

Monsignor Wellein celebrates 40th

Monsignor William G. Wellein, pastor of St. Mary's Church in Shelby and of Christ the King Church in Kings Mountain, will be celebrating his 40th anniversary of his ordination as a Roman Catholic priest on May 22 at St. Mary's. The celebration will begin with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and follow with a reception and covered dish supper. Relatives, parishioners and friends will join Monsignor on his day of celebration.

Monsignor was the youngest of 11 children born of Louis and Mary Wellein in Baltimore, Md. One child died at age 7 months, one became a priest and the other nine married and stayed together. Monsignor is very proud of his poor, large, depression family and with so many brothers and sisters he says, "I was bounced from knee to knee." His father was an accountant, was very handy and out of necessity taught his sons and daughters such skills as electrical, plumbing, carpentry, concrete work and wallpapering. The family lived across the street from a huge Catholic Church and there was a very religious atmosphere in the home with family prayer and recitation of the Angelus three times a day. Monsignor has fond memories of a loving family and a great education in parochial schools. As early as the 6th or 7th grade, he knew he wanted to be a priest and he remembers telling his friends this at a coed picnic for altar boys and school choir members.

His high school years and two years of junior college were spent at North East, Pa., near Erie where he attended a preparatory seminary. He then entered St. Mary's Seminary and University of Baltimore, which is the oldest Catholic Seminary in The United States. While there, he completed his senior college courses and the four years of post graduate work that is required of every priest.

His bachelor's degree is in philosophy and his licentiate degree is in theology. He was one of 11 who received this licentiate degree in his ordination class, which was in excess of 60 graduates including some from other countries. For five summers prior to ordination, he and other N.C. seminarians visited every dwelling in Raleigh, Asheville, Durham, Winston Salem and Wilmington.

Monsignor and Father Edward Beatty were ordained on May 22, 1952, in Greensboro by Bishop Vincent S. Waters, who was the Catholic bishop of North Carolina. The ordination was to take place at the new Our Lady of Grace Church, but it wasn't yet completed so it took place at St. Benedict's. Father Edward Beatty was a World War II veteran and several years ago he died in retirement. Father Wellein became a monsignor in February 1982.

Over the years, Monsignor has been assigned to the following churches throughout the state.

1952-53 - St. John the Baptist at North Wilkesboro and the Missions at Boone and

Blowing Rock.

1953-55 - Infant Prague at Jacksonville.

1955-57 - St. Lawrence in Asheville.

1957-59 - St. Catherine's in Wake Forest and helped begin the Mission at Butner and was involved in the Motor Chapel summer work.

1959-61 - Sacred Heart at Pinehurst and continued the Motor Chapel work.

1960-65 - Director of St. John Vianney Hall Pre-seminary in Asheville.

In 1962, every Bishop in the world was invited to a week long meeting prior to the 2nd Vatican Council to discuss male religious vocations. Bishop waters sent Monsignor as his delegate.

1965-70 - Holy Spirit Elementary and Jr. High School/Parish in Jacksonville.

1970-73 - St. Aloysius in Hickory.

1973-77 - St. Leo's in Winston Salem.

1977-84 - St. Vincent's in Charlotte.

1984-present - St. Mary's in Shelby and Christ the King Church in Kings Mountain.

Over the years, especially in connection with the Motor Chapels, Monsignor probably had over 20 assistant priests as-



MONSIGNOR WILLIAM G. WELLEIN

signed to him mostly after their ordinations. In 1975, he had a very severe heart attack, which necessitated giving up his work with the Permanent Diaconate and as associate director of the

N.C. Catholic. This was followed by heart bypass surgery in 1983. The following year, he was transferred to Shelby.

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