



The Alaskan Shepherd



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Some give by going to the Missions

Some go by giving to the Missions

Without both there are no Missions

BROTHER KIRBY BOONE, C.F.X. Missionary In Alaska:1990-2006

Editor's Note: This article is indebted to a considerable extent to writings by Father Louis L. Renner, S.J. --Patty Walter

"I always looked forward to my visits to the village of Tanana in particular because of the marvelous taste of Southern Hospitality Brother Kirby provided. I just knew that Kirby would be cooking up a storm in preparation for our gathering after Mass on Sunday. I wondered and speculated on what southern delicacy would come out of the oven this time. Thanks to Kirby, the church and quarters in back were always clean and welcoming. He had a way of keeping things functional and pleasant as well. He was there for the people in so many ways. He'll be missed by all the people of Tanana—certainly by me. I wish him all the best as he heads back to Kentucky."

—Fr. Joseph Laudwein, S.J., Tanana Visiting Priest & Fairbanks Hospital Chaplain

"Brother Kirby Boone, C.F.X., never forgot the people that he served. He was a constant advocate for their ministerial needs. The people genuinely loved his presence among them. He never stopped talking about them." —Fr. Richard Case, S.J., Galena Priest & Vicar General Diocese of Fairbanks

"Kirby is a brother's brother! He continues to live his religious life to the full and at the same time serves the Church in his Alaskan mission even into his 8th decade! Kirby is a brother living a life of poverty,

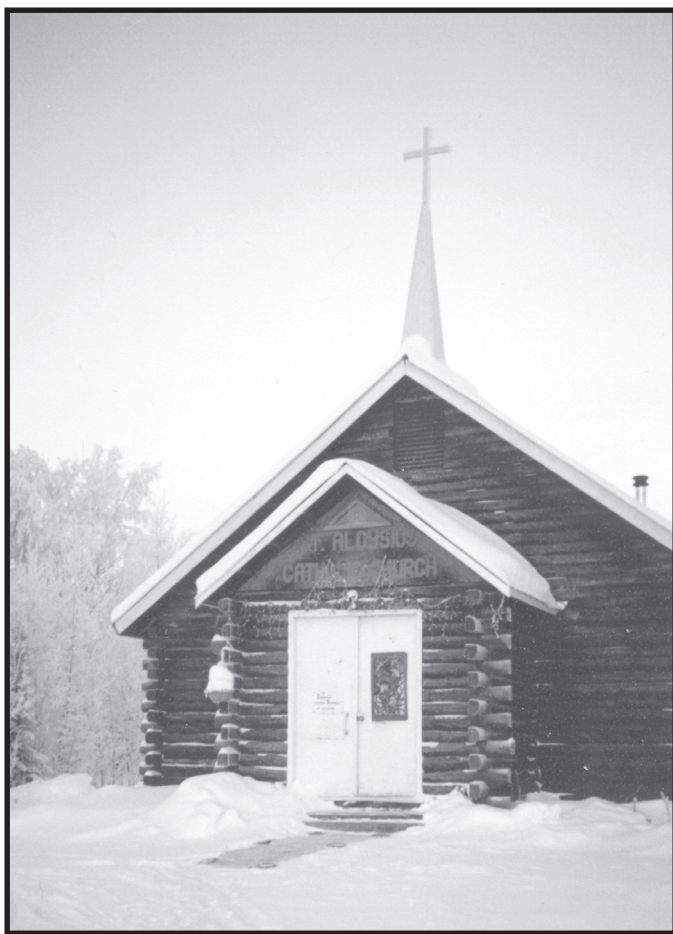


simplicity and humility using his talents to their maximum. He seeks no attention to himself serving in private yet effective ways. He would resist being acknowledged in any way and yet he deserves to be recognized."

—Brother Bonaventure Scully, C.F.X.

CATHOLIC BISHOP OF NORTHERN ALASKA
1312 PEGER ROAD, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99709
Phone: 907-374-9532 <http://www.cbna.info>
Please see our list of current Parish Needs on our website.

Special Masses are offered throughout the year for you and your intentions by our Missionary Priests. Please pray that God may bless us and our work.



St. Aloysius Church, Tanana, Alaska.

Photo by Brother Kirby Boone, C.F.X.

