

✕ Father Kenneth Johnston, retired pastor and principal, dies

By **admin** - June 21, 2018

> Father Kenneth J. Johnston, 76, retired priest, a “great mentor” and “kind, gentlemanly priest,” and former pastor and high school principal, died on June 14.

In his 44 years of active ministry, he was pastor of Saint Teresa, Runnemede (1999-2004); Saint Mary, Williamstown (2004-09); and Incarnation, Mantua (2009-12).

> Beyond the pew, Father Johnston preached in the halls and classrooms of Catholic high schools, as principal of Saint James High School, Carneys Point (1984-89) and Gloucester Catholic (1989-99).

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One of the lives shepherded by the longtime priest was Father Michael Romano, currently priest secretary to Bishop Dennis Sullivan and director of Vocations for the Diocese of Camden.

In his teenage years, he and his family attended Saint Teresa Parish in Runnemede, and Father Romano remembered his pastor, Father Johnston, as a guiding spiritual force for not only him, but for his family.

“He was good to me and my family,” he recalled. “We got to know him, respect him and love him.”

Later, as Father Romano spent his first years as an ordained priest at the Church of the Incarnation, he served with Father Johnston, then pastor there.

“It was a gift to work with him,” Father Romano said, adding that his friend was “a great mentor, and kind, gentlemanly priest.”

Born in New York on July 1, 1941, Father Johnston was a graduate of Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and continued his education, earning his master’s degree in theology at the American College, Louvain University, Belgium, and a master’s in education administration from Villanova University.

He was ordained on June 29, 1968 in Belgium, and in his early years of ministry was on the faculty at Saint Joseph High School, Hammonton, and Wildwood Catholic, and was vice principal at Holy Spirit High School, Absecon.

Father Johnston was in residence at several parishes in the Diocese of Camden, including Saint Anthony, Waterford (1971-76); Our Lady Star of the Sea, Cape May (1976-78); Assumption, Wildwood Crest (1978-81); Saint Thomas, Brigantine (1981-1981-84); Saint Michael, Gibbstown (1984-89); Most Holy Redeemer, Westville Grove (1989-94) and Saint John Vianney, Deptford (1994-99).

He served on the Diocesan Tribunal; was a member and chairman of the Continuing Education and Spiritual Formation of Priests; and served on the Vocation Advisory Board and Presbyteral Council.

He was the son of the late Harold and Margaret Johnston, and was the brother of the late Patricia Egnezzo.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated June 20 at Church of the Incarnation. Burial was in Saint Mary Cemetery, Williamstown.

Donations may be made to Sacred Heart Residence c/o 631 Market Street Camden, NJ 08102.

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