



# Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

## Office of the Bishop

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Dear Monsignor Urbaniak,

*Bernard*

It certainly made me smile when I heard that you are being honored by the Serra Club as Priest of the Year. And I smiled even more when I tried to imagine your reaction when you heard the news! In my opinion, they made a good choice!

In our dinner conversations, you would often remind me that your generation of priests from the 1960's had a unique perspective because of the changes in the world and the hope that was manifested in the teachings of the Second Vatican Council at that time. It makes me think of the patron saint of priests who lived through turbulent times 150 years before your experience.

Besides sharing in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, you have something else in common with St. John Vianney. Both of you have staying power as a pastor. Vianney spent 41 years at Ars, and your ministry on the east side of Erie is not far behind that number.

St. John Vianney was not one to brag about himself, yet he once said, "A good shepherd, a shepherd according to the heart of God, is the greatest treasure that the good God can give to a parish, and one of the most precious gifts of the divine mercy." St. John Vianney also put it this way: "The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus."

I know firsthand that the people at St. Stan's and St. Bernard's in Falls Creek years earlier think of you as having the heart of Jesus. None of us who are priests could be or accomplish anything in pastoral ministry unless we have that heart and are possessed by that heart of the Lord Jesus.

Congratulations good friend on being named Priest of the Year! I regret that I am not with you for the celebration. Our annual Serra Club Mass and Dinner in Johnstown is the very same day and time. Please extend my best wishes to the other honored guests and to the Serra Club for their great work in promoting vocations!

Fraternally in Christ,

*Mark*

Most Rev. Mark L. Bartchak  
Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown