

Homily – Funeral of Father “Jack” O’Donoghue

October 25, 2016

“One thing I ask of the LORD. This I seek:

To dwell in the LORD’s house all the days of my life” (Ps 27:4)

This is our prayer this morning as it was the prayer of Father O’Donoghue throughout his life and priestly ministry. Now our loving God has answered Father Jack’s prayer. He has called him home to rest in the Lord’s house forever.

Father Jack was and is very beloved by the people he served and by his fellow priests. What about all of us who are left behind and mourn his passing? We take consolation from the Book of Isaiah: at the eschatological banquet – of which the Eucharist is a foretaste - -in days to come God “will provide for all peoples, a feast of rich food and choice wines. . . God will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will destroy death forever.” We live with hope and trust in God’s mercy, compassion, and enduring love for all of us – especially a faithful servant like Father Jack!

Pope Francis reminded us recently that Jesus condemns hypocrisy: “You cannot be a Christian without practicing the Beatitudes. You cannot be a Christian without doing what Jesus

says...to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and welcome the stranger.” Father Jack was a faithful missionary disciple who lived the Beatitudes daily. To live in light of the gospel requires us acknowledge our utter dependence on God and to be God’s eyes, and ears, and hands, reaching out to all in need with God’s love, mercy, and compassion.

This Archdiocese has been very blessed through the years by the many, many wonderful priests who came from Ireland to minister among us. Father Jack was ordained in Ireland in 1964 and came to the U.S. shortly afterwards to serve first at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish. Three years later he was appointed spiritual director at our Seminary, serving for eight years as a role model and spiritual guide for future priests. He then served as campus minister and chaplain at Incarnate Word College and became an Air Force chaplain.

From 1976 until 2009 Father Jack was the director of our archdiocesan Permanent Diaconate Program, a ministry that he carried out with distinction -- serving two terms as director of the National Association of Permanent Deacons and working with the military ordinariate on the local and national to increase the number of military members in the diaconate program. The presence of so

many of our permanent deacons here this morning is a great testimony to the respect, esteem, and love they have had for Father Jack. He left us an important legacy, a strong advocate of support groups for permanent deacons “based on the total growth of the deacon [including] the family, along with the spiritual, intellectual, and emotional dimensions.”

While still director of the permanent diaconate program he became the pastor of Blessed Sacrament in 1990, where, as parishioners know so well, he served faithfully and lovingly until his death.

At his 25th anniversary he said “my priesthood has been...years of enabling people and helping them see their own giftedness – and in turn being aware of my own giftedness.” More than 25 years later we say “Amen!” to this. He was a good and faithful – and tireless! -- servant of God and the people of God. Yes, we miss him greatly. But we pray in faith and hope: May he rest in peace in the house of God forever!