

The Rev. Bernard J. McCarthy

The Rev. Bernard J. McCarthy, 81, passed away Tuesday, Sept. 16, 2003, surrounded by his nieces and nephews who were an important part of his life.

Born in Anaconda on Aug. 12, 1922, the seventh of nine children to Irish immigrants, Daniel and Winifred (Morris) McCarthy, Father McCarthy

was raised in Opportunity, educated in Anaconda, and graduated from St. Peter's High School in 1940. He studied at Carroll College in Helena for a year and then left school to work at the Anaconda smelter to earn enough money to return to school. It was at this time that a priest, recruiting students for the priesthood, asked if he was interested in attending the seminary. Having been influenced by the strong role Catholicism played in his childhood by the priests and sisters at St. Peter's High School in Anaconda, he immediately replied yes. While he had been contemplating it for several years, it was the first his parents had ever heard of his plans.

Father McCarthy was ordained in 1947 at the St. Helena Cathedral and served 10 years as an assistant pastor at the Cathedral of St. Helena, St. Patrick Church in Butte, and St. Anthony Church in Missoula. In 1957, he received a pastoral appointment to Sacred Heart Parrish in Roman. Father went on to serve parishes in Walkerville, Butte (St. Patrick), Conrad, and Kalispell before returning to Butte (St. Joseph and Chaplain at St. James Hospital). He was granted Senior Status in the Diocese in 1992.

People and the church were always important to Father Bernard. He once said, "priests do many things, some are teachers, some are lawyers, but I was a parish priest and that was all I ever wanted to do. I think you are closer to the people." It was during the Second Vatican Council in 1962 where he felt he made a difference as a priest. The council made several changes in accepted church procedures, causing several people to leave the church or question their faith. "I talked to the people of the parish and explained the changes before they were implemented. I explained that the modifications didn't change the church, only transformed the way Catholicism was taught." Year's later parishioners came to him and said they thought his handling of the changes helped to avoid the problems that other parishes had encountered. Bernard served on many committees for the church



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and served as State Chaplain for the Ancient Order of Hibernians for several years.

For as much as his faith was his soul, his Irish ancestry was his heart. He traveled to Ireland to spend time and get to know the family that still lives there. He enjoyed tracing his roots and would talk of the family to anyone who would listen. He reminisced about growing up in Opportunity and riding the train to Anaconda. While he enjoyed talking of the past, he was well read and enjoyed staying up on current events. He had a great love for his family and was very proud of all his nieces and nephews. He delighted in traveling to visit each and their families. He cherished the opportunity to perform almost every wedding and baptism in the family and extended families. He loved family gatherings and always looked forward to good company and good food. He will be greatly missed.

In addition to his parents, his brothers and sisters-in-law, Patrick and Madge McCarthy, Thomas and Isabel McCarthy, Bill McCarthy, Dick McCarthy; and four sisters and brothers-in-law, Mike and Mary Laslovich, Carl and Margaret Marcuson, and Harry and Helen Jones, and Chub and Loretta Douil, preceded him in death. He was also preceded in death by nephews, Frank Laslovich, Mike Laslovich, Colleen Fadness, and Carol Dunne and Bernie McCarthy.

He is survived by sisters-in-law, Kathleen McCarthy (Detroit), Carolyn Jane McCarthy (Great Falls); nephews/spouses, Bill and Chieko McCarthy, Tom and Theresa McCarthy, Dan and Jadine McCarthy, Tim McCarthy, Jim and Tami McCarthy, Bob McCarthy, Don and LuAnn McCarthy; and nieces/spouses, Pat Dunne, Luke and Ellen McKeeon, John and Peggy Kirchgessner, Marty and Maureen Kloker and special niece/spouse, Tom and MaryAnn Alexander (Butte). Numerous other nieces and nephews also survive Father Bernard.

Go in Peace, Father Bernie you have earned your reward.

Prayers will be recited Friday, Sept. 19, at 10:15 a.m. at Longfellow-Finnegan Funeral Home in Anaconda, proceeding to Saint Peter's Catholic Church where Monsignor Kevin O'Neill will celebrate the Mass of Christian burial at 11 a.m. Interment will be at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Catholic Priest Lot in Anaconda. Longfellow-Finnegan Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to the Butte Central Memorial Fund, Our Lady of the Rockies, or a charity of the donor's choice.