

Monsignor Eugene Fanelli, served parishes for 60 years

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WEST NEW YORK — Monsignor Eugene A. Fanelli, 84, a beloved church pastor for 40 years who after his retirement served at a West Long Branch church and directed musical shows, died Tuesday at Orange Memorial Hospital.

Monsignor Fanelli attended Lincoln High School in Jersey City and Seton Hall University. He was ordained a priest in 1940 at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Darlington. His first assignment was at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Jersey City, where he remained until 1953. He was then administrator and pastor of Madonna Della Libera Roman Catholic Church, West New York, until 1993. He was so well known during his pastorate that a street adjacent to the church was named after him. He oversaw the construction of Madonna Della Libera's elementary school. He was the chaplain of the West New York Fire Department and chaplain of the Serra Club of Hudson County.

He was created monsignor in 1989, and was at that time the oldest living Italian-American pastor in the Archdiocese of Newark. In honor of his 40th anniversary as a priest in 1980, he celebrated a private Mass in Rome with Pope John Paul II. The pope told him and his friend, Monsignor William Noe Field of Seton Hall University: "Go home and be good priests."

After his retirement in 1993, Monsignor Fanelli served at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Jersey City; Church of the Madonna, Fort Lee; Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Newark; and St. Jerome's, West Long Branch. Al-

ways eager to share his love of music and the theater, he began directing musical shows, first at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Jersey City, and then in West New York and Fort Lee. He was also a member of the Players Club, a theater association in New York.



He was born in Jersey City to the late Francesco and Carmella Fanelli.

He was predeceased by his sisters, Helen

Hundley, Gilda Muller, and Beatrice Bernarducci. Surviving are his nieces and nephews, Carol Ann and Anthony Backus of Westfield, Jeanne and Kenneth Jensen of Iselin, Woodbridge, and Francis and Vivian Famularo of South Carolina; five grandnephews; five grandnieces; a great-grandnephew; two great-grandnieces; and a friend, Monsignor William Noe Field.

Visitation will be from 6 to 9 p.m. today at Thomas J. Costello Funeral Home, Green Street and Cooper Avenue, Iselin, and from 3 to 7 p.m. Friday at Our Lady of Libera Church, 5808 Kennedy Blvd., West New York. A vigil Mass will be celebrated 7:30 p.m. Friday at the church. A funeral Liturgy will be offered 11 a.m. Saturday at the church. Interment will follow at Holy Name Cemetery, Jersey City. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Seton Hall University Archives, South Orange.