

# Happy



# th Birthday

## Fr. Peter Sweeney

Dear Parishioners,

It is with great joy and gratitude that we celebrate as a parish family *the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of our dearly beloved Fr. Peter Sweeney* this Tuesday, January 24. Thank you, Lord, for Fr. Sweeney! I'm sure you would all agree with me that when "we grow up" we want to be like him. Who else do you know that at 80 years old is still hearing confessions, playing golf, racing the pastor to see who can get into the church first, reading world history, studying for homilies, watching the Golf Channel at 4AM, and flying a private plane while building a new one with close friends?

Yes – there is only one Fr. Pete Sweeney!

I am sure that I speak for us all when I thank the Lord for the gift and witness of this dear man and priest who from the early age of 13 years old gave his life to Christ and freely chose to give up family, land, and heritage to come to the United States as a newly ordained priest 55 years ago to preach the Gospel and to serve the Lord's people. Since I arrived at St. John Neumann three years ago (on 1/31/2014) Fr. Sweeney has not ceased – thankfully – to "retire" from retirement: assisting with Masses and confessions, helping take care of the homebound and hospitalized, more than readily comforting the bereaved or listening to someone seeking a priest. This coming Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, Fr. Sweeney will preside at the 5PM Vigil Mass and afterwards we will enjoy our annual SJN Spaghetti Dinner with the added joy of celebrating Fr. Sweeney's birthday. We have a limited number of seats in the Parish Center, so please be sure to buy a ticket beforehand. If you are unable to attend, please be free to drop off your cards, notes, and warm wishes at the Rectory Office this week, and we will be sure that he receives them.

May the Lord bless our dear Fr. Sweeney, and may Our Lady watch over and protect him always.

In the Holy Family,

*Fr. Joe*



Father Peter Sweeney, a native of County Kerry, Ireland, and one of 10 children, was ordained to the priesthood on June 4, 1961 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Kilkenny, Ireland. He attended St. Brendan's College in Kilkenny and the Catholic University of America. He completed seminary studies at St. Kieran's in Kilkenny.

Father Sweeney has served as pastor of Our Lady of Grace Parish, Silver Spring, from 2004 - 2016. From 1989 to 2004, he was the pastor of St. Paul Parish, Damascus. In 1981, Father Sweeney was appointed pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Landover, where he served for three years until he went on an educational sabbatical in Rome for one year. He returned in 1985 and continued to serve as pastor of St. Joseph Parish for four more years until 1989. From 1974 to 1981, Father Sweeney was the director of the Propagation of the Faith.

In 1970, he was named parochial vicar of Holy Family Parish, Hillcrest Heights, where he served for five years. From 1968 to 1970, Father Sweeney was the parochial vicar of St. Gabriel Parish, Washington. In 1966, he was named assistant director of archdiocesan Propagation of the Faith, a role he served in until 1968. His first priestly assignment was as parochial vicar at St. Bernard Parish, Riverdale, from 1961 to 1968.

He also served as the spiritual director of the Legion of Mary in 1962. In 1981, he was the chaplain of the Emerald Isle Division #3 of the Ancient Order of the Hibernians. Father Sweeney served on the archdiocesan priest council for one year in 1996. For three years, he was the chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, St. Paul Council No. 11105 from 1997 to 2000.

After his retirement from Our Lady of Grace Parish, Fr. Sweeney moved to St. John Neumann on July 16<sup>th</sup> 2012. He has been savoring his retirement and enjoying being with the 50+ club as their Chaplain.



Want to see more pictures ? YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAgloT4ZqEc&fmt=18> or Google "Sweeney Jubilee"