

Joseph L. Obersinner, S.J.

60 Years in the Society



Henry Hargreaves, S.J. G.

Joe grew up in the shadow of the Benedictine monastery at Mt. Angel, Oregon. His parents, Joe, Sr. and Freda Schultalber, were members of the strong German Catholic community that settled there. So in terms of miles, his move into the Jesuit Novitiate at Sherdian in 1945, was a short one.

He has a great love for fishing and everywhere he goes, he searches out the local fishing holes. Happiness, for Joe, is struggling with a steelhead in the Nestucca River. He still drives his camping van — a Native American graphic emblazoned along the side panel — to his favorite fishing spots.

After spending his regency at Holy Cross Mission, he studied theology at Alma College in California, and was ordained in 1957 at St. Aloysius in Spokane. His first assignment after tertianship was to St. Mary's Mission in Omak, where he served as the assistant pastor and the prefect of discipline at the school. In 1964, he was appointed minister of the community and principal of the school, positions he held until 1971, when he moved to St. Ignatius Mission as co-pastor.

He held that post for 10 years and then spent a year's sabbatical at the Loyola Renewal Center in Portland. Afterwards, it was back to Omak to work with the Native community. In 1984, Joe moved to St. Luke's parish in Woodburn, just a stone's throw from his boyhood home, where he served as assistant pastor for five years. He continued in pastoral work for the next ten years, first at St. Francis Xavier parish in Missoula; then St. Joseph in Cloverdale, Oregon; and then at Sacred Heart in DeSmet, Idaho. In 1998 he moved to the Regis community in Spokane, where he continues to work as a pastoral minister.

