

Blogger Priest

Fr. Ken Roberts, REST IN PEACE

Posted on December 21, 2018 by Father Joe

Fr. Kenneth Roberts died Thursday, December 20, 2018 around 4:50 ET in Cincinnati, Ohio. Born and raised in England, he later became an American citizen. He was 89 years of age. A charismatic and articulate priest, he easily made his early reputation as a stark defender and teacher of Catholic teaching. (Back in 1989, I got to meet him over a dinner in Birmingham, Alabama.) At the time he was filming programs locally for Mother Angelica and EWTN. His book *PLAYBOY TO PRIEST* was one of the works that influenced many young men to discern a vocation to the priesthood, myself included. Another notable book was *NOBODY CALLS IT SIN ANYMORE*. He is well remembered for his books, tapes, television appearances, retreats and support for the Medjugorje apparitions and messages.

His defunct website noted the following: "Throughout his life, Father Ken has been especially devoted to our Blessed Mother, realizing that the love and graces of her Immaculate Heart are the surest and most expedient way into the saving Sacred Heart of her son Jesus Christ. Father Roberts has dedicated his priesthood to the Blessed Virgin Mary."



Although he traveled a great deal, he was a priest (ordained in 1966) from the Diocese of Dallas, Texas. Given credible charges of misconduct with minors, he was suspended from ministry in 1998 (November 13) by Bishop Charles Grahmann and incurred serious restrictions (such as not being able to wear clerical garb and from presenting himself as a priest in good standing). Although ordered to do so, he was hesitant or slow to terminate his national online ministry. He was especially popular with young people and his site got as many as 50,000 hits a day. When the revelations of misconduct were made public, his supporters were in utter disbelief and rallied to his defense. Unfortunately, accusations of improper behavior dated back to the 1970's. Since 1995 he had been directed to avoid ministerial contacts with youth and men thirty years of age or younger. He disappeared into retirement, stripped of all the trappings of priesthood, even the title, FATHER. An official monitum or Church warning went out in 2007 that he was allegedly celebrating home Masses and was associating with children and teenagers in violation of his suspension and earlier restrictions. I recall one vocal critic who complained when she spotted the elderly Roberts praying quietly in the rear corner of a parish church. It looked to her that he was wearing a clerical shirt, albeit not black and without the tell-tale Roman collar. If I recall the correspondence correctly, someone may have even called him "father," although I suspect that he

was also called many other things of a far more offensive nature. My response was to remind the critic, who had every right to be upset and disappointed in the wayward priest, that we are all sinners and the Church will never close her doors to any soul seeking to make reparation for wrongs and to find healing in Christ. Given that the charges were true, maybe he was bringing the many victims to prayer? We leave ultimate judgment to God.

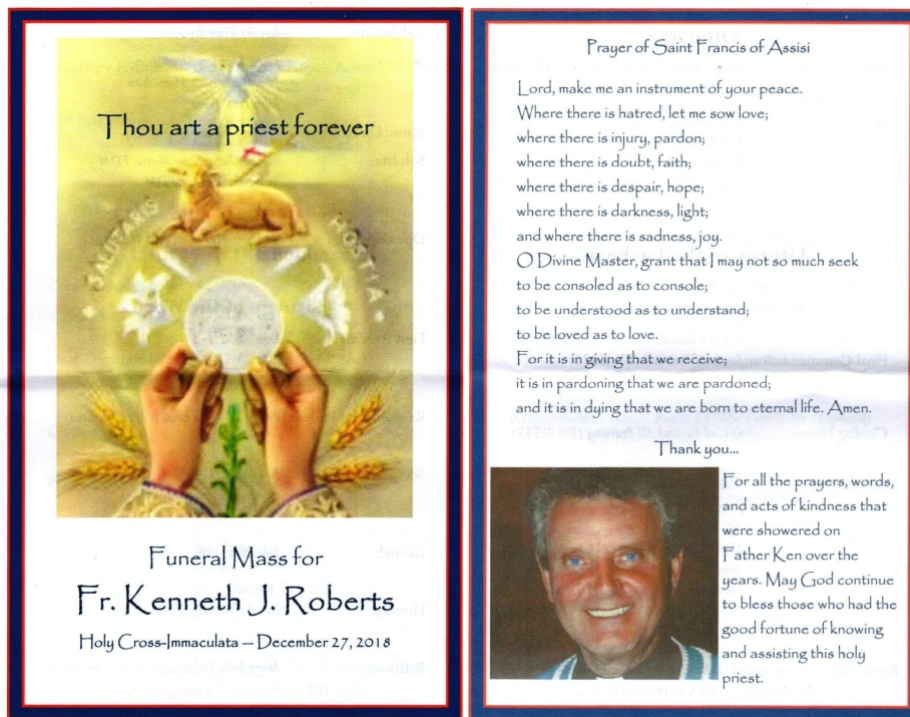
I was a big fan of his YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT program on EWTN. It was a wonderful show which he co-hosted with a Catholic and Protestant teenager. It spoke to the youth in a non-threatening language that they could understand. His small booklet in response to the anti-Catholicism of Jimmy Swaggert was also right on the mark. Of course, the misconduct soured or ruined the positive impact of much of what he did.

