

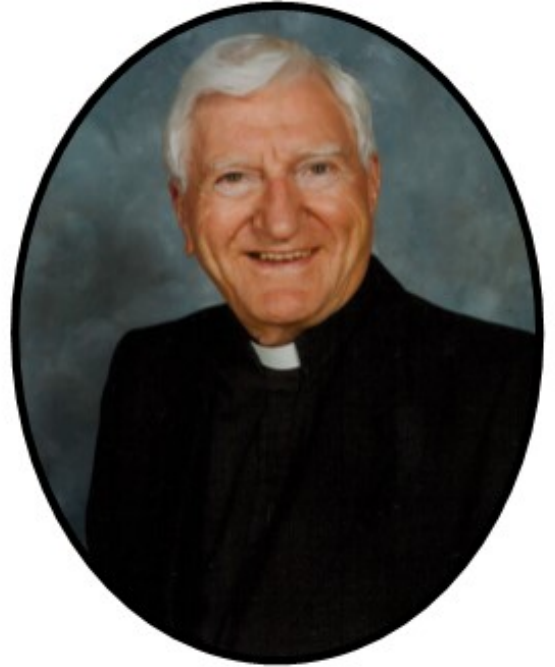
Fr. Edward Kennedy, C.Ss.R. (1925—2015)

By Fr. Ray Douziech, C.Ss.R.

I found this quote from *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak that seemed appropriate as I reflected on the life and death of Fr. Edward Kennedy. Death speaks: “His soul sat up. It met me. Those kinds of souls always do – the best ones. The ones who rise up and say “I know who you are and I am ready. Not that I want to go, of course, but I will come.” Those souls are always light because more of them have been put out. More of them have already found their way to other places.”

Fr. Ed was very realistic about growing old and dying. He was able to call on old friends and acquaintances, confreres and neighbours to give a hand. He was also blessed by the presence of Romanus Kyombya who was an excellent companion for the last five years. In all of this he rarely complained but spoke of “doing my best to accept the limitations that long life brings.” In the end he realized he could no longer manage on his own and needed more help than could be given at Liguori House. Once the decision was made he was moved to Villa Marguerite that same day. Later as he was dying he struggled to give instructions about his funeral – the reading from John 14, Psalm 23 and a piper.

Like so many others, I feel the emptiness and loss of Fr. Ed’s death. Fr. Ed touched so many lives and his influence inspired not only members of his family, but his religious family of Redemptorists, friends and countless others. As Zusak says, much of him found its way into our lives. Fr. Ed’s death is a sorrow for family, friends, and confreres, people he worked with within the Catholic community, in other Churches and outside of Church structures.



Fr. Edward Kennedy, C.Ss.R.

Born: March 24, 1925

Professed: August 15, 1944

Ordained: June 29, 1949

Died: January 20, 2015

Fr. Ed began his ministry as a teacher and continued as a teacher in the classroom, in the pulpit or from his front room armchair. He saw possibilities in people and did not hesitate to push many of us out of our comfort zones and encourage us to seek new horizons. He had a great love of language, literature, and art. These loves were part of his life, even as he struggled with the feebleness of old age and macular degeneration.

Fr. Ed is also known as a pastor. Many will remember Fr. Ed for his preaching and active involvement in parish life. Whether on a Sunday or weekday, at funerals, weddings, baptisms and first

communions he could be counted on to say something insightful, mixed with humour, stories, poetry and a deep faith in Jesus. He was gracious with people and a marvelous host with visitors. He was also known for being a man who had a head for money matters and for administration. He worked well with committees, school principals, school boards, and parish councils.



Fr Kennedy in his office at St Mary's College, Brockville
Photo courtesy of the Archives

Whenever Fr. Ed was able he would visit people in hospital or nursing homes. He knew how to bring a word of comfort and his presence was always appreciated. Fr. Ed was particularly interested in issues of social justice. He loved politics and combined this love with his keen sense of justice as he served for two terms as a city alderman in Edmonton. He continued being involved in public affairs after leaving politics by his involvement in other committees such as the Quality of Life committee in which he was a member until his death.

He led us for nine years as the leader of our Edmonton Redemptorist Province. During this time he creatively initiated the Redemptorist Centre for Growth and the Bioethics Consultancy. He sent some of us onto graduate studies so that we could contribute in professional capacities to the Congregation and to the Church. He encouraged the province to be generous towards the Accademia Alfonsiana, the General Government, and struggling Redemptorist units around the world.

Fr. Ed will be missed. For those of us who knew him it has been a grace to share the journey with him. We grieve with his brother Jack, his nephews and nieces, and his sister Janet. His memory will continue to inspire and motivate us to give of our best as he so willingly did throughout his priesthood and religious life.

Fr. Kennedy's vigil service was held on Sunday night at St. Alphonsus parish. In attendance were Archbishop Emeritus Sylvain Lavoie, and Auxiliary Bishop Greg Bitman. Romanus, the man who recently lived with Fr. Kennedy at Liguori House, Joe Vickers and Denis Chalifoux (HRC grad) all there to honour Fr. Kennedy. Kay Sobkow was one of many parishioners from St. Alphonsus Church who attended. Some of you may know that Kay is soon to celebrate her 99th birthday! There were also people who made the trip all the way from St. Joseph parish in Grande Prairie.

Fr. Mark Miller invited people to share inspiring memories at the vigil service. Those who got up to speak of their affection and admiration for Fr. Kennedy included, Doug Roach – former MP; Doug Magnusson – former chair of the Edmonton Social Planning Council; and Jeannette Martin – former counsellor at the Redemptorist Centre for Growth.

Susan, a niece of Fr. Kennedy spoke of the positive influence that Fr. Kennedy exerted on their family. David Kincaid also spoke of Fr. Kennedy's ability to inspire. As you may know David lived at Liguori House, used to work for the Liberal party of Alberta, and was recently baptised into the Roman Catholic Church through the encouragement, education, and mentoring of Fr. Kennedy.

Also, some of you will remember Phil and Frances Cliffe who continued to serve in many roles at St. Alphonsus parish after the Redemptorists left ministry there. They catered at the receptions for both Fr. Alan's and Fr. Kennedy's funerals.

And of course we departed from the church to the sound of bagpipes. Despite the cold, our good piper was able to welcome us at the graveside of Fr. Kennedy and greatly added to our prayers and farewells at the Committal Service.



*Fr Kennedy preaches at Our Lady of Perpetual Help church in Vancouver, where he served as pastor (1993-2005)
Photo courtesy of the Archives*



Fr. Kennedy as an Edmonton city councilor speaks while Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed listens

Photo courtesy of the Archives





Fr Joe Murphy in foreground. Fr. Kennedy's family in front pew.

