

Father Peter Mockler laid to rest in Ireland

BY JASON GREEN
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Father Peter Francis Mockler, pastor of St. Ann's Church in Lizana was laid to rest in his beloved Newbridge, Ballinsloe, County Galway, Ireland on Thursday, February 13.

Father Pete's funeral Mass was celebrated in St. Patrick's Church, Newbridge, at 12 noon with Bishop Christopher Jones, Diocese of Elphin, Bishop John Kirby, Diocese of Clonfert, and 30 concelebrating priests from all over Ireland. Representing the Diocese of Biloxi were Father Paddy Mockler, Father Tommy Conway, Father Louis Lohan, and two retired diocesan priests -- Father Mike Tracey and Father Noel Fannon. Also in attendance were several religious sisters who previously served in the Diocese of Biloxi and have since retired to Ireland -- Sr. Anna Quinlan, Sr. Rita Murray, Sr. Enda Hayes (sister of the late Father Patrick Hayes), Sr. Curtin Paschal, all Sisters of Mercy, and Sr. Josephine Cagney, PBVM. Also in attendance were family members of Father George Murphy, Sister Mary Ann O'Brien, Father Gerard Cleary, Father Henry McInerney, Father Tracey, and the late Father Hayes. Fr. Lohan, pastor of St. Thomas Church, Long Beach delivered the homily and Father. Tommy Conway of St. Fabian's Church in Oak Grove performed the grave-side rites.



St. Patrick's Church is where Father Pete was baptized, received his first Holy Communion, said his first Reconciliation, Confirmation, and later was ordained and said his first Mass therefore it was the chosen setting for his funeral mass.

Along with myself, escorting Father Pete back home was his two brothers, Father Paddy Mockler and Michael Mockler; three sisters, Ann Walsh, Mary Ryan, and Theresa Logan; Father Tommy Conway; Msgr. Joe Jennings; Sister Flo Albertson; and Karen Parker.

Upon arrival in Dublin, several family members joined in the funeral cortege from the airport to his childhood home where his remains would lie in state overnight. Father Paddy Mockler said the evening Mass in the home which is an Irish custom. On Wednesday, after a brief prayer service and rosary, Father Pete was moved from the home to St. Patrick's Church where the evening visitation would be held. Over 800 hundred mourners greeted the family. Father Donald Canon McNamara and Father Pat Stephenson, both classmates of Father Pete's from St. Patrick's College in Carlow, said the evening prayers following the visitation.

Outside the church were four flags, the diocesan flag, the flag of Ireland, the County flag of Galway, and the American flag, all lowered to half-staff in honor of Father Pete's service to the people of Newbridge and the people of Mississippi.

Father Pete was laid to rest just outside the front doors of the church. Neighbors of the Mockler family were asked to dig the grave which is an honor in Irish custom and the family and friends celebrated his life with a meal in the local community center.

It was an honor to be a part of Father Pete's farewell tribute and return his body home to his family and village of Newbridge. I was also able to express to them how much the people of South Mississippi appreciated his dedication to them and for his years of ministry.

May he Rest in Peace.



Photos by Jason Green



In attendance at Father Pete Mockler's funeral were several religious sisters who previously served in the Diocese of Biloxi and have since retired to Ireland, l-r, Sr. Rita Murray, Sr. Curtin Paschal, Sr. Enda Hayes (sister of the late Father Patrick Hayes), and Sr. Anna Quinlan, all Sisters of Mercy. At right, Father Noel Fannon and Father Mike Tracey.

