

Living Faith

Fr. Robert Cannon

Class of 1970

Fr. Bob was filled with doubts when he was thinking about becoming a priest in his senior year. He remembers asking CCC Coach John Ash (who was not a Catholic and not known for being overly religious) what he thought about him becoming a priest. Coach Ash looked him right in the eye, and as only a coach can with all sincerity, he quietly said to him, "You would make a good priest." His words gave Fr. Bob an inner dose of confidence to enter the seminary. "I doubt that Coach Ash had any idea how much his words meant to me. Some wise person said, "You only grow and stand tall in life if your roots run deep. How true, how true. Today, Clearwater Central Catholic remains one of those deep roots, still supporting me in life." When asked why he thought it was essential to stay connected to CCC, Fr. Bob said, "I have a debt of gratitude to all of those teachers and classmates at CCC that were part of my young adulthood. I would not have been able to accomplish what I have done without their influence and support."

After ordination on May 13, 1978, Fr. Bob served at St. Cecelia Catholic Church. In his second pastoral assignment, he was named the pastor. He remembers feeling torn when Cardinal Mooney played against CCC on the same fields that he played on as a former Marauder.

As a diocesan priest, he was commissioned as a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force Reserves in 1986 while studying in Rome, Italy. He was mobilized in 2003, leaving the Diocese of Venice for the War in Iraq. At the request of the Air Force Chief of Chaplains, he transitioned from the reserves to active duty until his retirement in June 2016. Since retiring with the rank of colonel in 2016, Fr. Bob has been on assignment to the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, in Washington, DC. He remains a priest of the Diocese of Venice in Florida.