the first step towards sainthood had been achieved. Pope John Paul II declared Casey as "venerable," worthy of reverence. The second step, beatification, at which point the person is referred to as "blessed," is underway. The third and final step is canonization, in which an individual becomes publicly known as a saint.

If anyone has any personal knowledge of Casey, they are asked to contact the guild at 1780 Mt. Elliott Ave., Detroit, MI 48207, or call (313) 579-2100, ext. 140.

Happy 50th Birthda
BUMMA
 Love Cole & Cade

Harvey's Family
 1418 Tower Ave