

Deacon Driesen known as man of deep prayer, energetic service

By Maria Wiering

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Deacon Simon Driesen, a retired permanent deacon who served at St. Mary of the Assumption in Pylesville, died March 4. He was 84.

Friends described Deacon Driesen as a deeply spiritual man with a heart for the homebound, sick, and aged, who regularly wore red to remind himself and others of the Holy Spirit's presence.

Deacon Driesen was ordained in 1992 and assigned to serve his parish, St. Mary. In 1996, he was also assigned to serve the Archdiocese for U.S. Military Services at the U.S. Army Garrison, Aberdeen Proving Ground. The deacon retired in 2004, but he continued to serve his community until illness prevented it.

"He prayed with the fervor and emotion that was beyond the norm, but it was so heartfelt that people couldn't help but identify with what he was praying for," said Deacon Donald Murray, who plans to preach at Deacon Driesen's funeral Mass.

Father Henry Kunkel, St. Mary's pastor, said that Deacon Driesen enjoyed a range of ministries, from preaching and baptizing to visiting the sick. He was involved with his parish's respect life committee, an ecumenical group of Pylesville-area pastors, and ministry at the Harford County Detention Center in Bel Air.

"He loved his ministry, and he loved the Lord," said Father Kunkel, who has served the 900-family parish with Deacon Driesen since 1993.

Called "Si" by those who knew him, Deacon Driesen was also a devoted husband to his wife, Theresa, and a good father to his children, said Deacon Michael McCoy, who was ordained with Deacon Driesen.

Deacon Driesen lived in Darlington and retired from the Navy before joining the diaconate.

A viewing will be held at Evans Funeral Home in Forest Hill on March 8, from 6 to 9 p.m., and March 9, from 3 to 5 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. A Christian wake service will be held March 9 at 8 p.m. On March 10, a viewing will be held at St. Mary from 10 to 11 a.m., followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 11 a.m. St. Mary is located at 1021 St. Mary's Road, Pylesville.