Fishing a lifelong passion for Parkville priest

Growing up on the Eastern Shore, Monsignor James P. Farmer, pastor of St. Ursula in Parkville, learned how to fish at age 2 under the watchful eye of family members. Since then fishing and crabbing have been hobbies he thoroughly enjoys, especially when in the company of others.

“Fishing forms great friendships and great memories,” said Monsignor Farmer. “Jesus chose fishermen to be his disciples.”

Maryland is a great place for fishing because of the ocean, the bay, lakes and rivers, said Monsignor Farmer, who added that Marylanders are blessed to have both fresh and salt water to fish in.

“When we fish we connect with nature and see the beauty of creation. The splendor of creation reflects the splendor of the Creator,” said the seasoned fisherman. “Fishing teaches us patience and a lot about faith.”

Monsignor Farmer said there are many connections between fishing and faith, and that “there is a leap of faith every time you make a cast.” Fishing and crabbing are good for children because they help them learn patience and good habits for life, he said.

“If a person doesn’t have a healthy form of recreation they will fall into unhealthy recreation,” said Monsignor Farmer, who helped establish a fishing group at the last three parishes he served.

The group will go to Mass first thing in the morning before heading off for a day of
fishing. Monsignor Farmer said he tries to go fishing at least once a week if his schedule permits. He tends to go fishing with his friends, family and fellow priests of the archdiocese. When Bishop Victor Galeone, bishop of St. Augustine, Fla., served in the archdiocese, he and Monsignor Farmer would go fishing together nearly every Wednesday for almost 20 years.

“You have to enjoy people to be a great fisherman,” said Monsignor Farmer with a smile. “One of my greatest joys is taking someone fishing and watching them catch a great big fish.”