

# Msgr. Sullivan celebrates 50 years of priesthood

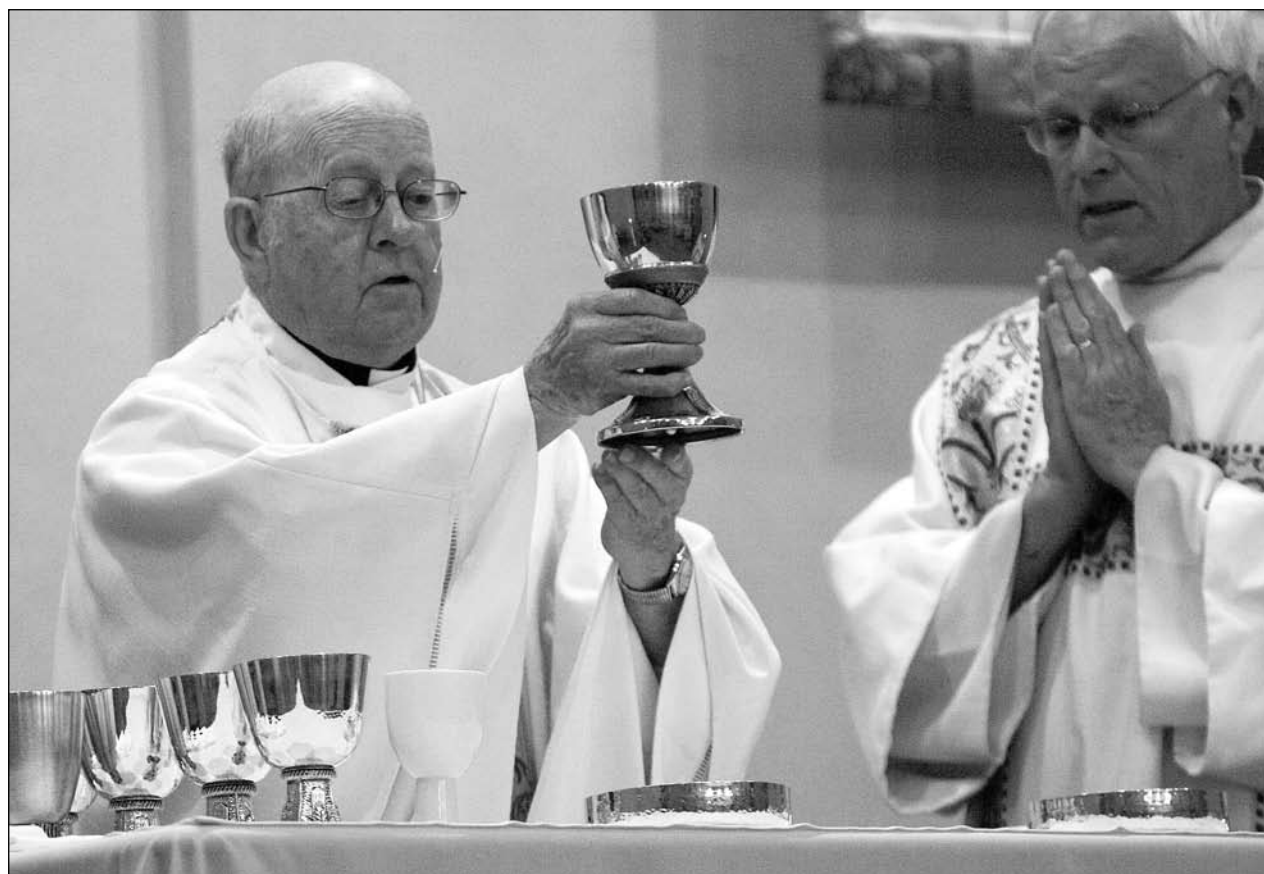
By Kathrine Patton  
Editor

CHEYENNE – Msgr. Eugene Sullivan celebrated his 50th anniversary to the priesthood May 21 at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Cheyenne. Msgr. Sullivan was joined by family, friends, and nearly 30 fellow priests and deacons of the diocese. Relatives traveled from as far away as Ireland to commemorate the golden jubilee with Msgr. Sullivan.

Retired Bishop Joseph Hart celebrated the anniversary Mass and gave the homily. During the homily, Bishop Hart said that it was fitting that the Gospel reading was about two brothers, Peter and Andrew who answered Christ's call to follow him. Msgr. Sullivan and his twin brother, Msgr. Gerald Sullivan, were ordained to the priesthood together in 1959 by Bishop Hubert Newell at St. Anthony's in Casper.

"Suppose they kept on with their nets, but they didn't" he said, "they said 'yes' and responded to the call. We have benefited from two of the finest priests we have ever known."

The anniversary



Photos by Shauna Stephenson

Above, Msgr. Eugene Sullivan celebrates the 50th anniversary of his ordination recently in a Mass held at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Cheyenne. Right, many parishioners and friends of Msgr. Sullivan were on hand for the special occasion, made a bit bittersweet, due to the death of his twin brother and fellow priest, Msgr. Gerald Sullivan in 2007.

celebration was "bittersweet" because of the absence of his brother with whom he had done everything, Msgr. Sullivan said. Msgr. Gerald Sullivan passed away

Sept. 13, 2007. The two men had lived together after their retirements in Cheyenne and had enjoyed one another's company while golfing, attending sporting events, celebrating Mass and traveling.

Bishop Hart spoke of the fellowship of the priesthood and how much it has meant to have the Sullivans as brother priests.

"We priests in Wyoming are a closely knit group, and it probably has something to do with the wide open spaces. We are in the priesthood together. We have the example of one another, and how blessed we have



been to have the blessing of Gene and Gerry as part of the presbyterate, as part of our lives," he said.

Bishop Hart spoke of the importance of the relationship between priests and the Blessed Mother. He shared that whenever he and Msgr. Sullivan travel together, Msgr. Sullivan says, "Let's pray the rosary."

There is a similarity between priests and the Blessed Mother, and that is the virtue of hope. When she said yes, she had to have high hopes, and the priest has to have high hopes, he said.

The bishop called Msgr. Sullivan a hero. "Heroes are the ones who pay the price of excellence to be a good priest," he said. "If we don't have heroes, how will we know how far we will go?"

Bishop Hart thanked Msgr. Sullivan's family for the blessing of their brother, their nephew, their cousin and their uncle. "We thank God for Gene," he said, "for putting down his net, and following Jesus."

Msgr. Sullivan shared how touched he

was to have his family with him for the celebration. He spoke of his parents coming to Wyoming from Ireland and how much faith and determination they must have had to do it.

"Thank God they did it," he said. He spoke of the many parishes he had been assigned to over the years and how he had fallen in love with the brotherhood of priests. "We are the finest fraternity in the world," he said.

The best part of his priesthood, he said, was celebrating the Holy Eucharist and having the opportunity to do parish ministry. "Their whole life is part of your life," he said, referring to the people he had served throughout his 50 years as a priest.

Msgr. Sullivan recalled how he called on the Blessed Mother Mary to be with him at the beginning of his ministry. "I turned to Mary and asked her to hold my hand. I have felt her hand everyday of my priesthood," he said.

Diocesan Administrator Father Michael Carr, recognized the gift that the priest has been to the faithful of Wyoming. "Msgr. Sullivan has been an inspiration for the priests and people of this diocese, and we congratulate him on his service and look forward to continued fellowship with him," he said.

Msgr. Sullivan, even in his retirement, continues to be active by participating in various functions and substituting for priests throughout the diocese.



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