

## **Priest enriched lives**

### **by serving deaf children**

Who really is Father Dennis Blaney? A man who has dedicated his life in bringing joy to everyone's lives. I can tell you this firsthand because Father Blaney has been part of my life since I was a little girl in red pigtails. Father Blaney opened his arms and heart to our family 27 years ago when he headed the Apostolate for the Handicapped Ministry for the Northwest Indiana Hearing-impaired Children.

When my mother and father experienced most emotions all parents do with "abled" children - confusion, worry, anxiety, etc. - Father appeared like an angel to provide moral support and, most of all, offer his love and guidance. I fondly remember the days when mom and dad would drop me off at St. Joseph Church, Hammond, every Saturday for the weekly religion class, to be followed by monthly sign language masses, outdoor masses and picnics at Merry Meadows, magic shows, retreats at "Castle Blaney" in Michigan City, skateboarding at Lemon Lake, camping/fishing at the Indiana Dunes, etc.

He has enriched our family's lives by emphasizing the importance of Christianity and the Catholic faith to deaf children. Today, as an adult, looking back at all the outings we participated in then, I realize Father Blaney invoked Jesus' good works in our excursions whether it be nature's delights, the outpouring of human love and opportunities to enjoy life without all its materialism.

As the years continue to go by, I never will forget all that Father Blaney has done for folks from various paths of life, especially the "abled." Without a doubt, he will continue to be a terrific inspiration with his ongoing SHARE Foundation Ministry at Rolling Prairie. The Northwest Indiana Diocese is fortunate to have Father Dennis Blaney, and I wish him happiness in his retirement.

**MARIE JEFFERS VAN MATRE**  
*Munster*