

Father Janaites dies at 79

Father Stanley J. Janaites, a longtime priest who inspired others to become more involved in church ministry, died Aug. 5 at St. Joseph Medical Center in Towson. He was 79. Funeral arrangements were still pending as The Catholic Review went to press.

Born in New Britain, Conn., Father Janaites was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore on May 28, 1955.

“He was totally available to the people,” remembered Father Joseph Bochenek, pastor of St. Brigid in Canton.

Father Bochenek was a teenager who volunteered in the rectory at St. Patrick in Fells Point when Father Janaites was a young associate pastor there in the mid 1960s.

“He would get a night call and drop everything and just go,” said Father Bochenek. “That was the one thing that inspired me most to become a priest.”

Father Bochenek recalled with a laugh that his mentor could be a “very challenging man.”

“He told it like it was,” said Father Bochenek. “During the Cuban missile crisis, he would pound on the podium and shout, ‘It’s a crying shame that it takes a war to bring people to church!’ ”

The priest recalled that girls knew they couldn’t wear shorts when they were within walking distance of St. Patrick because Father Janaites would make them go home and change clothes.

Bette Brocato, pastoral associate and director of religious education at St. Brigid, knew Father Janaites from his years as associate pastor of Church of the Ascension in Halethorpe in the 1970s. When Father Janaites made an appeal for more people to get involved in religious education, Ms. Brocato stepped forward and has spent 35 years in the field.

“Father J has been like a big teddy bear,” she said. “Everyone loved him. He was a big hugger. You met him once and he was a friend for life.”

Ms. Brocato said she could discuss anything with the priest and count on him to listen.

“You could be just so profoundly open with him,” she said.

Ms. Brocato remembered her friend as an accomplished pianist and poet. He was a big fan of “The Lawrence Welk Show,” according to Father Bochenek, and he composed special poems for priests and bishops - often passing out prayers cards and copies of his poetry to friends.

“He wrote astounding, deep and sensible poems,” said Ms. Brocato.

Deacon Paul Mann, archdiocesan coordinator for planning and council services, said Father Janaites was highly regarded throughout East Baltimore for starting a large and active CYO while at St. Patrick.

“He was one of the first CYO moderators to have live bands and local deejays doing record hops,” said Deacon Mann.

In addition to St. Patrick and Ascension, Father Janaites served as an associate pastor of St. Frances de Chantal, Pasadena; Sacred Heart of Mary, Graceland Park; and St. Dominic, Baltimore. Much of his ministry was devoted to hospital chaplaincy, serving at Mount Wilson State Hospital in Reisterstown and Springfield State Hospital in Sykesville.