

REVEREND MICHAEL S. SMITH

by Eleanor Miller



This past August the parishioners of St. Catherine of Siena Church welcomed Fr. Michael S. Smith as Parish Administrator. Fr. Michael is a native of Moosup where his great-grandfather em-

igrated during the potato famine in Ireland. He purchased a farm on which the Moosup Pond is located. His great-grandfather died when his grandfather, Joseph Patrick, was sixteen years old which made it necessary for him to drop out of school to work the farm with the assistance of siblings. During this period he did an apprenticeship with a local lawyer and served as Judge of Probate. Both Fr. Smith's father Paul (who died at the age of 56) and his brother Paul became lawyers. At the time of his father's death, he and his wife Mary had been

married over thirty years. Father Smith is one of seven children, 5 boys and 2 girls, one of which is Fr. Smith's twin sister. He is the only member of the family to enter the religious life. I asked Fr. Smith what inspired him to become a priest. His experience was quite unique. At the confirmation ceremony of a girl he was dating, the participants were required to write an essay as to why they were becoming confirmed. His girlfriend's essay was chosen to be read and what she had written was so powerful that he was profoundly moved. This prompted him to take his faith more seriously and he began reading the Bible. After completing one year at the University of Connecticut he made the decision to enter the priesthood. In September 1985 he enrolled in St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, CT where he received Priestly Formation and was awarded a BS in Philosophy with a minor in Psychology in May, 1988. From June, 1990 thru June 1992 he studied at Katholieke Universiteit in Leuven, Belgium where he was awarded a Baccalaureate of Sacred

Theology (S.T.B.) and a Master of Religious Science. Father Smith was ordained at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Norwich on July 25, 1992. Subsequently Fr. Smith provided parochial service at various military bases throughout Europe, was Chaplain Candidate in the U.S. Navy where he was responsible for all faith denominations, was parochial vicar at St. John Church in Cromwell, CT and also St. Michael Church in Pawcatuck, CT.

Now, Rev. Michael S. Smith is here at St. Catherine of Siena Church. He has found the parishioners to be friendly and supportive. He hopes he will be able to empower and encourage them to use their gifts and talents for the enrichment of this parish community. Also, he is looking forward to working with the local clergy in the other denominations in Preston.

The Preston Pipeline welcomes Fr. Smith to Preston.