

Father Fullen dies at 70

Father John “Jack” N. Fullen, a former Marine who answered the call to priestly ministry following the death of his wife, died May 7 after complications from heart surgery last fall. The 70-year-old father of three had retired from active ministry for health reasons in 2000 – five years after his ordination to the priesthood.

A funeral Mass was to be offered May 12 at Holy Trinity in Gainesville, Va.

Father Fullen was a former associate pastor of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Homeland and St. Mary in Hagerstown.

In a 1995 interview with The Catholic Review, Father Fullen said he turned to God after his wife, Sandra, died in 1986, asking the question, “Lord, what do you want to do with the rest of my life?”

As he continued to raise his teenage children while volunteering at Blessed Mother Teresa’s AIDS hospice in Washington, he said he felt a persistent call to the priesthood. Once his children were grown, he applied to become a priest for the Archdiocese of Baltimore and studied at Blessed John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Mass.

Father Fullen described his ordination as “a blossoming from the love of my marriage.”

Before becoming a priest, Father Fullen served three years in the Marines as a communications officer and later worked in marketing for the Harris Corporation for more than 20 years. He and his wife served on the Worldwide Marriage Encounter board of directors for two years.

Father Fullen was the co-founder and a missionary priest for the Missionaries of Our Lady of Divine Mercy, House of Mercy, in Manassas and served in the same capacity in Cote d’Ivoire, Ivory Coast.

Following his retirement, the priest lived with his children in Fairfax and provided sacramental assistance at several Virginia parishes.