



Reverend Monsignor Francis J. Willenburg

November 20, 1928 - July 10, 2014

Reverend Monsignor Francis J. Willenburg, age 85, long-time pastor at St. Agnes Church in Utica, and most recently in residence at St. Anthony and St. Agnes Church, went home to his Lord and Savior on Thursday, July 10, 2014, at the St. Joseph Nursing Home.

Francis was born on November 20, 1928, in Baltimore, Maryland, the son of the late Frank and Emelia (Zerhusen) Willenburg. Fran graduated from St. Aloysius Academy in Rome in 1946 as Valedictorian, and attended Niagara University where he earned varsity letters in football, basketball, baseball, and golf. Upon completion of his junior year, he followed his calling and entered St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester.

He was ordained on February 2, 1954, and was assigned as Parochial Vicar at Saint Agnes Church. From 1956-1958, he served as Resident Chaplain at St. John's and St. Joseph's Home, and Director and Board member Emeritus of Catholic Charities in the Utica-Rome area, and he was dedicated to the youth who attended Camp Nazareth. From 1970-1974, he was in residence at St. Thomas Church in New Hartford. Much of Father's ecumenical service from 1974 until he retired in 2009 was spent serving as Pastor at St. Agnes Church. He also assisted and served as administrator at St. Louis Gonzaga Church. In addition to his parish ministry, Monsignor Willenburg served as Chaplain at the Newman Club at Mohawk Valley Technical Institute, counselor for the Utica division of the Oneida County Children's Court, Catholic clergy representative for the Utica Civil Defense Organization, and was a founding

board member of St. Joseph Nursing Home. He was a member of the Utica Council 189 Knights of Columbus and The Knights of St. John Commandery #385. Monsignor was inducted into the Hall of Fame for the following organizations: Rome Sports, Greater Utica Sports, the SUNY Institute of Technology Wildcat Boosters, and Central New York Bowling. His love of sports extended to encouraging and supporting athletic endeavors of all around him. It was not unusual to see Monsignor at any and all sporting events involving the youth and adults of the community.

Monsignor Willenburg celebrated his 60th Jubilee in February 2014.

Throughout this time his unending generosity, comforting words, and humble reverence touched the hearts of parishioners, friends, and fellow clergy. His devout spirit, kind heart, and strong character were examples in living for all who knew him. Father's presence in their lives will live on.

Monsignor Willenburg is survived by his sister, Anne Morris of St. Petersburg, Florida; and his nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, cousins, and godchildren. Monsignor's heart was touched by many wonderful and close friendships too numerous to mention, and he felt like extended family to many of his dear parishioners and friends. He was predeceased by his sisters and brothers-in-law, Barbara and Harland Cooper, Mary C. Willenburg, and Robert Morris.

Monsignor Willenburg's family is thankful to the entire staff of the St. Joseph Nursing Home for the compassion, kindness, and respect they imparted to Monsignor while in their care. A note of appreciation is extended to the local clergy and friends who visited and prayed for Monsignor's well being.

Visitation will be held on Sunday from 4-7 at St. Anthony and St. Agnes Church, 422 Tilden Ave., Utica. Vigil Services for Deceased Priest will be at the conclusion of visitation. For those wishing to do so, memorial contributions may be considered to St. Anthony and St. Agnes Church or to Catholic Charities Camp Nazareth Program; envelopes will be available at the church. Monsignor Willenburg's Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Monday at 10:30 at St. Anthony and St. Agnes Church officiated by Most Reverend

Bishop Robert J. Cunningham. Concelebrating the Funeral Mass will be his nephew, Monsignor Robert Morris. He will be laid to rest alongside his family in St. Peter's Cemetery in Rome, NY. Arrangements have been entrusted to the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc., 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. Monsignor Willenburg would most likely want to bestow upon his family, friends, and parishioners his familiar wishes, "Bless you, bless you, bless you".

