

# **Monsignor FitzGerald, 29-year navy man, celebrates anniversary**

Although his 40-year career spanned the globe and taught this priest four languages, Monsignor John L. FitzGerald is back in his native town of Baltimore doing what he knows best: ministering to seafarers.

As a child, he attended St. Mark, Catonsville. Once ordained, he was assigned first to St. Matthew, Northwood, then St. Peter the Apostle, Baltimore.

In 1971, Monsignor FitzGerald was released by Cardinal Lawrence Shehan to enlist in the Navy-Marine Corp, beginning a sea-related career that lasted 29 years. In California, Hawaii, Virginia, and Rhode Island, he performed chaplain duties on assorted sites such as a naval hospital, aircraft carrier, parachute test range, naval chaplain school, and the Pentagon.

The priest retired from the navy in 1999 and set off for a graduate study sabbatical covering Paris, Munich, Vienna, Florence and Rome.

Before reporting back to the Archdiocese of Baltimore, he was a lecturer in Mexico, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. He holds two doctorates in professional psychology and human behavior and leadership.

In Baltimore, he established the Apostleship of the Sea and set up the Stella Maris Center “where I’ve been happily assigned ever since.”

Able to speak Italian, French, Spanish, and German, his versatility of languages serves him well in welcoming sailors from around the world as they disembark in Baltimore ports.

Moments for him which have been the most rewarding as a priest, he said, were “dealing with them (young men) suffering suicidal ideation and depression. There is a lot. (Also) convert instructions in the military – it was a big thing. We get a lot of converts in these young marines and sailors.”