

Father John J Walsh, First Pastor of St. John the Evangelist RC Parish
Joe and Mary Rekus

Father John Walsh, a priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, was very instrumental in ecumenical endeavors in the Archdiocese following Vatican II. He was assigned by Archbishop Lawrence Sheahan in 1967 to be the first pastor of the new parish, St John the Evangelist. The rectory was a house on **Green Mountain Circle** which was purchased by the parish. Father Walsh was a very welcoming man, a true pastor who gathered the new Columbians and people from surrounding areas to become parishioners in what many thought to be an experimental church. He was keen on good liturgies, **finding** personable, thought provoking priests to help with the growing need for more masses on weekends.

He held dinners at his home, not only get to know his new family at St. John's, but for the new families to get to know each other. It was not like parishes that we were accustomed to, it was people who came from many areas, backgrounds, and customs who were forming relationships to last a lifetime. **Father Walsh** joined with the other new interfaith pastors in the ground-breaking service for the city's first Interfaith Center, at Wilde Lake, on June 22, 1969. Father John Walsh was a pioneer in faith and leadership and also a great liturgist who helped our Church move forward after Vatican II. He remained pastor until August 1969.