“Brother Kirby and I go back to 1990 when he first came to Alaska. Although we never lived at the same parishes we have become good friends over the years. When we would get together it seemed we could not stop talking, that there was some special link that we shared. Our respect for each other has grown over the years. Brother Kirby was our area coordinator when he first came and somehow I have adopted his job. He was great to follow, always giving helpful advice and leadership. He will always be remembered for giving a little gift to anyone who visited him or for taking a gift to those he visited--like a candy bar. He will be remembered too for his food creations, always prepared and ready for an after church snack. Brother Kirby’s love for the church and people is exemplary; his prayers of petition are usually thanking Christ for giving Himself to us in the Eucharist.”

**Brother Robert Ruzicka, O.F.M.,
Pastoral Administrator Nulato and Director of Rural
Ministries-Galena Area**

*“Brother Kirby often stopped in for a visit with the ladies in the Alaskan Shepherd office. Those visits we will always treasure. To spend time with dear Brother Kirby is to spend a moment with a truly good man. His generosity and warmth are well known to all. He is an excellent listener, a master story teller. When he speaks with you, your heart feels lighter and more hopeful. He defines patience and kindness by his very demeanor. Brother Kirby will be dearly missed and often remembered as a wonderful Missionary in Alaska. **Patty Walter***

James Anthony Boone was born on June 11, 1926, in Nelson County, Kentucky, near New Haven, and about ten miles from where Abraham Lincoln was born. His parents were Frank Boone and Mary Martina Bowling. He had one sister and ten brothers. In 1929, the Boone family moved to Louisville, Kentucky, to get away from the one-room schoolhouse and the hardships of farming during the Great Depression. In Louisville, James attended Holy Family elementary school and St. Xavier high school. He graduated from St. Xavier in 1944. In 1947, he attended the University of Louisville and St. Louis University “to try out college life.” He later earned a B.A., in 1953, and an M.A., in 1968, both from the Catholic University in Washington, D.C. In the course of



**Brother Kirby Boone, C.F.X., prepares music for a Com-
munion service in St. Michael’s Church, in McGrath,
Alaska. *Photo by Sr. Marilyn Marx, S.N.J.M.***

We want to thank in a special way those of you who have included the Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska (our legal title) in your bequests and wills, and those of you who, at the time of the deaths of dear ones, have suggested that, in their memory, contributions be made to the Missions of Northern Alaska or to the Alaskan Shepherd Endowment Fund. For more information, please contact Tom Buzek, Business Administrator: 907-374-9528.

Alaskan Shepherd CREDIT CARD Donations!

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If you would prefer to make this donation by phone, please call the Alaskan Shepherd office at 907-374-9532.

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Alaskan Shepherd DIRECT DEPOSIT Donations!

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After providing us with the above information, please sign below, as your authorization to our bank to take donations from your account, in the amount of \$ _____

