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Holy Trinity's Father Yargeau elevated to Monsignor

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GREENFIELD -- Holy Trinity Church was filled with 511 worshippers Sunday afternoon, most of whom had come to honor the elevation of Father Ronald Gerard Yargeau to monsignor, the first in the church's 140-year history.

'I'm humbled and I'm greatly honored,' Yargeau said in an interview before the Sunday service, which was a prayer service for vocations.

Yargeau earlier indicated that he is the 17th pastor of the Holy Trinity Church.

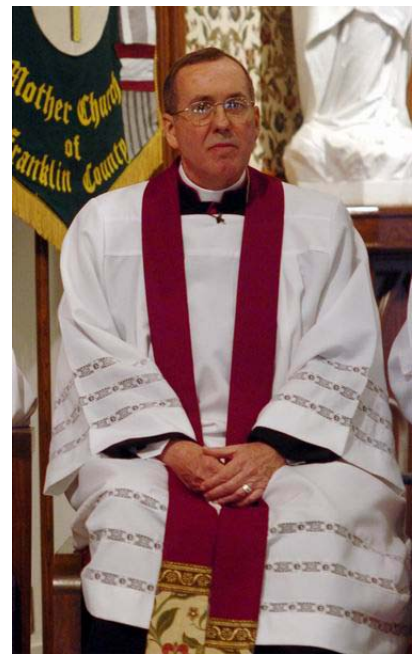
Pope Benedict XVI named Yargeau and eight other priests from the Springfield Diocese as monsignors at the end of last year. On Sunday, for the first time, Yargeau wore purple-trimmed black cassocks and a purple sash, the outward mark of his new office.

The title of monsignor is largely an honorary one, with some added responsibilities. It means Yargeau now has the rank of 'Chaplain to His Holiness.'

Although a solemn occasion, the service was not without humor.

'Do you think that he's done the dishes since he's become monsignor?' Father Timothy Campoli asked the crowd to the response of laughter.

When Yargeau looked into the crowd, he saw worshippers visiting from other churches he's served at, including some from Chicopee, Springfield, and Holyoke.



Recorder/Peter MacDonald
Father Ronald Gerard Yargeau sits and listens during the ceremony at Holy Trinity Church where he was elevated to monsignor on Sunday. It was the first such ceremony in the church's 140-year history.

'We're very fortunate here at this parish,' said Norman Therien, who has always attended Holy Trinity Church. 'When my mom passed away, he (Yargeau) called the house several times and asked if there was anything he could do for us.'

'He will listen to anything anyone needs help with,' said Joan McQuade, who had come from Colrain.

Following the service, worshippers formed a long line that slowly made its way downstairs where people had hors d'ouvres and took pictures with Yargeau and shook hands with Bishop Timothy McDonnell.

Among those waiting in line was Yargeau's brother, Brian, and his family, who had come from Ludlow.

At 10 years old, the monsignor was so devoted to the church that he had already set up an altar in the downstairs of his home and would practice saying mass there, Brian Yargeau said.

'My vocation began in my home with wonderful parents and wonderful family,' said the monsignor, who was ordained in 1973.
