

Taneytown pastor celebrates 50 years as a priest

By George P. Matysek Jr.

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Monsignor Martin E. Feild's priesthood has been all about involving more people in the life of the church. Inspired by the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the Catonsville native committed himself to inspiring others to be active participants at Mass and in the wider faith community.

"Everywhere I've served, I've really tried to empower the people to use their talents," said the longtime pastor of St. Joseph in Taneytown. "It's good to see them more and more involved. I'd like to see more of that."

Monsignor Feild celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood with a May 31 Mass at St. Joseph, the 600-family parish he has led for 14 years. Another celebration is planned this summer at St. Peter the Apostle in Oakland, where Monsignor Feild was pastor from 1975-1995 and where a parish building is named in his honor.

The priest grew up at St. Mark in Catonsville and knew early on that he was called to the priesthood. He went to the parish elementary school and was inspired by the priests and School Sisters of Notre Dame who served at St. Mark.

After spending some time at Loyola High School, Monsignor Feild entered St. Charles College, a former minor seminary in Catonsville, and later studied at St. Mary's Seminary on Paca Street in Baltimore and St. Mary's Seminary in Roland Park.

Following his May 23, 1959 ordination at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore, Monsignor Feild served as associate pastor of St. Joseph in Cockeysville for 10 years and associate pastor of St. Clement I in Lansdowne for six years.

He has also been active in Scouting, the archdiocesan tribunal, the clergy personnel board, interfaith cooperation, the Holy Name Society and the Knights of Columbus.

“What really stands out for me is the fact that all these years later, I still hear from people who remember me from each of the parishes I served,” Monsignor Feild said. “They mention how much they appreciated the small things – the understanding and the counseling and the assistance. I appreciate when they tell me what it meant to them.”

Monsignor Feild said he has enjoyed each of his assignments. He is delighted to see lay people step up and become more active in the liturgy.

“I think the Second Vatican Council really opened up the liturgy to the people and they were able to understand it better,” he said. “They’re not just observers, but participants. We need to keep going more along that line.”

The priest, who is known for his trademark joke telling, said he tried hard to keep everyone in good spirits.

“I have used humor to bring a smile into people’s lives,” he said.