

Deacon Robert J. Hacker remembered for putting faith first

By Erik Zygmunt

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Deacon Robert J. Hacker, who was for many years assigned to pastoral care at now-closed Church Hospital in Baltimore's Washington Hill neighborhood, was remembered as a man completely dedicated to God and his family.

Deacon Hacker died April 19 at age 81. A funeral Mass was to be offered April 22 at Our Lady, Queen of Peace, in Middle River.

As a child, Deacon Hacker attended Mass at St. Wenceslaus in Baltimore - where he would meet his wife - and studied at the now-closed St. Wenceslaus School. As a teenager, he attended Patterson High School.

According to Deacon Hacker's wife, Patricia Hacker of Middle River, he was a Baltimore City police officer from 1956-1971, then a warehouse manager, and finally a security officer for Mercy Medical Center.

Deacon Hacker is survived by his wife, six children, 14 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

"He sure raised his children right, that's for sure," said Patricia Hacker. "He tried to do the best he could and went to work every day."

Hacker noted that her husband exhibited a lifelong commitment to his faith. He had served as an altar server from boyhood until 1954, when the couple married.

Married men were barred from serving at the altar, but Deacon Hacker returned to ministry in the 1970s as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion, remembered his wife.

He was ordained a permanent deacon in 1989.

“He was a very faithful person who cared about his family a lot,” remembered Monsignor Arthur Bastress, who directed the formation of permanent deacons when Deacon Hacker was ordained.

“There was a calm and a peace about him, but he knew what was on his mind,” the monsignor added.

Monsignor Bastress, who is now pastor of the Shrine of St. Alphonsus in Baltimore, recalled that then-Archbishop William D. Borders “was concerned about the deacons being pastoral, or caring about people.”

“(Deacon Hacker) filled that role very well,” he said.

Patricia Hacker summarized her husband’s life:

“As his son said in the eulogy, he loved God, and he loved his family,” she said, “in that order.”

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