

Norbertine Father Brian A. Zielinski, former pastor of Baltimore-area parishes, dies at 78

Norbertine Father Brian A. Zielinski, who served as pastor of Our Lady, Queen of Peace in Middle River and St. Thomas More in Baltimore, died March 24 at age 78.

A funeral Mass will be offered March 30 at St. Casimir Lithuanian Church in Philadelphia, where Father Zielinski, according to an obituary prepared by his order, was raised, received his sacraments and attended the parish school.

He graduated from the former Bishop Neumann High School, and in 1959 entered the Order of Prémontré at St. Norbert Abbey in De Pere, Wis., and was vested as a novice. Father Zielinski received a bachelor's degree in theology and English from St. Norbert College.

He was ordained a priest in April 1971, at Daylesford Abbey in Paoli, Pa.

Father Zielinski returned to Bishop Neumann High, his scholastic alma mater, where he taught for 13 years and served as campus minister and dean of student life. For five years, he was the superior of St. Norbert Priory in Philadelphia and served on the Abbot's Council at Daylesford Abbey.

He taught at Padua Academy in Wilmington, Del., and from 1986 to 2000 taught, chaired the religion department and served as campus minister at Archmere Academy in Claymont, Del.

Father Zielinski became the sixth pastor of Our Lady, Queen of Peace in 2000, and led its 50th jubilee celebration in 2003. That included the addition of stained glass in 12 doors that lead into the narthex and church.

"When he got here, he fell in love with our stained glass (windows) and the stories they told," said Barry Shadrach, who has been business manager of the parish since 1994. "He wanted to do the same thing with our doors. He went to parishioners, and

raised the money for the project.”

Those doors depict antiphons, sacraments and saints such as St. Augustine of Hippo, St. Katharine Drexel and St. Norbert, who in the 12th century founded the order that included Father Zielinski.

Shadrach said that Father Zielinski “adhered to Scripture” and “emphasized religious education.”

“He hired my wife, Kathy, and Debbie Boblitz to coordinate religious education, and they’re still doing it today,” Shadrach said. “There were 80-90 children registered then. There are 182 now. That’s the legacy he built.”

Father Zielinski received a certificate from the Culinary Institute of America as a youth, and filled the Queen of Peace rectory with “wonderful smells,” according to Shadrach.

“Half the time, you didn’t know what you were eating, you just knew it was good,” Shadrach said. “He knew French cuisine, but he could also cook Polish food. I remember his pierogies.”

In 2004, he became pastor of St. Thomas More in north Baltimore.

“He loved decorating, especially at Christmas,” said Maria Boling, parish office manager and bookkeeper for more than 22 years. “He loved to have the church look beautiful for all the people.”

Boling’s parents, Paul and Gloria LaCotti, are parishioners of Our Lady, Queen of Peace, and Father Zielinski joined their family celebrations, which included Thanksgiving dinner at the Pasadena home of Gail Krondon, Boling’s sister.

Father Zielenski left St. Thomas More in 2013 and became superior of Immaculate Conception Priory in Middletown, Del. At his recommendation, Boling became bookkeeper for the Norbertine Fathers of Delaware in 2014.

He concluded his ministry as liturgy director for the community.

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