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Msgr. James J. Haddad Pilot file photo

Obituary: Msgr. James Haddad, mentor of many priests, dies at 74

 Father Robert M. O'Grady [LOCAL](#) FRIDAY 17TH OF AUGUST 2007

He loved priests. He loved being a priest and he loved being with priests. Msgr. James J. Haddad who had been a priest of the archdiocese just six months shy of his golden jubilee of ordination died at St. Patrick Manor on Aug. 9 following a long and courageous battle with complications from kidney disease.

Msgr. Haddad was born in Boston's South End, a point of which he was vocally proud, on Oct. 10, 1932, one of the three sons of John and Mary Haddad. His parents and both brothers predeceased him. He attended St. Rita School, Boston College High School, Boston College, and Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and completed his seminary training at St. John's Seminary, Brighton. Archbishop Richard Cushing ordained him to the priesthood Feb. 3, 1958 at the cathedral.

Between 1958 and 1965 he served in parish assignments. At St. John-St. Hugh Parish, Roxbury he was omnipresent to a changing population. He and the late Father Jim Publicover were legends in the parish for their extra priestly efforts. In 1962 he went to Maynard as an assistant at St. Bridget Parish and in 1964 to Quincy's Sacred Heart Parish. His evident love for parish life was clear to seminarians whom he would regale with stories from some of the more interesting priests with whom he lived and served.

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In 1965 he was sent to Ireland's only pontifical university, St. Patrick College, Maynooth from which he obtained a doctorate in sacred theology. He told of himself that he freely translated his Lebanese name into its Irish equivalent and not infrequently introduced himself as "Father Seamus McGowan", which caused the turns of not a few heads observing his swarthy Lebanese features.

On his return to the archdiocese he was named the founding Director of the Pastoral Institute of the archdiocese housed at St. William Hall on the then-seminary campus. It was here that he became a mentor and model, guide and spiritual director for literally hundreds of priests and seminarians, not only of the archdiocese but also

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The institute thrived under his leadership with retreats, study weeks and days of recollection in constant demand and availability. He sought out the best spiritual directors, faculty and support staff for the institute. He was truly its heart.

At the same time he also taught theology classes at college and theology levels and brought his evident enthusiasm for the faith to local campuses teaching at Regis and Emmanuel Colleges.

In 1977 he was named pastor of St. Eulalia Parish in Winchester where he built a new spirit in the parish and development a sense of stewardship and ownership by the parishioners resulting in an immediate and overwhelming response to any financial requests he made, whether for parish needs or those beyond the Winchester-Arlington lines.

In 1985, Cardinal Law named him founding director of the archdiocesan Stewardship and Development Office where he brought his skills again to the archdiocesan level. In 1988 he was named pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Needham where he increased Mass attendance and parish support, expanded the parish school and added a middle school which bears his name and inspired a spirit of stewardship in the parishioners.

Pope John Paul II named him a prelate of honor on April 21, 1998 and his beloved Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle bestowed its highest honor, the Cardinal Cushing Medal, on him in October 2002.

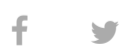
He was granted senior priest status on Jan. 1, 2003 due to his declining health. In the past several years he has been on death's door more than once but his indomitable spirit seemed to bring him back.

Longtime friend and confidant from Winchester, Kay McAvoy said "He was a great priest and good friend."

Bishop Robert Hennessey was the principal celebrant and homilist of the funeral Mass at St. Joseph Church, Needham on Aug. 14. Joining him were Auxiliary Bishop John Dooher, former auxiliary Bishop John Boles, archdiocesan vicar general, Father Richard Erikson, Father Stephen Madden, Father Patrick Armano, and some 60 other brother priests. The 1,000-seat church was filled with mourners from Needham, Winchester, Quincy and Roxbury, and beyond.

Msgr. Haddad was buried in Mount Benedict Cemetery, West Roxbury with his parents.

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