

# DAILY NEW

## EDITORIAL

### Bless this father

On Sunday, Msgr. John Powis celebrated his last Mass at St. Barbara's Church in Bushwick after almost 45 years of service in various Brooklyn parishes. Nagging health problems have forced him from the pulpit, but he will not go gentle into that good retirement. He couldn't. It's not his nature, which is that of a crusader.

Powis, though, is not a fire-and-brimstone spiritual leader. Rather, he is a compassionate shepherd whose flock, while poor and disenfranchised, is his treasure. To them he has ministered, providing more valuable service to New York than most of the high and mighty.

Powis is Brooklyn through and through. He was born and reared in East New York, worked as a vendor in fabled Ebbets Field and spent most of his pastoral career in communities threatened, at some point, by urban decay. But even in the darkest days, Powis kept the faith with the future of the neighborhoods and their people. While other churches emptied, and remain empty, St. Barbara's is filled to standing-room each Sunday.

In organizations such as East Brooklyn Congregations and the Brownsville school board, Powis was in the vanguard of fights for education and housing. His dedication to social justice has been unflagging. And will continue to be. Powis promises to be in Bushwick at least weekly, showing what it means to love one's neighbor.