

Brother Thomas Kuhn, C.Ss.R., dies at 71

 [redemptorists.net/in-memoriam/brother-thomas-kuhn-obit](https://www.redemptorists.net/in-memoriam/brother-thomas-kuhn-obit)

Brother Thomas Kuhn, C.Ss.R., died Tuesday, March 5, 2019, at the St. John Neumann Residence (Stella Maris), in Timonium, Md., surrounded by his confreres. He was two weeks shy of his 72nd birthday.

Brother Thomas was professed on August 28, 1982.

Arrangements are as follows:

Viewing is set for 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 12, at Stella Maris, followed by Mass at 11.

On Thursday, March 14, a viewing is scheduled for 10 a.m. at St. Gregory Church in North East, Pa., followed by an 11 a.m. funeral Mass and burial.

Update: Read Father Patrick Woods's homily from Brother Tom's funeral Mass:

The other night I called to wish Kevin O'Neil a happy birthday, and he told me the sad news that Brother Tom Kuhn had just died. Since that call I have felt a deep sadness. Many memories filled my mind as I said a prayer for Tom and thanked God for the friendship and Redemptorist life that we had shared over almost 40 years.

The first time I saw Tom Kuhn, I was not happy with him. I was a student at St. Mary's Seminary, and our basketball team had an undefeated record of, I believe 14 and 0—the perfect season. All of us students crowded into the gym at St. Gregory's in North East to root for our beloved St. Mary Lakers. I think we were promised a free day if our team had an undefeated season. St. Gregory's had two small guards, Jimmy Triana and Tom Kuhn. Now these beloved friends are reunited before God. We had a good team, but these two players, especially that short fellow with the crew cut and thick glasses, played so well that we lost the game and our perfect season! God has a great sense of humor and mystery in his workings. Little could I ever have imagined that one day that fellow with the thick glasses would become my dear friend and confrere.

Years later I returned to teach at the seminary in North East, and Tom Kuhn (along with Jim Triana) was the basketball coach of our seminary team. Being avid sports fans—he a fan of the Browns and Indians and I the hopeless Jets and Mets—we built a friendship that brings me here today to Stella Maris. As a young man, Tom had entered our congregation to become a brother, but family concerns led him to leave Ephrata. I can tell you there is a glass brick wall on the porch of what we call *The Mansion* that Tom always pointed out to me when we were visiting Ephrata. He'd say, "Woodsie [his favorite name for me], I **built** that wall!"



One day I was with him at basketball practice, and the kids were shooting layups as they warmed up. I must note that Kenny Gaddy, who is here today, was missing most of his layups. Tom, never one for long conversations, said to me, "Woodsie, sometimes I think I should have never left the Redemptorists. Even though I knew it would cost our school the loss of a great coach, I said, "Why don't you come back?"

Tom did return to the Redemptorists, never looked back, and became an outstanding brother of the congregation for more than three decades. He was a Redemptorist brother in the mode of such men as Brothers Rudy, Benno, Cyril, Benjamin, Raph, Bernie Colleran, Steve Lendvay, Tom Conlin, and countless others, the leaven of our congregation and province. But to [those of us who are] parish priests, preachers of the Gospel, teachers, formators or provincials, our brothers have witnessed by their vowed religious lives [and have called] us to the truth that the great theologian Brother Bosco had constantly proclaimed: we are Redemptorists first. Tom lived that truth. He was a humble, prayerful man who worked tirelessly for the mission of the congregation.

He was minister of the formation house at Holy Redeemer College in Washington, D.C., for many years. I used to joke that I was the only rector in the province who could not sign a check. Tom had a prudent fear of letting me get too near the money. He was a wise man. I remember once on a Friday during Lent (I think it was the feast of St. Clement that fell just two days before Tom's birthday on St. Joseph's Day—a great patron for Tom, who could repair anything), I wanted to have a special dinner for the community in spite of our not being able to eat meat, so I suggested lobster tails. I told Tom to go buy some for the dinner.

When I saw fish sticks being served, I asked, "Where are the lobsters?"

"Woodsie, there were none in the whole city of Washington, D.C."

Tom was a serious steward of our congregation's money. He was also known for filling Häagen-Dazs ice-cream containers with a cheaper brand, and he delighted in listening to the students say how much they enjoyed the Perrier water, knowing it was filled with the tap water he had put in the bottles.

At that time we had a wonderful woman with two children who was struggling to get legalized in our country. Tom became a great friend and supporter of her kids. They are now grown, with great memories of Tom and with excellent educations. He had a Redemptorist heart for the marginalized in the neighborhood, and he had some struggling people whom he befriended. It is said that a house is a home when it has a mother. Well, Tom's care made Holy Redeemer a home with his concern for each of us priests and students. Once I was with Tom in the Villa at New Smyrna Beach where he also served as minister. We were watching a game on television and a senior confrere came into the room deeply disturbed: *My television is broken!* Tom immediately jumped up, put two batteries in the remote and told the man his television was fixed. He never complained; he just did it. It is a simple story but one that for me is iconic of how Tom

respected and loved us. I joked (but it was true) that when Tom left Washington as minister, we had to hire a maintenance man, a gardener, and a bookkeeper to replace his many roles.

It was a great cross for Tom to be ill. His life was about doing and serving. In his first days here at the St. John Neumann Residence, he sought to find his niche in helping the confreres and in finding a place to smoke. But his health was failing. As great as was his powerful witness to the grace of God in his active ministry as a Brother, these final years of the journey, bearing the cross of suffering and limitations, were his powerful proclamation of his faith in Jesus Christ and his love of the Redemptorist community.

The soul of Tom Kuhn is in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch him. He seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and his passing away was thought an affliction and his going forth from us, utter destruction. But he is at peace. Knowing Tom Kuhn, we are convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In faith we trust that Jesus our Redeemer and Our Mother of Perpetual Help have welcomed him home to the kingdom with the words "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master."