



John Rossiter

June 26, 1933 - June 27, 2010

Father John Francis Rossiter, age 77, of Topeka, died Sunday, June 27, 2010 at Midland Hospice House. He was born June 26, 1933 in Topeka, to George and Estelle (Finn) Rossiter. He attended Holy Name Grade School and in 1951 graduated from Hayden High School. Fr. Rossiter was very proud of having achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. He attended Marquette University in 1952 and entered St. Thomas Seminary, Denver CO. In 1955 he went to North American College/Gregorian University Rome, Italy, S.T.L. , where Father was ordained December 20, 1958. In the summers of 1964-71 he attended graduate schools in Washington DC and St. Louis MO and earned his Masters Degree in Theology. In 1959-60 Father John was assigned to Blessed Sacrament Parish and taught at Ward High School, Kansas City KS; from 1960-62 he was assigned to The Old Cathedral and taught at Immaculata High School in Leavenworth; from 1962-72 he was assigned to St. John the Evangelist Parish, Kansas City KS and he taught at Donnelly College, he also taught at St Joseph High School 1962-63. He was Pastor from 1973-77 at St Lawrence Catholic Campus Center KU; 1977-1986 St. Pius X Parish, Mission KS; 1986-2006 Assumption Parish; July 1, 2006 Fr. Rossiter retired in residence to Assumption Rectory. Fr. Rossiter was a proud grandson of Irish immigrants. He became well known to Topekans as the celebrant of the Mass at Assumption Catholic Church which officially opened the St. Patrick's Day celebration. He was the Grand Marshal of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in 2006. His homilies and bulletins were known as much

for their wit as for their substance. Father Rossiter was a man whose interests were many including travel, musical theatre, reading, especially mystery novels, food, jokes, his favorite sports teams Notre Dame, KC Chiefs and Royals, KU Jayhawks, Boston Celtics. There was a special place in his heart for Guest House and Alcoholics Anonymous. He provided space at the rectory for AA meetings. He was preceded in death by his parents and his sister Kathleen Jacobs. He is survived by his sisters, Jeanne Renfro, Wichita; Maureen Lane and her husband, Jim, Topeka; 12 nieces and nephews. Fr. John Rossiter will lie in state Wednesday from 10 a.m. until a 7 p.m. Prayer Service at Mater Dei Assumption Church, where family will greet friends from 4-7 p.m. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Thursday at 11 a.m. at the church. Burial will follow at Mt. Calvary Cemetery. Fr. Rossiter requests memorial contributions be made to Mater Dei Parish for the purpose of the Sandwich Ministry and Midland Hospice.

Tribute Wall



“ *John Rossiter*

January 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ *Fr. Rossiter was known as the "cool priest" at St. John the Evangelist during the 60's. Before he arrived, all of us kids thought the masses were boring and the priests were grouchy old men whos scared us. Fr. John made it interesting, and even fun, for the young folks. The masses he conducted were always well attended, because everyone wanted to hear his sermons and laugh at his jokes. He was an inspiration for myself and classmates because he made the celebration of the eucharist a true celebration. He was a role model for me and many others. He will live on through those many young people he inspired.*

Chuck Morris - July 21, 2010 at 10:02 AM

BB

“ Our belated expression of care and of our love to you, Jeanne, Maureen and your families. We were at the Mass, and dearly appreciated the large attendance of clergy, nuns and laity, plus the meaningful liturgy and homily. It was all so appropriate for John. I'm sure he enjoyed every moment of that celebration. We could not stay for the dinner afterward because of previous commitments, so we truly missed a chance to meet with you in person. We all go back such a long way to the days in the Kendall/Potwin neighborhood, Holy Name, etc.

My brother, Ted, John and Bob Smith were all such good, close friends. Ted was waiting for John with open arms, I,m sure. He died two years ago, also in the month of June. I'm sure John needs no prayers. You will have many wonderful memories to console you in your time of loss, without a doubt. Again, our love and prayers, Bob and Joleen

Bob and Joleen Bechtel - July 03, 2010 at 02:01 PM

SM

“ My family and I will always be grateful to Father John Rossiter for the kindness and compassion he shared with our family upon our dear mother's death. His presence comforted her in her final days and was a blessing to us all.

Many years ago when I visited Topeka, my brother and I attended Easter Mass. To this day we still remember how Father Rossiter's beautiful voice mesmerized everyone when he sang the Liturgy of the Eucharist. When my brother called and told me that Father Rossiter had been called home, we both spoke of that Mass and how it touched our hearts.

May the many warm memories you have of your dear one, comfort you in your loss.

