

The Rev. Claude J. Bender, 59; served at many local Camden Diocese churches

The Rev. Claude J. Bender, 59, a Roman Catholic priest who served many area churches, died Saturday.

Among the churches served by the Rev. Bender during his 26 years with the Camden Diocese were St. Ann's in Wildwood; Our Lady Star of the Sea in Cape May; St. Michael's in Atlantic City; Our Lady of Good Counsel in Ocean City; and St. Rose of Lima in Newfield.

Most recently he had been assigned to Vianney Villa in Cherry Hill.

Born in Philadelphia, he received a bachelor's degree from Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Md. He also studied

at Niagara University in Niagara, N.Y., and Our Lady of the Angels Seminary in Albany, N.Y.

He was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Celestine Damiano of Camden in 1965. His first assignment was as an associate pastor at St. Anthony's Church in Camden.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated 10:30 a.m. Thursday at St. Peter's Church in Merchantville.

A Mass of Jesus Christ the High Priest will be celebrated 8 p.m. Wednesday at St. Peter's Church, where friends may call from 2 p.m.

Burial will be in St. Joseph Cemetery, Chews Landing.