



DIOCESE OF LITTLE ROCK

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OBITUARY FOR FR. THOMAS KELLER

Father Thomas Keller, the eldest living and longest serving priest of the Diocese of Little Rock, died on April 13, 2024, in Little Rock, Arkansas. A native of Little Rock, Fr. Keller was the youngest of seven born to J. Walter and Isabelle Keller. In 1950, he graduated from Little Rock Catholic High School for Boys. He attended Villanova University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, before discerning a call to the priesthood. Returning home to Little Rock, he enrolled in Saint John's Home Mission Seminary. Bishop Albert Fletcher ordained Fr. Keller to the priesthood on May 15, 1958, at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew.

After ordination, his first assignment was as associate pastor of Immaculate Conception in Blytheville. Fr. Keller served the parishes of Saint Joseph in Pine Bluff, Saint Barbara in De Queen, Saint Thomas Aquinas in Fayetteville, Saint Edward in Texarkana, Saint James in Searcy, Saint Cecilia in Newport, Saint Agnes in Mena, Blessed Sacrament in Jonesboro, Saint Theresa in Little Rock, Our Lady of Good Counsel in Little Rock, Saint Jude in Jacksonville, Saint Francis of Assisi in Fairfield Bay, Saint Jude Thaddeus in Clinton, Saint Rose of Lima in Carlisle, and Holy Trinity in England. On June 17, 2014, Father Keller transitioned to Senior Priest status while serving as the Chaplain for the Pro-life movement in the Diocese of Little Rock. He served on several diocesan boards and commissions during his over sixty-five years of ministry.

In addition to his work as a pastor in parishes, Father Keller served the spiritual needs of members of the Arkansas Army National Guard beginning in 1969. During Operation Desert Storm, he deployed to the Middle East. Following many years of service in the Guard he retired with the rank of Major.

Throughout his ministry, Fr. Keller championed the unborn and the Church's teachings of the dignity of every person from the first moment of conception to its natural end. He prayed and worked for the end to abortion. The Pro-Life movement in central Arkansas owes much to the tireless efforts of Father Keller.

Father Keller had a deep devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He promoted Devotion of the Two Hearts of Jesus and Mary. In his homilies, classes, and conversations, he directed people to Jesus through the intercession of the Blessed Mother.

Fr. Keller is preceded in death by his parents and siblings. He is survived by many nieces and nephews who remember him as a spiritual mentor.

Funeral Arrangements are under the guidance of Smith Family Funeral Home- North Little Rock. All services will be held at Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church located at 1321 South Van Buren Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. A Visitation will be held at the Church from 5pm to 7 pm followed by a Vigil Service and Rosary at 7 pm on Thursday, April 18, 2024. The Mass of Christian Burial will occur at Our Lady of Good Counsel at 11 am on Friday, April 19, 2024, with burial to follow in the "Priests' Circle" at Calvary Cemetery at the corner of Charles Bussey and South Woodrow Streets in Little Rock.