

Monsignor Alfred E. Smith, former pastor, dies at 85

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Monsignor Alfred E. Smith, a priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore for 60 years, was remembered for his humility and holiness.

“He loved being a priest,” said Monsignor James P. Farmer, pastor of St. Thomas More in Baltimore and a longtime friend of Monsignor Smith, who died Dec. 5 at 85.

A funeral Mass for Monsignor Smith was to be offered Dec. 10 at Stella Maris in Timonium.

Born in Baltimore as one of seven children of a devout Catholic family, he was baptized and confirmed at the former St. Martin Church in Baltimore, where he also attended the parish school.

Monsignor Smith studied at the former St. Charles College High School and St. Charles College, both in Catonsville, beginning his preparations for the priesthood. He studied theology and philosophy at Le Grand Séminaire de Saint-Brieuc in France, earning a bachelor’s degree in sacred theology.

He was ordained to the priesthood for the Baltimore Archdiocese in June 1956, in France.

Monsignor Smith was assigned as associate pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Baynesville, where he remained until 1963, when he was transferred to St. John the Evangelist Parish in Frederick. The following year, he became chaplain of Fort Detrick, also in Frederick.

Monsignor Smith became associate pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in

Columbia in 1969; he became administrator a few months later.

He received permission to pursue graduate studies in 1971; for four months, he studied at the Institute for Continuing Theological Education in Rome.

Monsignor Smith became pastor of St. Augustine Parish in Williamsport in 1972. He was granted retirement status in 2001 and was made a Prelate of Honor by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006.

Although born in the city, Monsignor Smith found a welcoming home in Washington County, where he remained after his retirement, assisting at St. Augustine and other nearby parishes.

Father J. Collin Poston, pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Thurmont and St. Anthony Shrine in Emmitsburg, remembered Monsignor Smith as a “very kind, down-to-earth, humble priest.”

“Even in retirement, he was very generous in his availability to serve, whether at Mass, hearing confessions or just listening to someone who needed to talk,” added Father Poston, who got to know Monsignor Smith when the former was pastor of St. Mary Parish in Hagerstown.

“He would sometimes simply concelebrate the 6:30 a.m. weekday Mass,” Father Poston remembered, adding that Monsignor Smith often joined the local priests for dinners and penance services.

Monsignor Farmer said that Monsignor Smith was “a priest all the time,” even during golfing vacations that the two took annually with other priests.

“Even on vacation, we had Mass together every morning before golf,” Monsignor Farmer said, noting that on the most recent trip, in April, “(Monsignor Smith) was delightful in every way. We’re going to miss him.”

Read more obituaries here.