



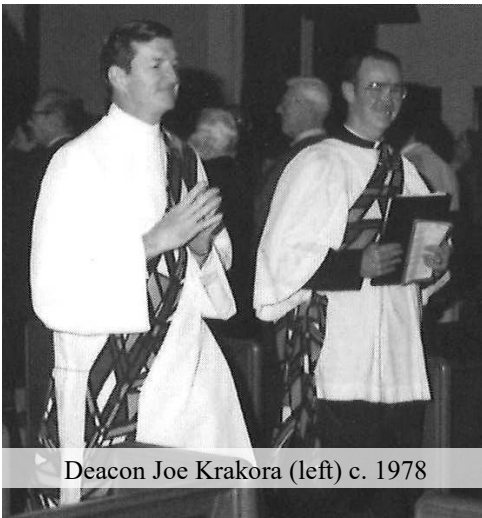
FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

I began my ministry at St. Mary's over seven years ago, in July of 2016. As with every new assignment, the first weeks at a new parish would be filled with learning new routines, parish traditions, meeting parishioners and staff members in getting acclimated to the new assignment.

I can very distinctly remember the very warm welcome I had received, over seven years ago, from retired Deacon Joe Krakora. He graciously welcomed me and wanted to make sure that I knew he would do all he could to assist me in getting to know the people and the parish. We had dinner together in the first month I was at St. Mary's. He had a vast knowledge and history with St. Mary's, having been a parishioner with his wife Marie, since 1965 and a permanent deacon serving the people of St. Mary's since his ordination in 1978. I would come to know of his deep faith, and belief in Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Deacon Joe had buried two of his children at St. Mary's as well as his wife of 62 years in 2012. He had a very deep and strong faith in God.

Deacon Joe had extended his hand of welcome and his heart of support to me. It meant a great deal to me upon my arrival while trying to navigate all of the new realities I was facing at St. Mary's. I would come to appreciate even more the ongoing support that Joe would offer me, spiritual support as well as continued encouragement in my ministry to his family and all of the families at St. Mary's. Over the years I would see Joe, praying quietly inside the church of St. Mary. When his health allowed he drove his car south on Waukegan Road to Deerpath Road, traveling east on Deerpath to Green Bay, traveling two blocks south on Green Bay, where he would daily turn into the lot behind the church. He would faithfully come to his church and spend time in prayer before reversing his course. Deacon Joe had a deep faith and served God and God's people with kindness, prayerfulness, goodness, and compassion running through his heart and veins.

A few years ago, Joe moved into a senior residence where he would be able to be cared for by staff and looked after by his family. I would visit him in his new home, no longer needing to walk up or down the 28 steps in his family home anymore. I continued to receive his same kindness, support, and prayerful encouragement from him since I had first met him. Over the recent years when I would visit, he may not have recognized me, but he was ever close to God in prayer and would join me in the prayers we recited together as I offered him Holy Communion. After a lengthy illness, Joe took his last breath on earth on Friday, November 3, with family at his bedside. Deacon Joe Krakora was 97 years old.



Deacon Joe Krakora was part of the second permanent diaconate class of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Over the decades of his ministry at St. Mary's Deacon Joe served under many pastors, worked with many Parish Staffs and ministered to many families. I could try to research the sacramental records of our parish to get an idea of how many babies Deacon Joe baptized, how many couples he prepared for and celebrated their wedding, as well as people he supported with pastoral counseling. Suffice it to say, only God knows those numbers. For those who have been parishioners since the 1980s there is a very good chance you were cared for with pastoral kindness by Deacon Joe Krakora.

Deacon Joe Krakora will be remembered by many people.

Deacon Joe's wake is this coming Monday, November 13 at Wenban Funeral Home from 5:00pm - 8:00pm. There will be a prayer service at 8:00pm Monday evening to conclude the visitation and wake.

The funeral for Deacon Joe is on Tuesday, November 14 at 10:30am.

Throughout November we remember all those who have died from our families and from our parish. The memorial Book of the Dead, is prominently placed in the sanctuary, in front of the Paschal Candle. Deacon Joe Krakora's name is one of many in the Church of St. Mary Book of the Dead this year.

Rest in peace Joe Krakora, rest in the peace of the Lord. Come and share the place Jesus has prepared for you for all eternity.

Fr. Mike Nacur