

Father Harris eager to return to city, Govans

Father Raymond L. Harris is eager to return to his hometown, a move made possible by his assignment as pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption in Govans.

He will assume that post Feb. 1. In the interim, Father Harris will complete his licentiate in Canon Law at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where he has been studying since the fall semester of 2007.

Other than those studies and the four years he spent doing his undergraduate work at Princeton University in New Jersey, Father Harris, 42, who was raised in St. Joseph's Passionist Monastery Parish in Irvington, has spent his entire life in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

"I've had a variety of different experiences, having served in all three vicariates under our previous vicariate system," Father Harris said. "I always felt that God was calling me to the diocesan priesthood, and it's good to come back to Baltimore (City) after being away for nine years."

Father Harris served as an associate pastor, first in Gardenville at St. Anthony of Padua and Most Precious Blood, then at Immaculate Conception in Towson, before moving in 2000 to Emmitsburg, where he served in a number of positions at Mount St. Mary's University and Mount St. Mary's Seminary.

Father Harris is familiar with his new parish, which he frequented in the early 1990s, when he studied at St. Mary's Seminary and University and walked from Roland Park to Govans on Saturday mornings, for confession before noon Mass.

"St. Mary has a great history, there's a lot of loyalty in the parish," Father Harris said. "I've been in communication with the pastoral staff and lay leadership. It has a strong alliance with GEDCO (the Govans Ecumenical Development Corporation), and I look forward to reaching out to the surrounding community."