Sara McGinnis - July 02, 2010 at 03:29 PM

SM

“ To Jeanne & the families of Father Rossiter,
We are so sorry for your loss. We have been praying for Father
John throughout his illness and will continue to pray for you and
your families in this difficult time. May God bless you.
Sue & Merwyn Muckenthaler

Sue & Merwyn Muckenthaler - June 30, 2010 at 04:48 PM

FC

“ Please accept my deepest sympathies. John was a classmate in
Rome. From 1955 through 1959 we shared many experiences
together and since 1959 our class has kept in contact with
regularity. John has been a regular attendee at our class reunions
(the next one is scheduled for this October), and his wonderful and
enjoyable presence will be greatly missed. Please be assured of my
prayers for you and for John's soul.
Fr. Angelo Caligiuri (Buffalo NY)

PS One of the nicknames we had for John was "Rudy"

Fr. Angelo Caligiuri - June 30, 2010 at 03:07 PM

JR

“ It is with a heavy heart and much sadness that we mourn the passing of Fr. Rossiter. However, there is joy in knowing that he is in peace and will enjoy the rewards of eternal life. Like so many others, I had the priviledge of knowing Fr. Rossiter most of my life. My first memory of him was his walking out of the sacristy at St. John the Evangelist (KCK) with a "beard." That doesn't seem like much by today's standards, but in the early 70's and through a little girl's eyes, that was huge, and we took notice. Through the years, Fr. Rossiter continued to make an impact on so many of us he served as a parish priest and family friend. Not only could he deliver a great homily, but he could deliver valuable advice and memorable teachings (sometimes laced with wit). Once a little boy went to up to communion and told Father he wanted ice-cream . Without missing a beat, Father pointed to Topsy's and said, "Chocolate or vanilla...two blocks that way." Over the years, I grew to appreciated Father Rossiter's intellect and insight that has aided me in better understanding Catholicism and life in general. Truly, he was one of a kind and he will be deeply missed.

Jane Grosdidier Regan - June 30, 2010 at 01:24 PM

JN

“ I was in 6th grade at St. John the Evangelist when Father Rossiter came to our parish. He was such a breath of fresh air! He constantly challenged my thinking and over time became a friend and confidant. He was a unique and vivacious soul - one in a million. To have known Father Rossiter is to have been truly blessed.

Joan Nickum - June 30, 2010 at 12:03 AM

MK

“ We love you, Father Rossiter, you have a very special place in the hearts of all of us Assumption kids. Will remember you always for giving us the gifts of First communion and First Confession. Our prayers are with you and your family.

marissa keehn - June 29, 2010 at 11:30 PM

JR

“ My husband and I have known Father Rossiter since we were in first grade. He was there when we made our first confession, our first communion, and when we were confirmed. Father Rossiter was present at our eighth grade graduation ceremony from Assumption as well. Father married us in 2005 and then baptized our son in 2007. Father has been a constant in our lives, its like he's family. We were so blessed to have him in our lives for so long. He will be missed.

Jim, Amy and Kaden Raines - June 29, 2010 at 10:07 PM

HH

“ Father was the first priest with whom I formed a friendship. I share his interests in etymology and teaching and his homilies were riveting to me. He is a chief reason my husband went through RCIA and joined the Church, and we were honored to have him preside at our wedding and later baptize our two daughters, even though by then we had to ask him to come out of retirement to do so. Father was so smart, funny, and approachable. As a lector, I enjoyed visiting with him in the sacristy before Mass; usually it was about the Jayhawks, books we were reading, or art, but before we would leave to begin Mass, he would always say, "Let's go do a good job for Jesus." Great advice from a great man! Rest in peace, Father!

Heather Huscher - June 29, 2010 at 09:29 PM

RS

“ We purchased our first home in St. Pius Parish. Before we purchased our home, I called the rectory and Father answered. He told me we were a "stone's throw away from the church" when I asked how far the Church was from our home.

Father Rossiter Baptized our second son Ryan. When he left St. Pius we were very upset because we knew we would miss seeing and hearing him at Mass.

He was truly a great man and a comforting soul.
Thank you for allowing us to be a part of his life!

The Swarts'

Rose Marie & Steve Swarts - June 29, 2010 at 07:10 PM

MV

“ Father Rossiter was the face of the Church in the 60s. I took his classes at Donnelly, and through the years, he's remained one of the best reasons for me to hang on to Catholicism. He was honest, joyous, authentic, and he cared about each of us. He was challenging and tough, and his commitment to Assumption only bore out those beliefs he instilled in us, through example, so long ago. We'll be talking dail. Thank you, Father. Rest in Peace.

