Fleeky works, plays, prays during year-long sabbatical

Rev. Michael J. Fleeky S.J., was out of the week back in his home in western North Carolina. He stayed for two months alone in a camp that was closed for the season. He stayed in a little cabin with a wood-burning stove close to a lake. While alone in the woods, Fleeky said that he spent a lot of time appreciating nature. “I had a lot of time for reflection, isolation, quiet and prayer,” he said.

Fleeky said the center was a retreat on research and biology station. The students were art or photography students from New York, Arkansas, Pennsylvania and Miami. Fleeky said the focus of “spirited spaces” was displayed at Creighton University.

Fleeky said the students were art or photography students from New York, Arkansas, Pennsylvania and Miami. He continued on his own photography project, a section of the “spirited spaces” which was displayed at Creighton University.

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After traveling through upstate New York and Maine, he said his next destination was the Anasazi Ruins in New Mexico. This also was part of his photography project, “spirited spaces.”

After New Mexico, Fleeky said he went back to North Carolina for a week-and-a-half fall landscape retreat. The retreat had a focus on environmental concerns. Enroute home to Creighton, he attended a photography symposium in Rochester, New York, which concentrated on photojournalism and fine art photography from the 1960s. Activities were located in the George Eastman House, which is the headquarters for the International Museum of Photography.

Fleeky said he returned to Creighton on Thanksgiving Day 1990. Since then he has been spending time in his darkroom printing pictures. Fleeky said he sent some of his work to a show at Boston College for an exhibit featuring Jesuits in the Arts.

Fleeky said he was having a little trouble re-entering the routine at Creighton because it is such a different pace from his sabbatical sojourn.

In the Adirondacks, he said he would wake up, throw a few logs in the burner, make some coffee, read a paper, and then go to the post office to pick up his mail. “I enjoyed the simple kind of life, and living on campus is such a different kind of life; it’s an institution,” Fleeky said.

He said that one reason he may be having difficulty getting back into the routine at Creighton is because he has not been teaching, which has been his normal schedule for the last ten years. He said while traveling he didn’t miss teaching, although he did miss his weekly meeting with the 10 o’clock Mass group at Kiewit dorm.

Fleeky said that in a couple of weeks he will be traveling to Belize in Central America with a former student to photograph ancient Mayan ruins. He will return to teaching next fall. Fleeky said he hopes to incorporate into his classes some of the things he learned during his sabbatical travels.