

Baltimore parishes come together at St. Matthew for feast day

St. Matthew, Northwood, found an inventive solution to its pastor's multiple duties. On Sept. 19, when the parish celebrated the feast day of its patron, its celebration simply included Church of the Blessed Sacrament, the other parish that is ministered by Father Joseph L. Muth Jr.

"In June, on Blessed Sacrament's feast day, Corpus Christi, a lot of people from St. Matthew went down there," Father Muth said. "For St. Matthew feast day, we decided to close Blessed Sacrament for the day and invite the entire parish here."

The result was a joyous Mass at the church on Loch Raven Boulevard, albeit with some adjustments, starting with the time, 10 a.m.

"Blessed Sacrament usually has Mass at 10:30, St. Matthew at 11," Father Muth said at the start of his homily. "If stragglers arrive, make them welcome."

Open arms were not a concern during a liturgy that included Father Patrick Besel, the director of the William Cardinal Keeler House of Discernment, which is housed at St. Matthew; Paulist Father John Hurley, the executive director of the Archdiocese of Baltimore's Department of Evangelization and retired Father Joseph B. Hughes.

In addition to Deacon Steven Rubio of St. Matthew, Deacon Paul D. Shelton of Blessed Sacrament joined the celebration.

"We've got about 100 people here from Blessed Sacrament," Deacon Shelton said. "Father Joe (Muth) comes to us, it's right that we have gone to him. That's not hard to do. You see how he interacts with people."

A combined choir produced strong emotion, as St. Matthew's Ed Sommerfeldt returned from an illness and Priscilla Mitchell offered a stirring solo. St. Matthew's multi-national flavor was represented by the Wasifiri Voices, who sang in Swahili during the preparation of the altar.

On Catechetical Sunday, Father Muth recognized eucharistic ministers, teachers, parents and anyone else in the packed church.

“How are we going to reach out to families who never thought that they would be without food, or money to pay rent?” he challenged during his homily. “Our God is a transforming God. ... We’ve all got something to share. God can outdo us in generosity. If we take one step, God will take two.”