

Capuchin Franciscans honor Blessed Solanus Casey in Baltimore

Eight days after Father Solanus Casey was beatified in Detroit, Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori celebrated a Mass honoring the Capuchin Franciscan Friar at St. Ambrose in Park Heights Nov. 26.

Capuchin Franciscan Father Paul Zaborowski is pastor of St. Ambrose, which is home to a Capuchin friary. He said that he and his brothers put themselves “in the midst of the most needy,” aligning with their founder, St. Francis.

The Capuchins who serve in Maryland are of the Province of St. Augustine, which serves Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, the District of Columbia and Maryland, with missions in Puerto Rico, Papua New Guinea and Cuba.

The history of the province dates back to three Capuchin Friars who came to Pittsburgh in 1873, fleeing persecution in Germany. Within three years, they began to minister in Cumberland, where they maintain a strong presence serving Our Lady of the Mountains Parish.

While serving those in need is a top priority to the Capuchin Franciscans, their primary charism is fraternity and coming together as a community.

The four friars residing at St. Ambrose minister throughout Baltimore in many different ways - including health care, parish ministry and archdiocesan work - but, according to Father Zaborowski, they all come back together, similar to a family, at the end of the day.

“(Our goal is) to show that people who are not connected in any (other) way can be

connected through faith,” Father Zaborowski said.

On the feast of Christ the King, the Mass at St. Ambrose attracted other Capuchin Friars, several friars in formation at the Capuchin College in Washington, D.C., and religious women, all to honor Father Casey.

Born in Wisconsin in 1870, he entered the Capuchin Friars in Detroit in the 1890s. Due to a language barrier - most Capuchin classes were taught in German - Father Casey struggled with his studies. When he was finally ordained, he was not allowed to preach or hear confessions.

He was assigned to St. Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit as a doorman, receiving visitors. He would talk with the visitors, and pray for them.

“What he did was listen,” said Father Zaborowski, what he described as a lost art today, despite modern communication technologies. “There’s so much about him that today we need to understand and cherish.”

Multiple healings and miracles are attributed to the prayer of Father Casey, and to his intercession after his death in 1957.

“He was deeply in love with Jesus, and as a result, he was kind to every person that he met,” Archbishop Lori said. “Every person that walked through the doors of that monastery mattered to Father Solanus. ...

“He was poor in spirit, meek and mild, clean of heart, a man who hungered for holiness and a priest who knew suffering in his own life. And so, he loved like Jesus loved. And in God’s grace, Father Solanus extended the healing touch of Jesus Christ to everyone that he met.”

Before the Mass ended, a dramatization of Father Casey’s life was performed by

Gerald Brown, 17, who researched and wrote the piece. A parishioner of St. Ambrose, Brown is a student at George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology in Towson, where he studies carpentry.

In his portrayal, Brown summed up Father Casey's quiet, yet powerful, life: "Not everyone, not everything, was meant to be big."

To learn more about Father Solanus Casey, listen to the Catholic Baltimore radio show [here](#).

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