

# Monsignor Armstrong remembered for 'forming friendships in Christ'

A Mass of Christian Burial was offered March 13 at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Homeland for Monsignor Robert Armstrong, a former rector of the cathedral from 1984 until his retirement in 2009. Monsignor Armstrong died March 7 after several years of declining health.

Archbishop William E. Lori was the main celebrant, with priests of the archdiocese serving as concelebrants.

Cardinal J. Francis Stafford, former auxiliary bishop of Baltimore and major penitentiary emeritus of the Apostolic Penitentiary at the Vatican preached the homily. He compared the rest of the Creator on the seventh day in the Genesis story of creation to the rest for which we pray that Monsignor Armstrong is now experiencing.

"The peace that God brings is the rest of the Sabbath," Cardinal Stafford said.



*Cardinal J. Francis Stafford, former auxiliary bishop of Baltimore and major penitentiary emeritus of the Apostolic Penitentiary at the Vatican, preaches the March 13 homily at the funeral Mass for Monsignor Robert Armstrong. (Kevin J. Parks/CR Staff)*

The cardinal said that through death, the monsignor had left behind the "horizontal world," in which the list of his deeds and accomplishments was made. "He now has entered a new dimension a dimension which all of us will face. ...

"May the Father remember not only his life, but how Monsignor Bob responded to the tensions within his own life, the tensions that allowed us to see his true identity as a son of God."

Cardinal Stafford also praised Monsignor Armstrong's welcoming spirit to people in the parishes he served, to priests in the archdiocese and to St. John Paul II when the pope visited the Baltimore Cathedral in 1995.

"Monsignor Bob had an enormous capacity for forming friendships in Christ," the cardinal said, noting that he and the monsignor had been friends since 1962. "There was not a bone of competitiveness in him. Never did I sense that there."

The cardinal also lauded Monsignor Armstrong for his pastoral care to the sick and dying.



*Archbishop William E. Lori prays beside the casket of Monsignor Robert Armstrong.  
(Kevin J. Parks/CR Staff)*

In remarks at the end of Mass, Archbishop Lori thanked Monsignor Armstrong's sister and brother-in-law and his many nieces and nephews present "for sharing him with us for so many years."

He encouraged those present - brother priests, family members, parishioners and friends - to pray for vocations to the priesthood to follow in Monsignor Armstrong's footsteps.

Wilmington Bishop W. Francis Malooly, a former auxiliary bishop of Baltimore, and Baltimore Auxiliary Bishops Adam J. Parker and Mark E. Brennan were also present for the liturgy.

Before the Mass, many friends, family and parishioners paused near Monsignor Armstrong's open casket to pay their respects.

*Also see:*

Monsignor Armstrong, beloved rector of Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, dies at 81