

Monsignor Lazor marks 50 years in the priesthood

Monsignor Joseph S. Lazor Jr., the pastor of St. Luke, Edgemere, first thought about becoming a priest when he was in the fifth grade.

“I was very much impressed by the young priests we had in our parish. They were very good role models,” Monsignor Lazor said.

The Hagerstown native, who marked 50 years as a priest May 24, marked the jubilee June 22, with a Mass at the parish and a celebration in Perry Hall.

“Surviving 50 years is an achievement,” he said. “God has been very good to me.”

A member of Monsignor Lazor’s ordination class of seven, Monsignor A. Thomas Baumgartner, pastor emeritus of St. Ursula in Parkville, concelebrated the jubilee Mass. Other concelebrants included Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski, eastern vicar, and Bishop William C. Newman, retired eastern vicar.

James B. Peake, the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs, also attended the event.

The celebration turned into a reunion for Monsignor Lazor and Dr. Peake. A U.S. Army chaplain for 22 years, Monsignor Lazor’s overseas tours of duty included time in South Korea, where then-Col. Peake was his commanding officer.

Monsignor Lazor has been pastor of St. Luke since 1997. Previously, he served as an associate pastor of St. Agnes, Catonsville, from 1993-1997, a U.S. Army chaplain from 1971-1993, and an associate pastor of Sacred Heart, Glyndon, from 1958-1971.

At St. Luke, his accomplishments include establishing First Friday and eucharistic adoration. He was named a monsignor in May 2006.

“It was something I never expected to see. It was a big surprise,” Monsignor Lazor humbly said.

During his decades as a priest, Monsignor Lazor said he has most enjoyed taking care of the spiritual needs of people.

Monsignor Lazor would advise young priests today that the priesthood is a great challenge.

“It’s more than a job. It’s a life commitment that’s full of satisfaction and achievements,” he said. “If I had to do it again I would.”

Those sending blessings and letters of congratulation to Monsignor Lazor include Pope Benedict XVI, President George W. Bush, Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley and Archbishop William D. Borders. Monsignor Lazor also received a U.S. flag that flew over the Capitol May 24, the 50th anniversary of his ordination.

Carolyn Monette and Paul McMullen contributed to this article.