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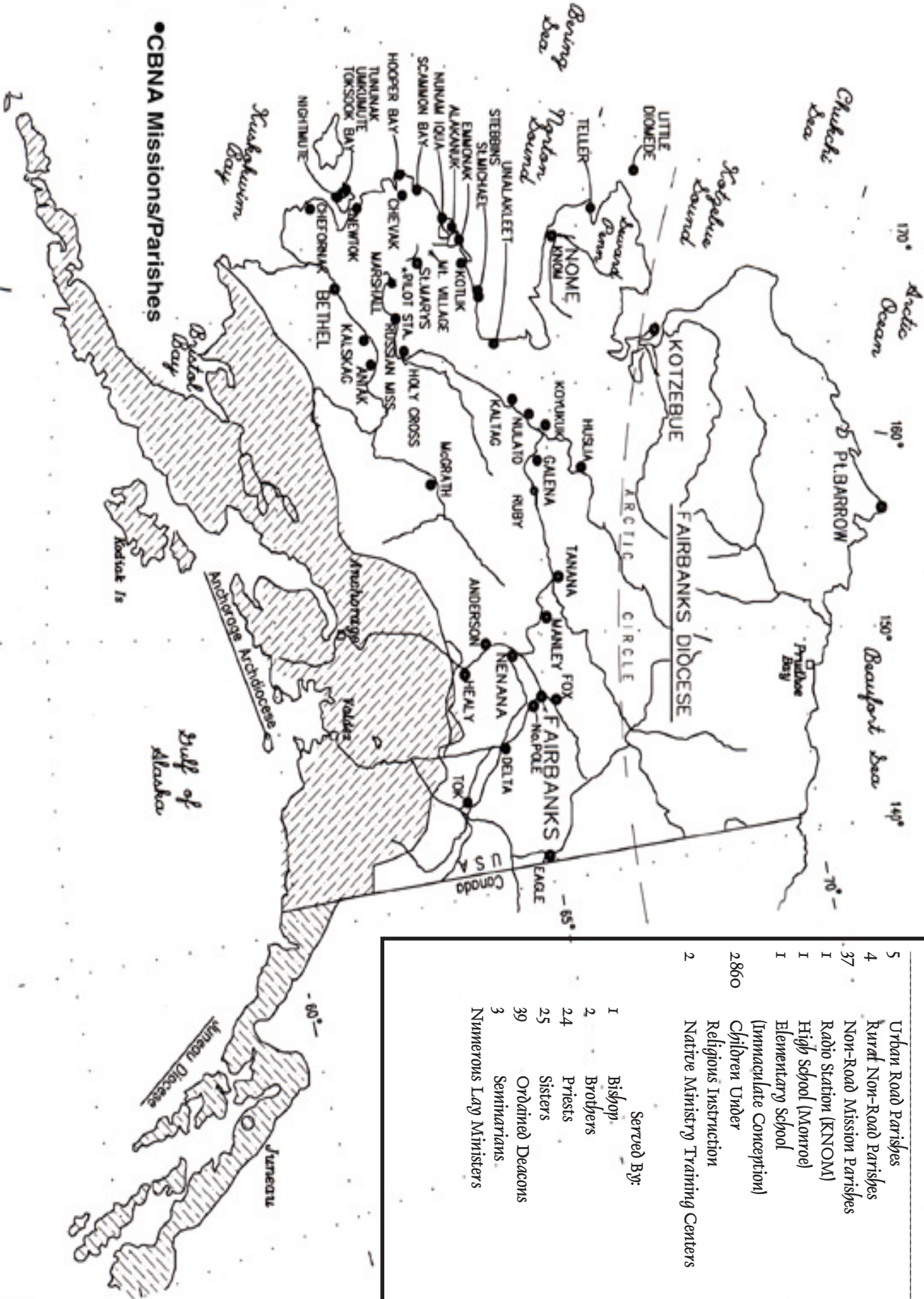
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**CATHOLIC BISHOP OF NORTHERN ALASKA
MISSIONARY DIOCESE OF FAIRBANKS**
Northern 2/3 of Alaska.



●CBNA Missions/Parishes

5	Urban Road Parishes	
4	Rural Non-Road Parishes	
37	Non-Road Mission Parishes	
1	Radio Station (KNOM)	
1	High School (Monroe)	
1	Elementary School	
	(Immaculate Conception)	
2860	Children Under	
	Religious Instruction	
2	Native Ministry Training Centers	
Served By:		
1	Bishop	
2	Brothers	
24	Priests	
25	Sisters	
39	Ordained Deacons	
3	Seminarians	
	Numerous Lay Ministers	



Brother Kirby Boone, C.F.X., poses with Sr. Marita Soucy, C.S.J., in McGrath, Alaska.

Photo by Sr. Marilyn Marx, S.N.J.M.

time, he also became a certified counselor and school administrator.

In 1945, James was drafted into the U.S. Army Air Force. After completing his basic training at Sheppard Field, Texas, he was assigned to radio mechanic school at Scott Field, Illinois. At the end of the six-month course at Scott, he was appointed a teacher there. In December 1946, he was honorably discharged. His acceptance of the teaching appointment had “guaranteed” him an early discharge.

James entered the Xaverian Brothers on February 15, 1948. After completing his six-month postulancy at Fort Monroe, Virginia, he took the Religious name of Kirby, and began his two-year noviceship. The second year of his noviceship he made at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He took his temporary vows on August 15, 1950, and his final vows three years later.

From 1953-60, Brother Kirby taught in Bardstown, Kentucky. He then taught at Flaget High School in Louisville, from 1960-74, serving as principal during his last six years. For the years 1974-76, he was at St. Francis Indian School, Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota.

During the following ten years, he was at Mount St. Joseph High School in Baltimore, Maryland, serving as principal from 1980-86. He next spent the years 1986-88 at Holy Family High School in Ensley, Alabama. He was back again at the Rosebud Reservation as Director of Religious Education, 1988-90.

In the summer of 1990, Brother Kirby went north, to Alaska. By that time he had a great variety of work experiences. During his pre-Xaverian years he had worked in cornfields, and had been a paperboy, a service station attendant, a cafeteria busboy and cook, a grocery clerk, and a surveyor’s helper. In the military, he was a radio mechanic and a teacher. As a Xaverian Brother, he had served as a high school teacher, a principal, an athletic director, a coach of track, football, and swimming, and a summer camp counselor.

