By Kathleen Toups

LEROY

It might be said Father Edgar Bissonette came to the Lafayette diocese because of a chance meeting in New Orleans with Msgr. Paul Fusilier. Father Bissonette was in New Orleans, representing the Savannah, Ga., diocese at a national meeting of representatives of Catholic Relief Services. He wasn't really the diocesan director, as most of those in attendance were, but had been asked to represent the diocese. Msgr. Fusilier was representing the Lafayette diocese, and spotting Father Bissonette's French name, engaged him in conversation. As it turned out, Father Bissonette knew Msgr. Gustave Berube, then pastor in Lake Arthur. Msgr. Fusilier urged Father Bissonette to come to the diocese. Nothing was settled during this meeting and Father Bissonette returned to Georgia.

However, after an exchange of several letters, Father Bissonette was offered the parish at Leroy which would be vacant because Msgr. Ignatius A. Martin, then superintendent of schools, was going into this office in a full-time capacity.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Leroy, was the first of several rural parishes which Father Bissonette held. He was in Leroy from 1948 to 1954. He found a small, close-knit community, mostly of farmers. One of his altar boys, now ordained, was Father Carey Landry. In Leroy he built a new church and converted the former church into a parish hall.

In 1954 he was appointed pastor of Assumption Parish, Bosco. Now called Mire, the name, Bosco, Father Bissonette feels, was taken from a man of that name who owned a store.

Spotlight

in the community. There was an oil field near by and it was a tough, sturdy community.

"Each place I served was different, not only the people, but the kind of French they spoke," Father Bissonette recalls, "and you always find good people everywhere. He built a new church in Bosco, and one of his former altar boys there is now Father Don Hebert, pastor of St. Anthony's Parish, Eunice.

In 1965 he was appointed pastor of Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Delcambre and here he found a small town with several important industries including fishing, agriculture, and salt mining.

In Delcambre, he made improvements to the church, bought a pipe organ, organized a strong CCD program.

He has served under all three bishops of Lafayette. Father Bissonette has strong recollections of Bishop Jeanmard.

"He was a kindly man, and enjoyed speaking French. He spoke good French with a Creole accent," Father Bissonette recalls. "There was something charming about him."

Father Bissonette also enjoyed speaking French with Bishop Schexnayder. "There was a simplicity and honesty about him," Father Bissonette says. "He used to enjoy (Continued on Page 2)