Tribute Wall

BC

“ Our community, indeed the whole world, has lost a giant, an Angel who could only do good. Monsignor Willenburg though you always hid your light under a bushel basketi it's sunlight brightness always shined through lighting our ways. You touched the lives of so many, old,the young, especially the children. You are now safe harbored beyond the mists of grief and pain and tears. You have served well both heaven and earth. Rest in peace your memory will be eternal.
Bill Chanatry

Bill Chanatry - July 15, 2014 at 06:51 PM

JP

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



John J. P. - July 13, 2014 at 06:26 PM

MA

“ Rest in eternal peace....one of the best



Maria Arrigo-sequin - July 13, 2014 at 04:55 PM



“ Tammy Liss lit a candle in memory of Reverend Monsignor Francis J. Willenburg



Tammy Liss - July 13, 2014 at 12:54 PM



“ DEAR FAMILY OF MSGR FRANCIS WILLENBURG, It has been our pleasure to know Msgr for all of these years here in Utica not only serving Divine Liturgy and Holy Mass with him as a deacon but also seeing him so often at sporting events especially at the Pin O Rama Bowling Center were our son and daughter bowled, Notre Dame baseball and Proctor basketball. "O GOD OF ALL SPIRITS AND ALL FLESH WHO HAVE DESTROYED DEATH, OVERCOME THE DEVIL, GRANT TO YOUR PRIEST SERVANT, FRANCIS, A PLACE OF LIGHT, A PLACE OF PEACE, A PLACE OF HAPPINES WHERE THERE IS NO PAIN, NO GRIEF, NO SIGHING BUT EVERLASTING LIFE" With Our Deepest Sympathy And Heartfelt Prayers Deacon Dan and Cindy Klockowski

Deacon Dan & Cindy Klockowski - July 13, 2014 at 08:16 AM



“ Lisa Klein lit a candle in memory of Reverend Monsignor Francis J. Willenburg



lisa klein - July 12, 2014 at 10:34 PM

CD

“ *Fr. Willinberg was a wonderful Priest to our family during his years a St. Agnes and officiated at both my Mother's and my father's funeral mass. God bless him.*

*Cass DeFiore
Urbana, MD*

Cass DeFiore - July 12, 2014 at 06:49 PM

MS

“ *My deepest sympathies to the family of Monsignor he was a wonderful person and priest. We lived on Albany Street through they 80's and attended St. Agnes. He was always kind and compassionate, and understanding when things were not going well. Even after I married and my parents moved from Utica, they kept in touch, and I he came to my Dads funeral in '96. He will be sorely missed by so very many.*

Mary Jane Scouten - July 12, 2014 at 04:47 PM

VM

“ WELL WHERE TO START WITH MONSIGNOR FRANCIS WILLENBURG . MY FAMILY HAS BEEN LONG TIME FRIENDS WITH MONSIGNOR. WE HAVE GONE THROUGH BAPTISMALS TO WEDDINGS AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN . I MYSELF WAS BLESSED TO WORK WITH MONSIGNOR WILLENBURG FOR , FOUR YEARS . MONSIGNOR NEVER MISSED A BALL GAME OR A BINGO SESSION OR WATCHING MY BROTHERS BOWL EVERY WEDNESDAY NIGHT . IF HE WAS'NT THERE WE WOULD GET WORRIED .IT WAS ALWAYS NICE TO HAVE MONSIGNOR OVER FOR DINNER OR AT THE CAMP . AS MY FAMILY HAS GROWN, MONSIGNOR HAS BLESSED THREE GENERATIONS OF OUR FAMILY . WE WERE VERY BLESSED TO HAVE THAT HONOR WITH HIM AS OUR PRIEST AND A REAL MEMBER OF OUR FAMILY.MONSIGNOR HAS TAUGHT ME TO BE A GREAT CATHOLIC AND FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE CHURCH . I WANT TO SAY THANKS TO MONSIGNOR WILLENBURG FOR ALWAYS BEING THERE IN THE GOOD TIMES AND THE HARD TIMES THAT CAME UP IN LIFE FOR MYSELF AND MY FAMILY.MONSIGNOR WILLENBURG IS THE ONE PERSON I KNOW THAT WILL GO STRAIGHT TO HEAVEN HE WAS A GREAT SHEPERD TO THE LORD. MANY PRAYERS TO HIS FAMILY . WE ARE GOING TO MISS YOU! SINCERILY,
VALERIE VITI MAIDA

