

Longtime St. Veronica deacon dies

By Catholic Review Staff

A funeral Mass for longtime St. Veronica Deacon Willard E. Pinkney will be offered April 10 at the Cherry Hill parish. Deacon Pinkney died March 30. He was 97 and had been a deacon for 37 years.

Deacon Pinkney served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He was ordained to the permanent diaconate in 1974 and served at St. Veronica for 30 years, retiring in 1994. He continued to serve after he retired, as he was able.

Missionaries of St. Paul of Nigeria Father Augustine Etemma Inwang, the pastor of St. Veronica from 2002 to 2010, said Deacon Pinkney continued to serve the church for nearly a decade after he retired.

Father Inwang, now pastor of Transfiguration Catholic Community, Baltimore, said he had to force Deacon Pinkney to stop serving the parish around 2005 because of his health.

"What he used to tell me was that he had a vow to God to serve him as a deacon," Father Inwang said, "and me taking that away from him - he wasn't very happy."

"He wasn't happy that I kept him from actively serving because he wasn't strong enough," Father Inwang said. "He loved being a deacon."

"He was a good man committed to his work," Father Inwang said, "very committed to the diaconate."

When Deacon Pinkney heard a hymn that he liked, "he would get up and dance," Father Inwang said.

Deacon Pinkney, whose wife died in 1997, is survived by six children and

grandchildren.