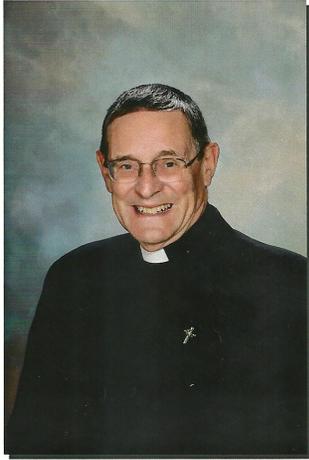


**50th Ordination
Anniversary
St. Bernard Church**



**May 11, 2018
Rev. Michael W. Cloney**

FATHER MICHAEL W. CLONEY

BIOGRAPHY

JANUARY 10, 2018

The vocational call to the priesthood of Jesus Christ was a seed planted in my heart at a very early age of ten years. I would play “priest” at home with my two brothers and a sister. My vocation was fostered by my parents who took us to Mass every Sunday at St. Patrick’s Church, Loleta. Our family sheep ranch was on Table Bluff, and I learned to be a “shepherder” because I drove the sheep into the barn with the help of Laddie, our Australian Collie. Little did I know that I would become a “shepherd” leading my flock of people. I was born in Eureka and baptized at St. Bernard Church, Eureka, CA. My parents are Leland F. and Florence Ann Cloney.

The Irish priests were great friends of the family and they were an inspiration to me. I also met Father Paul Debiels, who took three of us students to an ordination ceremony in Sacramento. My eighth grade teacher, Sister Rosemary, had us write a story about becoming a certain kind of person with a good education. I wrote two stories to either become a pharmacist or a priest. Sister Rosemary said, “You better make up your mind soon.”

I entered St. Pius X Seminary, Metropolitan-Rio Dell for three years and returned to St. Bernard High School to graduate in 1960. I entered Mt. Angel Seminary, St. Benedict, Oregon. The Mt. Angel Abbey monks were our teachers to help us complete eight years of philosophy and theology studies. I was ordained a priest, May 11, 1968, at St. Bernard Church, Eureka, CA by Bishop Leo T. Maher, the first bishop of the new Diocese of Santa Rosa (1962).

I retired in 2015 at the age of 73 years. I was an associate pastor; a high school chaplain and religion teacher; journalism and photography teacher; chaplain and builder of our summer camp program; and Pastor of five parishes and four elementary schools. I have served in the counties of Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino, Humboldt and Del Norte.

My life’s attitude and value was to serve where I was called by the Bishop. I was free to enter into a new ministry with openness and adventure. My challenge was to serve the spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual needs of the people of all ages. I have been gifted by God to shepherd my people for fifty years.

Blessings!

Father Michael W. Cloney