

Faithful servants

There is always room for more servants in the Lord's vineyard. Whether as clergy, religious or laity, the Church relies on people of faith to share their gifts with others for the glory of God and His Church.

That is especially true of late, as our Archdiocese says 'good-bye' to a handful of longtime servants whose contributions to our local Church have been so great, I would be remiss in failing to appropriately acknowledge them.

This past weekend, Monsignor Dennis Tinder, Pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Towson, announced his retirement from active priestly ministry. Sadly, Monsignor Tinder, who has led the people of Immaculate Conception Parish for the past decade, has been suffering from a debilitating medical condition that has affected him for some time and which no longer allows him to carry the daily burdens of shepherding one of our largest parishes.

Monsignor's gifts and talents have been ably displayed in his many assignments, which include serving as pastor at St. Joseph's in Fullerton, St. Jane's in Riviera Beach, and Immaculate, and as Director of Vocations and Chair of the Priests' Advisory Committee for the Heritage of Hope capital campaign.

His leadership will be greatly missed and his absence from the ranks of our active pastors will leave a noticeable void - as will that of his colleague, Monsignor Robert Armstrong, who recently announced he will retire at year's end after serving as Rector of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen for the past quarter century.

A priest of the Archdiocese since 1962, Monsignor Armstrong has held many important positions, including serving as Associate Director and Director of the Archdiocesan Office of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine for seven years and as pastor at St. Michael's in Overlea for six years prior to being named Rector of the "new" Cathedral in 1984.

Under Monsignor Armstrong's leadership, the Cathedral has established itself as a valued institution in our Church and our community, and the Cathedral Parish has developed into a dynamic community of faith with Monsignor Armstrong at the helm.

There was no greater example of this than the recent celebration of the Cathedral's 50th anniversary.

The priestly ministry of both Monsignor Tinder and Monsignor Armstrong were honored by Pope John Paul II when he appointed them Prelates of Honor with the title of Monsignor in the 1990s.

We also extend our gratitude and bid farewell to three long-serving lay leaders.

Dr. Ronald J. Valenti, Executive Director of the Department of Catholic Education Ministries and Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese, announced last week he will be retiring June 30 after nearly 20 years of serving the educational needs of our students. Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore have been blessed to have the committed leadership of Dr. Valenti, who is highly respected among his colleagues and peers locally and beyond.

Dr. Valenti's longtime Associate Superintendent of Schools, Ms. Carol Goldbeck, departed in September after serving in Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Baltimore for more than three decades, including as principal of the Institute of Notre Dame and The John Carroll School. That experience as a school administrator served Carol well in her role as Associate Superintendent, and rightly earned her the respect of those serving on the front lines in our schools.

Another longtime servant recently leaving for retirement is Mr. Harold "Hal" Smith, formerly the Executive Director of Catholic Charities here in Baltimore. Hal served in that capacity for over 30 years, building our Catholic Charities into a model for other agencies in Maryland and across the country. Hal's extraordinary vision and outstanding leadership abilities led to the expansion and growth of Charities' operations - the centerpiece of which is the Our Daily Bread Employment Center. Following Hal's example, the parishes and people of the Archdiocese of Baltimore believe and live out Charities' motto of "Cherishing the Divine Within" through their support of the countless good works of Catholic Charities' many programs.

Our Archdiocese has been fortunate and blessed by the generous service of these good and faithful servants of God, and we pray that they will continue to serve God as they enter the next phase of their lives. We also pray that others will hear and

answer God's call to serve Him -whether in our parishes, schools or charitable outreach centers - for they too will know the satisfaction of serving in the Vineyard of the Lord.