VALERIE VITI MAIDA - July 12, 2014 at 04:17 PM

DR

“ I have known Monsignor for 36 plus years. I am saddened by the his death. the numbers cannot be counted by the amount of friends, parishoners, loved ones, and community, that he has left behind. I worked with Monsignor on Thursday nights, when we had our Bingo games at the Son's of Italy. I also participated with The St. Agnes' summer fair, when it was just St. Agnes on Kossuth Ave. Monsignor worked tirelessly all the years of his adult life. He was a great inspiration to our family when my husband Anthony Rescigno was sick, and when he passed away.He helped me tremendously with what ever was thrown in my path. That's Monsignor !! We sure had some great times. Monsignor went above and beyond the call from God. There wasn't a moments rest in his days until late at night when he finally laid his head down on his pillow. Everyone who came to know Mgsr. loved him. when he came into our cafe he always had kind words to say and loved it when my 3 yr old grand=daughter Cali would wait on him...what a kick that was.....he blessed us in so many ways and I know that he is loving us and helping us from the arms of Jesus. He truly knew the meaning of the Tree of Life. He always reminded us humbly to Thank the Lord first , then others. i could share so much with all of you who read this, about Mgsr's great works and love he had and gave of himself.. Until we meet again Monsignor....right???? all my love,
Debbie

Debra Rescigno - July 12, 2014 at 11:47 AM

TF

“ Monsignor is now one with the Lord and no doubt still praying for us still in this world. For living such a kind, gentle, unselfish life he will surely spend eternity in Heaven.



Tim & Colleen Moylan Family - July 12, 2014 at 07:09 AM

BG

“ He was a wonderful person not just clergyman. He went above and beyond his duty. Monsignor was one of a kind. He and my brother Pat never seen eye to eye when my brother was younger. He was fresh sometimes and monsignor was strict. Monsignor got softer as he got old and my brother grow up. They became very close in the last years of my brother Pat`s life. Monsignor was even there when my brother joined Jesus in heaven. My brother waited for monsignor to come be by my brother`s side. last rites were given. Then my brother let go and went to heaven. Thank you to Monsignor for that. I will say my goodbyes Sunday to one of the best men in my life.

Beverly Burr Garner - July 11, 2014 at 06:58 PM

PM

“ In the 80's Monsignor was a member of our bowling team representing Saint Agnes in the Catholic Men's League @ The Pinorama. He was very good and very competitive. Memories of which I will cherish for a very long time.

Paul Mangano - July 11, 2014 at 12:45 PM

PM

“ Paul Mangano sent a virtual gift in memory of Reverend Monsignor Francis J. Willenburg



Paul Mangano - July 11, 2014 at 09:22 AM

MI

“Monsignor will be remembered as a star athlete in his younger days, and a great priest who comforted untold numbers in times of need. He complemented everyone who did even the smallest bit of good, and will always be remembered as an all-around good guy. Living just a few houses from Saint Agnes, I remember his quiet generosity to the poor and underprivileged. He did this in silence, often remaining anonymous. He was a man of God. Rest in peace my friend.

Mike - July 11, 2014 at 07:16 AM

LH

“Monsignor was a great spiritual adviser and friend to so many people. Went to every game and also to every visitation when someone passed away. A man of honor who will never be forgotten. He is truly with God now, may he rest in peace.

Lois Hoyle - July 11, 2014 at 06:49 AM

FD

We have lost a great priest and caring friend. He was truly a dedicated man -not only to the church and his parishoners, but to the entire community. He has touched the lives of so many-he will be greatly missed.

Flo DeSimone - July 11, 2014 at 11:54 AM