

Garrett County parishioners maintain strong faith, serve others



Faces of Faith



McHENRY – Jean and Bill Schrider have maintained their love throughout their 59 years of marriage – both to each other, and to God.

GET TO KNOW

Jean and Bill Schrider

What is your home parish?

St. Peter the Apostle, Oakland

Who had the most influence on the development of your faith?

Jean: "Growing up, I was baptized Catholic, went to Catholic grade school, Catholic high school. The nuns and the priests were very influential."

Bill: "Since I was in the third grade I was an altar boy. I did that through high school. It was just a part of growing up."

Who is your favorite saint and why?

Jean: "My favorite saint is St. Maria Goretti because I learned about her when I was about the age she was sexually attacked and murdered. I guess that made an impression on me."

Bill: "Ss. Peter and Paul who are the parish (patrons). ... I think they were so instrumental in forming the Catholic faith."

What makes you proud to be Catholic?

Jean: "I've looked at other religions and other than the Jewish religion – I've always said if I wasn't Catholic I'd want to be Jewish. I think that the Catholic religion and the Jewish religion are founded, are grown, they had an honest beginning. ... I find that they're true, and nothing is going to break them up. ... No matter where you go in this world, the Catholic services will all be the same."

Bill: "I've seen nothing in any other faith that would compare to anything we've got."

The Schriders, who reside near Deep Creek Lake, are parishioners of the Archdiocese of Baltimore's westernmost parish, St. Peter the Apostle in Oakland, and attend Mass at the its St. Peter at the Lake Center in McHenry.

Jean and Bill have been frequenting the region, and its Catholic community, since 1979, when they first bought a home. They have lived there year-round since 1999.

Their story began in Washington, D.C., where they both attended the parish school at St. Gabriel. Bill was an altar server since third grade, and Jean said she would always go to the Mass he was serving.

Through nearly six decades of marriage, and four children, the Schriders never lost touch with their faith.

"I guess we were united in God and we just carried him, and all of the beliefs, and all of the doctrines, through the rest of our lives," Jean said. "We just never lost the trust and faith in God."

From the beginning of their marriage, the couple prayed a daily rosary. As their children grew and their activities created a packed schedule, that slipped, but they still made family prayer a priority.

Now, in their 80s, the Schriders have made it a priority to pray the rosary every day. They each have a rosary by their chairs, and in their cars. Every time they have a long enough car ride, they make sure to say the devotion.

Jean and Bill have made service a priority. Jean is on the parish council, and Bill was its secretary for nine years. The couple also volunteers as counters of the parish's collection.

The Schriders also have served together for about nine years as volunteers for the Hospice of Garrett County.

"I feel like we're helping them find their way back to God in heaven," Jean said. "If they want to pray we'll pray with them."

Jean and Bill, who both share patients and have their own, will read anything to their

patients, including religious materials.

“We have no problem discussing religion,” Jean said.

As volunteers, not medical professionals, they can assist the patient to the bathroom or with a meal, but not with anything medical.

“Whatever needs to be done, other than administering medical situations,” Jean said.

They visit some patients in their homes, and others in the nursing home.

The Schriders first took note of hospice ministry when Jean’s brother was in hospice care out of state. The family told the couple how helpful the people were, and it sparked their interest. They saw an advertisement in the newspaper for a training class for new hospice volunteers, and they decided to join.

“Sometimes we’ve only had them one day, or a couple of years,” Jean said. “We always go to the funeral home to pay our respects.”

No matter how long they have known the patients, they always develop a relationship.

“We’ve lost some really great people,” Bill said.

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