

Rev. Msgr. Daniel Cardelli

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Rev. Msgr. Daniel Cardelli, a priest for 64 years, died Dec. 29. Retired since 2005, he maintained an active presence in the lives of his brother priests, his parishioners, his beloved Italian Catholic Federation and his family.

He spent 27 years of his priesthood as pastor of St. Isidore Parish in Danville, where he was remembered fondly at his funeral Mass on Jan. 10.

Msgr. Cardelli's devotion to his brother priests was legendary.

"He really cared about priests," recalled Father Larry Young, pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Rodeo and a friend of Msgr. Cardelli for more than half a century. "He loved to cook," Father Young recalled. "Once a year, he would cook pasta and invite the retired priests to come for lunch."

He was often asked why his pasta was so good.

The secret? "He used his mother's recipe," Father Young said.

He was proud of his Italian heritage and served the Italian Catholic Federation, in his parish and nationally.

"He would go to the conventions, they'd be all over the country," Father Young said. "He would go to these monthly meetings; he was dedicated."

So dedicated that he enlisted Father Young in 1987 as chaplain for the Contra Costa region.

"He was proud of his Italian heritage, proud of his Catholic faith, proud of his family," Father Young said. "He loved the fact that he had that wonderful school at St. Isidore and he was able to build the two departments there."

Msgr. Cardelli, who was 91, was a native of Fall River, Massachusetts. In his high school years, his family -- of which there were five sons -- moved to California, where he entered Serra High School in San Mateo. At Serra, he was captain of the football team and senior class president.

In 1948, at the age of 17, he entered St. Joseph College Seminary in Mountain View. He continued his preparation for the priesthood at St. Patrick Major Seminary in Menlo Park.

He was ordained to the priesthood on June 15, 1957, at St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco.

"He and some of his classmates always got together every week for priest day, to support one another," Father Young said. One

of the classmates had a pilot's license, and Msgr. Cardelli enjoyed flying with him.

His service to the Church includes time as parochial vicar at St. John Vianney Church, San José; St. Leo Church, San José; Santa Maria Church, Orinda; St. Bede Church, Hayward; and Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Oakland.

He served as pastor of St. Peter Martyr of Verona Church, Pittsburg, before his assignment at St. Isidore Church.

In the Diocese of Oakland, and beyond, he served as Vicar for Retired Priests, Diocese of Oakland; Founding member of Presbyteral Council, Diocese of Oakland; Diocesan Consultor; Founded SOS (Sources of Support), ministry to divorced men and women; Diocesan Chaplain, Italian Catholic Federation, Oakland; Chaplain, Italian Catholic Federation Branch 352, Danville, Knights of Columbus, Council 4060, Young Ladies Institute, Pittsburg and Danville and Young Men's Institute, Pittsburg; Spiritual Director (National Chaplain), Italian Catholic Federation; 4th Degree Knight of Columbus; Knights of Holy Sepulchre; and member of Young Men's Institute, Pittsburg.

Msgr. Cardelli entered what turned out to be a very active retirement. His service assisting at St.

Augustine Church in Oakland ended with the pandemic, but he remained active as national chaplain of the Italian Catholic Federation and writing a monthly column for Bollettino.

Msgr. Cardelli is survived by his brother Alindo "Lin" (Gloria) Cardelli; sisters-in-law Elaine and Laura; his "6th Brother" Father Harry Yim of Honolulu; his lifetime dear friend Peggy McCarthy of Alameda; and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews in Italy, France, and the United States.

He is also survived by his beloved brother priests throughout the Bay Area and the world. †



+ IN MEMORY

A donation may be made in Msgr. Cardelli's name to St. Isidore Parish or St. Isidore School, ICF Branch 352, Provendenza Fund of the ICF or Knights of Columbus 4060, St. Isidore Branch. All are to be addressed to 440 La Gonda Way, Danville, CA 94526.

"The life of a priest is hard work, but most fulfilling. ... My greatest joy and strength come from the privilege and awe of celebrating Mass. I said 'Wow' 50 years ago and I still say 'Wow,' today!"

