

FR. WALTER KARRER, 90, DIES DEC. 22

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Father Walter Karrer, a Redemptorist priest who served St. Joseph Parish, Wichita, for 17 years, died Dec. 22 in Liguori, Mo.

A Mass was celebrated in memory of Fr. Karrer at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 3, at St. Joseph Church, Wichita. The church is located just west of the Delano district off of West Douglas at 139 S. Millwood.

Father Karrer died of complications resulting from hip surgery. He was 90 years old and would have celebrated 70 years of profession as a Redemptorist this coming summer.

Bill and Janet Walsh, members of St. Joseph Parish, Wichita, said Father Karrer played an important role in a difficult point in their lives.

Janet wrote that in the summer of 1998, she and her husband were joyfully awaiting the birth of their fifth child when they received the news that their baby, a boy, had anencephaly and would not survive long after birth.

Anencephaly is a condition where part of the brain does not develop.

“Although we prayed for a miracle,” she said, “during the next five weeks we made preparations for his funeral, if needed.”

Janet said Father Karrer stressed the need for baptism and was at the hospital when an emergency C-section was performed. The Redemptorist priest baptized, chose a confirmation name, and confirmed the newborn, John Michael Joseph Walsh, who lived just under two hours – much of that time in the arms of Father Karrer.

Several days later at a funeral service, Janet said, Father Karrer shared with the gathered mourners, “On Tuesday night at St. Francis Hospital, I was privileged to witness the birth, and honored to baptize and confirm this young soul. I watched as the angels came to escort him to his eternal home.”

Another son of Bill and Janet Walsh, Andrew, is a seminarian studying for the Diocese of Wichita.

After serving St. Joseph Parish, he resided at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Wichita, and in 2008 moved into the Priest Retirement Center, Wichita. Health needs in 2009 prompted his moving into the community at St. Clement Health Care Center in Liguori, Mo.

Born in Detroit, Mich., Fr. Karrer was professed as a Redemptorist in 1941, and ordained a priest in 1947. In addition to Wichita, he served in Denver; Omaha; Kansas City, Mo.; Lebanon, Ind.; Davenport, Iowa; Midland, Mich.; Oconomowoc, Wisc.; and Tucson, Ariz.

