

REVEREND JEROME FRANCIS McKENNA, C.P.



Father Jerome Francis McKenna, a Passionist priest of the St. Paul of the Cross Province of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, died on Sunday, April 7, 2024. Born on April 13, 1930, he was 93 years of age. A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he was the son of the late Francis Joseph McKenna and the late Gertrude Foley McKenna. Father Jerome was predeceased by his brothers, Thomas, Jerome Matthew,

and Patrick. In addition to the members of his Congregation, Fr. Jerome leaves his brother Joseph, (spouse: MaryLou Libell), Regis (spouse: Dianne Page), Brother Robert McKenna, C.P., many devoted nephews and nieces, family members and friends.

Fr. Jerome graduated from High School at Holy Cross Minor Seminary, Dunkirk, New York in 1950. Fr. Jerome's First Profession into the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ was on July 17, 1951 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His Final Profession was on July 17, 1954 in Brighton, Massachusetts. From 1951 to 1955 he completed undergraduate studies acquiring an academic degree of Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from St. Gabriel's Passionist seminary in Brighton, Massachusetts. Between 1955 and 1958 he engaged in academic studies at Holy Family Monastery, West Hartford, Connecticut and St. Michael's Monastery, Union City, New Jersey achieving an academic degree of Master of Arts in Theology. On April 25, 1958, Fr. Jerome entered into Holy Orders being ordained a priest by Bishop Cuthbert M. O'Gara, C.P. at St. Michael's Church in Union City, New Jersey. In 1958, Fr. Jerome also completed his studies in Sacred Eloquence at Our Lady of Sorrows Passionist Monastery in West Springfield, Massachusetts. Fr. Jerome's final academic achievement was in 1961 when he completed an academic degree of Licentiate in Sacred Theology at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome, Italy.

His Passionist ministry proclaiming the love of God in the Passion of Jesus Christ spanned more than 63 years and included official leadership responsibilities throughout the Province, including work in Union City, New Jersey; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Preston, West Virginia; Charleston, West Virginia; and Atlanta, Georgia. His Passionist service had significant positive impact on the lives of numerous individuals, groups, and dioceses, in particular the Diocese of Wheeling, Diocese of Pittsburgh, the Archdiocese of Newark, and the Archdiocese of Georgia. During these many years, Fr. Jerome assumed varied leadership roles and duties including Provincial Secretary (1961-1965), Monastery Rector-St. Paul of the Cross Monastery (1965-1971), Director-Passionist Social Concerns Center (1971-1981), Director-Passionist Volunteers, Inc. (1973-1981), Moderator-Monastery Food Cooperative (1974-1978), Pastor-Catholic Church of Preston County (1981-2000), Dean-Fairmont Deanery (1985-1994), Provincial Consultor (1990-1994), Vicar Forane-Vicariate of Clarksburg (1997-2000), Director-Diocesan Planning & Pastoral Services (2000), Vicar General-Diocese of Wheeling (2005-2009), Pastor-St. Paul of the Cross Parish (2009-until his death).

Fr. Jerome also served on numerous commissions and boards of directors during his years of Passionist and priestly ministry. These include the Synodal Commission for Religious-Chairperson (1970-1971), Church Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines-Chairperson (1976-1979), Province Task Force on Option for the Poor, Pastoral Concerns Committee-Diocese of Wheeling Presbyteral Council, Preston County Ministerial Association & Ethics Committee, Priest Mentor Committee-Chairperson (1993), Inter-Province Committee on Corporate Responsibility (1994), Mission Fulfillment Task Force (1994-1999), Synodal Commission on Church (1997-2000), Province Pastoral Planning Committee (1999), Presbyteral Council, Diocesan Consultor (2000), Bishop's Cabinet (2000), Executive Secretary, Diocesan Pastoral Council (2001), Executive Staff of Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston (2005), and Vicar for Planning (2006).

In addition, Fr. Jerome was a member of a number of Church and Civic Societies including the Catholic Theological Society of America, Amnesty International, Knights of Columbus, Priests Eucharistic League, National Catholic Evangelization Association, The Liturgical Conference, PAX CHRISTI USA, and the Southern Poverty Law Center. He was also engaged in various literary publications. He was publisher of the S.C. Alert, an editor of Compassion magazine, a contributor to the Whole Earth Papers, and a participant and contributor for the radio series, The Catholic Perspective-Catholic Sound Bites (1990-1994).

Finally, Fr. Jerome was decorated by the Holy See on December 15, 2006 with the Cross of Honor-Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice.

Wake services and a Mass of Transferral will be held at St. Paul of the Cross Parish, 551 Harwell Road, Atlanta, Georgia. The Wake will occur on Wednesday, April 10, 2024 from 3pm until 9pm. The Mass of Transferral will occur at 10am on Thursday, April 11, 2024.

Fr. Jerome's body will then be transferred to St. Paul of the Cross Monastery Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for Wake, Mass of Christian Burial, and Final Interment. The Wake will occur on Thursday, April 18, 2024 in the Monastery Church from 3pm to 9pm. The Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Friday, April 19, 2024 in the Monastery Church at 10am. The Interment will occur immediately after the Mass in the St. Paul of the Cross Cemetery in Pittsburgh.

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