

FATHER V. ANTONY ALAHARASON

by Eleanor Miller



On the weekend of Sept. 28, 29, Father V. Antony Alaharason began serving as pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Church here in Preston. Fr. Antony is a learned scholar who has written 8 books in his native land of Sri Lanka and four in English after coming to the US in 1984. He has always been an avid reader and while attending Ceylon National Seminary he was exposed to American literature such as books by Henry David Thoreau, and poets such as Longfellow, Emerson etc.

The two American prelates that he holds in

high esteem are the late Bishop Fulton Sheen and Rev. Billy Graham.

Fr. Antony was awarded baccalaureate degrees in philosophy and theology in 1965 and was ordained a priest in Dr. Lanka on Dec. 21, 1965. He served the Diocese of Tricomalee -Batticoloa in the capacities of pastor, rector, editor and professor of Eastern philosophy. He received a bachelors degree from madras University, S. India in Tamil, English literature and culture in 1974. He completed his master's degree and continued his studies in comparative religion with special emphasis on the bible and Kural and in 1979 he was awarded his doctoral (Ph.D) at Madras University.

Fr. Antony arrived in the US in 1984 and his first assignment was in the Bronx and Brooklyn, NY, In 1989 he was reassigned to the Sacred Heart Church in Lynn, Mass. for two years. While there he did research at Harvard Divinity School on World Religions - their Ethics and Practices. One of his books "Papers from Harvard University" was written as a result of this research.

In 1993 Bishop Daniel P. Reilly installed Fr. Antony as priest of the Diocese of Norwich. Prior to coming to Preston he served as associate pastor at St. John's church in Cromwell. While there he also served as Professor of Eastern Religion and Christianity at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell.

Presently Fr. Antony is writing his autobiography "Priest from the East". He has just completed "Pearl of Tail Wisdom" - a collection of Tamil literature from the southern part of India and Sri Lanka and is looking for a publisher. One of the four books he has written is "Smile and Shine for Jesus" and this title seems to embody the theme of his ministry.

Fr. Antony's formal installation will be held on Nov, 3rd at St. Catherine's. Msgr. Henry N. Archambault, Dean of Norwich Deanery will be Bishop Hart's representative for the ceremony during the 10:00 a.m. Mass. A reception in Siena Hall will follow.