Mary Preston VanSchoelandt - June 29, 2010 at 07:07 PM

SC

“ fr. rossiter confirmed me in 1995 and have always followed the rules et forth and am proud to have met him my condolences are with the family

scott cox - June 29, 2010 at 04:22 PM

GK

“ *Father Rossiter was truly a God-send to me. His dedication to service to others left a permanent mark with me. Today I serve as sacristan, Eucharistic Minister, and lector. I will never forget his words each Sunday before Mass: "Let's go out and do a good job for the Lord." And towards the end: "Remember to pray for me." I will, Father. His spirit lives on. --Gail Kaiser and Louis Hartness*

Gail Kaiser - June 29, 2010 at 02:06 PM

RP

“ *Jeanne and Maureen and families, we send our condolences. Fr. Rossiter was a dear, special friend to our family and we will miss him. You must be so proud of him and all of the ways he made a difference in so many lives. We have many memories of Fr. Rossiter and of the good times we shared together. We are just glad his suffering is over and he can now enjoy the fruits of his labor...heaven. May you feel some comfort knowing he is now in a better place and we will see him again someday. Rudy, Rosemary, and Kevin Pappert*

Rosemary Pappert - June 29, 2010 at 01:59 PM

CS

“ Father Rossiter also married my husband, Tim, and I, on Jan. 7, 1995 at Assumption Church, Topeka. His homilies were indeed substantive — both contemporary and old-fashioned in each one. He married my aunt and uncle in Leavenworth (Fred and Barbara Miller) in the early 60's, as well. Fr. John meant so much to us — he brought us into Assumption Parish which then channeled us to Holy Name Church. When the two parishes became one, Mater Dei Parish, we were finally back to being a part of both great parishes. Fr. John was strong, funny and wise . . . someone we all learned from each time we saw him. We will miss him — but we know we are so blessed to have been blessed by him in marriage so many years ago. May he enjoy his peaceful retirement in God's hands. And to his immediate loved ones — bless you, and may you share peace and comfort with all the people he touched. Thank you for sharing him with us.

Christine, Tim and Adam Schieferecke

Christine, Tim and Adam Schieferecke - June 29, 2010 at 01:38 PM

BS

“ I always felt so fortunate to have my very own personal priest - actually took it for granted that Fr. Rossiter would always be there for me (and my family). Even when he was diagnosed with cancer 8 years ago, I thought he would always be there. Last week my mom called and said she thought it would be soon. I just wanted to see him and say goodbye. I didn't make it to KC in time to say goodbye but I know that he will always be there in my heart as he is in all of yours. I know that he will watch over me and my family as he has done for the past 45 years. I know he is in a better place and is no longer suffering. He left me with so many fond memories and unconditional love. Thank you to the Rossiter family for sharing him with the Grosdidier family. We will forever be in your debt. With much love and gratitude, Betsy Grosdidier Schuler

Betsy Schuler - June 29, 2010 at 01:26 PM

KH

“ I am so sorry that I never got to meet Father Rossiter. He left Ward High School two years before I got there. He is my second cousin and I would like to have gotten to know him and hear some of the stories I'm sure he must have had about the Hynes family.

Can you tell me where he is going to be buried? The only Mt. Calvary Cemetery I am familiar with is in Wyandotte County, Kansas.

Kathleen Hontz - June 29, 2010 at 12:57 PM

DL

“ Maureen, Jim and the entire Rossiter family, please accept my sincere sympathies. I'm sure the reunion taking place right now between Fr. John, his family and the many lives he touched is a joyous one.

Dave Laird - June 29, 2010 at 12:08 PM

BS

“ My condolences on the passing of Father John Rossiter. I was blessed to know him when I first came to Topeka in the 1990s. I appreciated his support in my life and will mourn his passing. May God bless him as angels greet him in the Eternal Jerusalem.

Bill Stelzner - June 29, 2010 at 09:49 AM

JH

“ To Father Rossiter's family: We are so sorry for your loss. We are members of St. Pius X parish in Mission, KS., and had great respect for Fr. John. When my husband, Tom, joined the Catholic church many years ago, it was Fr. John who did the instruction. Please know that we will keep you in our thoughts and prayers at this difficult time. -- Sincerely, Judy and Tom Hyde

Judith Hyde - June 29, 2010 at 09:29 AM

JP

“ Although my wife has lived here all her life, I moved to Topeka in June of 1986. When I first met Fr. John, I was taken aback, but the more I got to know him, the more I liked him. He performed the marriage ceremony for my wife and I. We know that most of his parishioner's must feel the same way as we do; He was not only our Priest and spiritual advisor, he was our friend. As a Priest, he said what you needed to hear, not what you may have wanted to hear. He told it like it was. He will be greatly missed. To Jim and Maureen, take solice as he is now with his Lord and Savior, and will never feel pain again. We are sure he's looking down wearing that famous Irish smile.

Janet & David Pierce - June 29, 2010 at 08:56 AM

JS

“ Jeanne and Maureen and families - Thank you for sharing the gift of your brother John with us for so many years. We feel his passing with emotions so similar to those of your family. We loved Father John dearly. He's now in the company of the Saints and the presence of our Lord. God bless you and yours. The Spain's - John, Lori, Christopher and Benjamin

John Spain - June 28, 2010 at 11:46 PM

HD

“ *To the family of Father Rossiter, Sorry for your loss, may god take care of you and bless you in your time of grief.*

Heather DuBry - June 28, 2010 at 10:53 PM

AA

“ *To the family of Father Rossiter. May you find comfort in the memories you hold dear in your heart.*

Godspeed Father John.

Adrian, Tish and Shelle Smith Alcala - June 28, 2010 at 06:23 PM