

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 pre-deceased 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 attended St. Canice Grade School in Knoxville for five years when the family moved to the Brookline area of Pittsburgh, where he finished his grade school education at Resurrection Grade School in Brookline, taught by the Sisters of Charity. 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. During these many years, Fr. Jerome assumed varied leadership roles and duties, including 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), and 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. 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.

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