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For most of his 50 years in the priesthood, Monsignor Joseph C. Ansaldi's name would become synonymous with his beloved St. Joseph-by-the-Sea High School.

50 years in priesthood celebrated

Monsignor Joseph Ansaldi observes his golden jubilee tomorrow at a concelebrated mass

By DIANE C. LORE
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

Fifty years ago, in June of 1962, a brand new Catholic high school was taking shape in Huguenot, within sight of Raritan Bay. The new school, fittingly, would be known as St. Joseph by-the-Sea High School.

Fifty years ago, on June 2, 1962, a tall, thin, earnest-faced young man was ordained to the priesthood in St. Patrick's Cathedral by the late Cardinal Francis Spellman. This young man ordained that day was the Rev. Joseph C. Ansaldi.

For almost his entire life in the priesthood Monsignor Ansaldi's name would become synonymous with his beloved St. Joseph by-the-Sea, as a teacher, assistant principal, and 27 years as principal. It seems only fitting for the two to be celebrating their golden jubilee this year.

Monsignor Ansaldi will celebrate the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood tomorrow with a mass at 1:15 p.m. in St. Charles R.C. Church, Oakwood.

Joining him in the pews, and on the altar during the mass, as altar servers and lecturers, will be Sea alumni, past and present faculty, and friends of Sea, along with parishioners of St. Charles, where Monsignor has celebrated Sunday mass as a weekend associate for many years.

CONCELEBRATED MASS

The mass will be concelebrated with pastors and priests from Staten Island parishes and elsewhere in the Archdiocese, including the Rev. Thomas P. Devery, director of priest personnel; Monsignor Peter Finn, co-vicar for Staten Island and pastor of Blessed Sacrament R.C. Church, West Brighton, and Monsignor Thomas Berghin, pastor of St. Charles. Monsignor Anthony Marchitelli will serve as homilist. Michael Coppotelli, a Sea graduate (Class of 2001) and parishioner, will serve as master of ceremonies. A light reception will follow in the school auditorium.

Monsignor Ansaldi's first assignment as a priest was as chaplain and dean of girls at the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin, Mount Loretto in Pleasant Plains. From 1963 to 1978 he served as a teacher and dean at Cardinal Hayes High School in the Bronx and also served as parochial vicar at St. Dominic's R.C. Church there. He returned to Staten Island in 1978, as assistant principal of Sea, and in 1982 was named as principal, a position he would hold through 2009.

NAMED MONSIGNOR

He was named a Monsignor in 1990 by the late Pope John Paul II. The following year he was named as co-vicar for Staten Island by the late Cardinal John J. O'Connor, a position he maintained until 1998.

From 2009 to 2011 Monsignor Ansaldi served as principal emeritus and taught at Sea. Since reaching the mandatory priest retirement age of 75 last year, he's been serving as a chaplain at St. Peter's Boys High School, West Brighton, and St. Joseph Hill Academy, Arrochar, and as a chapel assistant at Monsi-

gnor Farrell High School, Oakwood.

During his 27-year tenure as principal Monsignor Ansaldi is credited with spearheading an amazing transformation at Sea. He raised the bar academically and added numerous programs including Sea's music and band program, volleyball, football, wrestling, and lacrosse. He also built enrollment at the co-educational school to its present total of just under 1,400 students.

SEA REVITALIZED

Paralleling this transformation was a complete revitalization of the physical plant. Monsignor Ansaldi added a music wing for the band; Viking Park (an 11-acre sports complex including field turf, a football/soccer field, a baseball and softball stadium, a state-of-the-art track and three tennis courts); an auditorium; a second gymnasium; a fitness center; a student television studio; three state-of-the-art computer labs connected by an advanced network, and three modernized science labs.

Choosing to downplay his accomplishments as an administrator, however, Monsignor Ansaldi said he'd rather focus on offering prayers and thanksgiving for his 50 years of service to God through the priesthood.

"My thanks today is as sincere as it was 50 years ago," he said. "I want to express how very much I appreciate the kindness shown to me throughout my years in the priesthood; be assured that it will not be forgotten in my prayers."

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