“In the summer of 1990, on the Yukon River banks and vicinity, a dream and a wish came true,” wrote Brother Kirby as the third millennium began. It was in July 1990 that, as Pastoral Minister in Ruby, he began his long years of service to the Diocese of Fairbanks. From the outset, he found Ruby “a beautiful location to wonder, wander, and serve.” During his first year there, he served full-time, making himself available to the people “around the clock.” The following two years, he served part-time in Ruby and part-time in Galena.

Brother Kirby relayed this story about his arrival in Alaska, “When I arrived in Alaska, Father Renner handed me a camera with the instructions, ‘Go take some pictures!’ Therefore, camera in hand, I arrived in Ruby



Bishop Michael J. Kaniecki, S.J., Hollie Koyukuk, and Brother Kirby Boone, C.F.X. *--Alaskan Shepherd Archives*

Again, we who serve here in the Far North want to express to you, our kind benefactors, our very sincere thanks for all the generous help you have been giving us in our need. It is you who, through your kind donations and prayers, keep us on the trail, and on the wing, and so enable us to bring the Mass and the sacraments and the ministries of the Church to our flocks in towns and villages scattered far and wide throughout this vast 409,849-square-mile missionary diocese.

Where we go, you go; what we do, you do. God bless us everyone!



Established in 1929, the Catholic Church in Kotzebue, Alaska, is dedicated to St. Francis Xavier, inspiration of the Xaverian Brothers.

and was asked to go ice fishing with a Native family. The fishing hole was located where the Yukon meets the Melotzi River on a mile wide stretch. I arrived at the destination but was informed that the children had misbehaved at school and that they were not going to be able to fish that day. The mother offered to take me back across the river on her 'Snow Go' (snow machine), which trailed a basket sled behind it. I climbed on a little unsteady, as I carried my 'assigned' camera in one hand and was trying to keep my scarf in place with the other. Soon we were off across the icy river, which was well covered with fresh new snow. The driver hit a bump that sent me soaring through the air. I landed unharmed, after sliding a distance on the river ice and scooping up a mouth full of snow. I had picked myself up and had made a little progress across the river before it was discovered that I was missing from my backseat perch. When the driver returned to the scene, she ordered me to 'get in the basket' attached to the Sno Go. I remember that story well, for it was the day I became 'a basket case!'

A number of years after Brother Kirby began his Ruby ministry, he was able to write: *"My position in Ruby as pastoral minister has brought with it more than*

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one occasion of major joy and consolation. Let me recount one such. It has to do with an old Ruby sourdough, who made his Profession of Faith and his first Holy Communion on Christmas Day, 1993. I was privileged to play a part in his finding the Faith and its blessings in so formal a manner. But, of course, it was a kindly Providence that first set him on the path that eventually brought him so much peace of heart and happiness in his old age." The "old Ruby sourdough," in his mid-80s at the time, was Albert Yrjana.

Beginning in 1993, while still making his headquarters in Ruby, Brother Kirby began to serve also as "Coordinator of Ministries for 13 Villages." They were: Galena, Huslia, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Koyukuk, Kotzebue, McGrath, Nome, Nulato, Ruby, St. Michael, Stebbins, and Tanana. In 1996, while retaining his role of coordinator, he was assigned to Tanana, to serve there as Pastoral Minister. As coordinator, he visited each village twice a year for several days, mostly to observe and listen on behalf of Michael J. Kaniecki, S.J., Bishop of Fairbanks at the time. Brother Kirby reported his observations and findings back to the bishop. As coordinator, he also organized regional meetings every fall and spring for parish ministers and people from the 13 villages.

In 1999, Brother Kirby, by then freed of his role of coordinator, began to serve the Tanana parish, now as Pastoral Minister, now as Pastoral Administrator. At the same time, on six-week rotations, he served also as Pastoral Administrator of the McGrath parish.

Throughout his years of ministry in the villages of northern Alaska, one of Brother Kirby's chief "operating objectives" was, in his words, "to empower the people, to get them to realize that they are a priestly people, as St. Peter proclaimed." He found them to be talented, graced, and quite capable and worthy to be Eucharist Ministers and presiders at liturgies when no priest was present.

Brother Kirby Boone, C.F.X., arrived in Alaska in his 64th year. Now in his 80th year, he is looking forward to returning home to Kentucky, to his beginnings. He says of his time in Alaska, ***"It is the people I will miss. I will remember their graciousness and their willingness to serve."***

--Patty Walter

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