

# **Monsignor Auer celebrates 50 years as a priest**

For 50 years Monsignor John Auer has served as a priest in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, been an inspiration to others and helped parishes achieve their goals.

On June 17th Monsignor Auer and the parishioners of St. John the Evangelist, Severna Park, will celebrate his 50th anniversary at the noon Mass followed by a reception in his honor. He said about 15 of his fellow priests will be present along with some of his cousins, nieces and nephews.

“I had an attraction to the priesthood,” said Monsignor Auer, 77, who has been retired for about five years. “It was a spiritual call to follow Christ and to be of service to others.”

The Mount St. Joseph High School, Irvington, graduate attended John Hopkins University in Baltimore and enrolled in the premed program, but before graduating he decided to apply for the seminary. While at John Hopkins, Monsignor Auer joined the Newman club where he met Father Gouch, chaplain at the time, who was influential and inspirational in his decision to become a priest.

During the summers of his seminary years, Monsignor Auer spent his time as a counselor at St. Martin’s Camp at Love Point and St. Vincent de Paul camp which was located on the South River. After ordination on May 25, 1957, his first assignment was to St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Riviera Beach, where he served for about five years before following his desire to do missionary work.

In June of 1962, Monsignor Auer joined the St. James Missionary Society which was founded in Boston by Cardinal Richard J. Cushing. The society recruited English speaking priests to send to Latin America for a five year term. After serving and learning Spanish in Peru Monsignor Auer headed to Ecuador to do social work with parishes. He also worked with the HOPE ship, an effort to bring United States medical personal to third world countries.

One of his major achievements when working in Ecuador was his involvement with

the formation of a credit union in a poor town. The credit union is still around and it has flourished, said Monsignor Auer with a smile of pride on his face.

When he returned to the United States in 1967, he was assigned to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Woodlawn until 1970 when he was sent to Holy Trinity, Glen Burnie, as a co-pastor. After the formation of four new parishes in Glen Burnie, Monsignor Auer remained the pastor of Holy Trinity where he helped to convert the old convent into a day care center and a parish center.

In 1985 he was reassigned to St. Brigid, Canton, until 1989 when he became pastor of Our Lady of the Fields, Millersville, where he assisted in building a parish center to fill the need for religious education classrooms and offices for the parish.

"It's a good feeling," to celebrate 50 years as a priest, said Monsignor Auer as he thought back on all of the great memories he experienced. "It doesn't seem like 50 years, time goes by so quickly."

Monsignor Auer said he has truly enjoyed celebrating Mass and the sacraments. He continues to help out with Mass, confessions and funerals at St. John the Evangelist and plans to do so for as long as he is able.