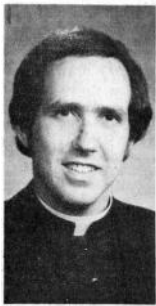


Thank You Fr. Mike

For Your 40 Years of Dedicated Service to the Church

April 25, 1981 - April 25, 2021

It was 40 years ago this weekend that Fr. Mike Roach, surrounded by family, friends, priests of the diocese



MICHAEL ROACH

Liberty man to be ordained

Michael Roach, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Roach of Liberty, will be ordained to the Roman Catholic Priesthood in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Kansas City, Saturday, April 25, by Bishop John Sullivan, D.D.

One of nine children, he was born and raised in Glenaire and attended St. James grade school in Liberty graduating from there in 1967. He graduated from St. Pius X High

School in 1971.

Roach attended Maple Woods Community College, Southwest Missouri State University, and received his bachelor of arts degree, from Conception Seminary College in 1977. The last four years he has attended Kenrick Theological Seminary in St. Louis

where he obtained a Master of Divinity degree. On Sunday, April 26, he will celebrate his first Mass of Thanksgiving in the new St. James Catholic Church at 309 Stewart Rd.

and others in attendance at the cathedral, made his solemn promises before God and was ordained a priest in our diocese by Bishop John Sullivan.

The next day, Sunday, April 26, 1981, he said his first Mass at what was then the new St. James Church, just three weeks after its dedication. St. James is the parish where he grew up with his parents and eight siblings - a very loving and devout family, about whom he often speaks during his homilies.



Fr. Mike with his parents.



Ordination with Bishop Sullivan

His journey to the priesthood included a time of discernment and years of education. He attended St. James School (his parents were instrumental in the founding of the original school on Water St). He went to St. Pius X High School, graduating in 1971, Maple Woods Community College, SW Missouri State University, graduating from Conception Seminary Collage in 1977. Following that he attended Kenrick Theological Seminary in St. Louis where he received his Master of Divinity degree.

His first parish was at the Cathedral of St. Joseph, followed by assignments to St. Therese, Risen Christ Church (now St. Monica), St. Patrick, and again to St. Therese for 13 years.

When Fr. Mike came to St. James in 2011 he was pleased to see parishioners who attended his ordination 30 years previously, including Lorraine Hilts, Mary Weishaar, and Joe and Eileen Barry.

From his arrival here, he had a dream and vision of building a new church that would meet the growing needs of our parish for future generations.

Eight years later, that dream was fulfilled when our new church was dedicated by Bishop James Johnston on October 19, 2019.



Fr. Mike and his sisters.



Fr. Mike, his parents & brothers.



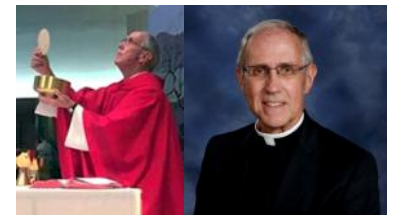
Parishioner Eileen Barry with a vestment designed by her late son Kevin.



Sister Irene McGrath, the first St. James School principal, parishioner Loraine Hilts with her late husband Deacon Carl Hilts.



First Baptism



Fr. Mike today

In an article "New Priests Reflect on Discovering Their Vocations" published in the May 3, 1981 issue of the *Catholic Key*, our former diocesan newspaper, Fr. Mike said "Before I entered seminary I saw the Church as a building on a certain street - run by the priests, where the people went to for Mass or the sacraments".

"Now I see the Church as the "People of God" - a people who are bound together by a belief, trust and hope in God - all working together to build a better parish, and thus a better world. The Church is not the hierachy, the Church is the People!"

Fr. Mike makes his long ago vision of the Church come alive every day at St. James.

Pictures from Fr. Mike's Ordination Photo Album