MY JOURNEY TO THE PRIESTHOOD

BY MONSIGNOR DANIEL CARDELLI

Monsignor Cardelli served as spiritual director of the Italian Catholic Federation. In that capacity, he wrote a monthly column for the ICF Bollettino. He graciously shared columns with readers of The Catholic Voice from time to time. This is one he shared in January 2021. In his memory and honor, The Catholic Voice shares it in this issue.

A vocation to the priesthood comes to each priest in a different way. Nobody gets a telegram directly from God. Each priest has a unique story to tell. Let me share my story with you.

I trace my call to the priesthood all the way back to before I made my First Communion. I was in St. Patrick's Church in Fall River, Massachusetts, at Mass. I was very little. I guess I was about five or six. I know I was so little because I couldn't see the altar except between the shoulders of two adults who were in the pew in front of me. I remember I could just see the priest at the middle of the altar. It was at the consecration of the Mass. I heard the bell ring. The celebrant raised the host and I, in awe, said to myself, "That is God."

From that time on, at various times throughout my childhood, I had the thought that I might want to be a priest. I didn't tell anyone, but eventually my family found out that I had leanings in that direction.

One day, my mother said to me, "Go down to visit your grandmother." She lived down the street from us, and all her children were grown up and married. So she was living alone in her "empty nest." What great memories her home had for me! Throughout the years her family, children and grandchildren, would come together for the major holidays. I remember my siblings and cousins and I all sat at the "children's table." What great feasts they were. So much delicious Italian food!

So, at my mother's suggestion that day, I trotted down the street and arrived at "Nonna's" house. I sat with her for a visit in her living room. She was born in Italy and did not ever learn how to speak English. Eventually, she asked me in Italian what all grandmothers

usually ask their grandchildren, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" And I answered her with conviction, "Prete." (Priest) Then she smiled and leaned over and gave me such a big hug that I can still feel it to this day! Her love and her pride were evident to me even at my young age. When our visit was over, I walked back home with such warmth in my little heart and then went on with daily life. It's a cherished memory that I relive often.

My four brothers and I all went to public school in Fall River, Massachusetts. When I graduated from the eighth grade, I asked my mother to send me to a Catholic high school so I might be able to discern whether I had a vocation

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to be a priest. Money was tight for a family with five boys, but my mother agreed that they would find a way. At that time, 1944, there was only one Catholic high school in the city and you had to know how to speak French to go there. So I enrolled at Monsignor James E. Coyle High School in Taunton, Massachusetts, a long bus ride away from our home.

After my sophomore year, my family moved to South San Francisco. I enrolled in Serra High School in San Mateo, another long bus ride from home. It was a new school, and my class was the first class to go all four years and the second graduating class. It was a perfect move for me to help me on my journey to be a priest. Every class

at Serra was taught by a diocesan priest. It was just what I needed. I could almost feel God's grace guiding me.

For some unknown reason, I knew even before we moved to California that I wanted to be a parish priest. I can't explain it. I just knew in my heart that, if I had a vocation, it was to be a parish priest. I had the example and guidance of the diocesan priests at Serra to help me make my decision.

So, in my junior year I decided to go to the seminary. I didn't tell anyone. After graduation, my classmates were surprised at my answer when they asked me what college I was going to go to. I had been president of my class and captain of the football team, plus MVP in my

senior year, so everyone was curious about my plans "for greatness."

"What are you going to do?" they asked. I answered, "I am not going to college. I am going to the seminary to be a priest." They were more than amazed! So as the saying goes, "The rest is history." However, it is not history. The rest is another story.

I thank God for my vocation. Being a priest was not always easy, but never did I want to be anything else. In my youth, I felt that the Blessed Mother guided me through the process; and when I was ordained on June 15, 1957, I imagined that Mary said to her Son, "Here he is, so you take over. I will pray for him and protect him as a mother should. But he is yours now!" †