

Monsignor McCrory honored in final rite

At the funeral mass for the Right Rev. William T. "Skids" McCrory Monday, the Rev. Paul Henry told a story about an auctioneer who was trying to sell an old lyre:

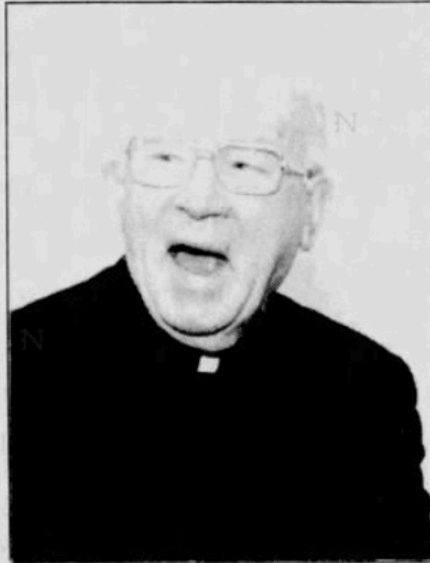
The auctioneer tried to sell the instrument for a few dollars but was interrupted by a man who played a tune on it that captivated the buyers at the auction.

When the man was done, the auctioneer asked for thousands. What was the difference, a potential customer asked.

"The master's touch," the auctioneer replied.

"Many people say Skids McCrory had the common touch because he was so good with people

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The Right Rev. William T. McCrory died Thursday.

Monsignor McCrory of HdG is remembered

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but he had the master's touch," Father Henry said. "He had the touch of Jesus."

Monsignor McCrory, pastor of the St. Patrick Church in Havre de Grace from 1968 until his retirement in January 1992, died Thursday at Citizens Nursing Home in the city. He was 76.

"He was part of Havre de Grace

and he will be sorely missed," said Janet McDonald, director of the nursing home.

A standing-room-only crowd filled the church Monday morning as the Most Rev. William Keebler, archbishop of Baltimore, and Father Henry concelebrated a Mass of Christian burial.

Born Oct. 2, 1916 in Baltimore, Monsignor McCrory was ordained a priest June 13, 1941 and, during his priesthood the Catholic church changed substantially.

It was a trying time for Monsignor McCrory and all priests, Father Henry said.

"Vatican II in the '60s brought with it many changes in the church and a lot of adjustments for us priests, as well as other members of the church. For 20

years of my priesthood I said masses in Latin with my back to the people. Then came Vatican II. It was a time of change. The priest began facing the people at a special altar with prayers said in English," Monsignor McCrory said in a 1990 interview.

In his years as a priest, Monsignor McCrory estimated he married about 1,400 couples and baptized more than 2,000 babies.

Monsignor McCrory was elevated to monsignor on Feb. 10, 1990 by Pope John Paul II and, at the time, he was the only monsignor in Harford County.

"He would always take time to meet with people. He never knew how to say no," Father Henry said.

Since Monsignor McCrory arrived in Havre de Grace, the parish has grown since then from about 350 families to about 450 families and five years ago, the church underwent a major renovation.

Though he was well versed in scholarly works, he would be as comfortable discussing best selling novels as he would be discussing liturgical works, Father Henry said.

He was especially fond of mystery and suspense novels and liked Tom Clancy's spy novels.

He also read the *The Racing Form* regularly and enjoyed play-

ing cards and going to the track to play the horses.

"He was the most controlled gambler I ever met," Father Henry said. "He could go to the track all day and never place a bet," Father Henry said, noting that Monsignor McCrory was especially interested in the blood lines of race horses.

Upon his retirement, Monsignor McCrory asked to be put in Citizens Nursing Home, where he knew many of the residents and where he had celebrated mass on the second and fourth Fridays of every month for many years, McDonald said.

"He expanded the ministry at the home celebrating mass every Friday," Father Henry said.

Son of the late William A. and Anna Dailey McCrory, Monsignor McCrory is survived by one brother, Donald J. McCrory of Baltimore and a sister, Margaret Hagan of Mesa, Ariz.

He was a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 2002, the Catholic War Veterans Post 1841, the Havre de Grace Rotary Club, the board of directors of the Salvation Army, St. John's Towers Old Timers and the Havre de Grace Ministerial Alliance.

He was buried at the Mt. Erin Cemetery and his pallbearers were Joseph Buchanan, Anthony Wancowicz, Richard Pinamonti, John Hestery, Arthur Liberatore and Ralph Liberatore.

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