

# Cambridge priest reveals he has AIDS

By Jordana Hart  
GLOBE STAFF

CAMBRIDGE — Rev. William Cummings is known for his work with children and immigrants in St. John the Evangelist parish, whose imposing brick church and rectory tower over Massachusetts Avenue in North Cambridge.

But the pastor, known as “Broadway Bill” for his brilliant singing voice and quick wit as one of the eight Singing Priests, was missing from the parish’s centennial celebrations earlier this month.

Following a never fully-explained ab-

## Many in parish send letters of support

sence that began in March, Father Cummings told his flock he was diagnosed in 1985 as HIV positive through a letter Bishop John Boles read from the altar April 25.

Father Cummings, 52, St. John’s pastor since 1990, said he is now ill with symptoms of AIDS and probably would not be able to return to his activities.

“He said he hoped we’d understand,” said Mary Ryan, 70, a lifelong parishioner. The daily churchgoer said she was among

those who heard the letter being read.

“At least with my group of women, we are behind him all the way,” she said yesterday. “I mean, who are we to judge? I am sure some people were shocked and others can’t accept what is going on in the world. They think priests should be above everyone else.”

In his letter, Father Cummings did not say how he contracted the AIDS virus. He could not be reached for comment last night.

During the May 8 centennial Mass, according to The Pilot archdiocesan newspaper, Cardinal Bernard Law paid tribute to

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