As with the many other scandals facing the Church, it is all so terrible and hard to believe. How must we respond? We must pray for victims and their perpetrators. We must seek transparency in our discipleship and shed any duplicity. We must seek justice and healing for those harmed.

His family and friends kept his passing quiet so as to avoid sensationalism. That is as it should be. **The reason I posted this information was to urge all his past fans, friends and critics to pray for the repose of his soul.** He was buried from Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish in Cincinnati on December 27, 2018. The Mass was celebrated by Fr. Timothy Reid (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owI8xENPIYE>). He was buried at Gate of Heaven Cemetery (11000 Montgomery Road, Cincinnati, OH 45249).

- **Opening Hymn** – *Be Thou My Vision* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lh5QCv7aW2g>).
- **First Reading:** Daniel 12:1-3
- **Responsorial:** Psalm 23
- **Second Reading:** Romans 6:3-9
- **Gospel:** John 6:51-58
- **Offertory Hymn** – *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNG2KOLsYrw>).
- **Communion Hymns** – *Ave Maria* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwp1CH5R-w4>) / *Alleluia, Sing to Jesus* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wh61poqcnpA>).
- **Closing Hymn** – *O God Beyond All Praising* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnnQpC9oLxU>).

He very much believed in the power of prayer and frequently urged that we remember the poor helpless souls in purgatory. I suspect that he has now joined their company.



(<https://bloggerpriest.files.wordpress.com/2018/12/img012b.jpg>).
Funeral Mass Program – Fr. Kenneth J. Roberts

*Eternal rest, grant unto him/her O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon him.
May he rest in peace. Amen.*

May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Remembering Father Ken... I hope and trust that he knew the graces that come with repentance. REST IN PEACE.

http://www.ncregister.com/site/article/dallas_bishop_suspends_father_ken_roberts
(http://www.ncregister.com/site/article/dallas_bishop_suspends_father_ken_roberts)

<https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2003/former-student-pursues-charges/>
(<https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2003/former-student-pursues-charges/>)

<https://www.crisismagazine.com/2018/gay-priests-open-letter-fr-james-martin>
(<https://www.crisismagazine.com/2018/gay-priests-open-letter-fr-james-martin>)

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33 Responses



Father Joe, on [March 21, 2019 at 3:28 pm](#) said:

PLEASE NOTE: All comments are moderated before posted. That is why they do not immediately appear. This is necessary as I do not want to have people (I do not know) defamed or to be a source of detraction. It is my hope that all who come to this blog would understand this. While I have given space for people to share their stories (even negative ones) and how angry and hurting people want justice, I am hesitant to permit any comments that would castigate individuals as damned to hell. I pray that God's mercy will come, even to the most egregious of sinners. I have alternately been ridiculed for mentioning Ken Roberts' shortcomings and mocked for suggesting that he ever did anything good. I leave ultimate judgment to Almighty God. Given this and a previous posting, I suspect that what needed to be said has been said. I am closing this post to further comments and asking all to pray for both true justice and healing. God bless!

Prayer for Healing Victims of Abuse from the USCCB

God of endless love,
 ever caring, ever strong,
 always present, always just:
 You gave your only Son
 to save us by the blood of his cross.

Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,
 join to your own suffering
 the pain of all who have been hurt
 in body, mind, and spirit
 by those who betrayed
 the trust placed in them.

Hear our cries as we agonize
 over the harm done to our brothers and sisters.
 Breathe wisdom into our prayers,
 soothe restless hearts with hope,
 steady shaken spirits with faith.
 Show us the way to justice and wholeness,
 enlightened by truth and
 enfolded in your mercy.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,
 heal your people's wounds
 and transform our brokenness.
 Grant us courage and wisdom,
 humility and grace,
 so that we may act with justice
 and find peace in you.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Patrick Driscoll, on March 21, 2019 at 11:20 am said:
 Well said, Matt.



Patrick Driscoll, on March 21, 2019 at 11:18 am said:
 Amen to that!



eyeskyblue, on March 21, 2019 at 11:11 am said:

In the spring of 1988, I was at a retreat at King's House. I confided in "Father" Roberts that I thought I might be gay. His response was to stick his tongue down my throat. I am certain that other priests there (i.e. DELETED) knew this guy was a pedophile and kept a blind eye. I was fifteen years old.

FATHER JOE: I am so very sorry for what happened. Although I do not know who you are, as always, I urge people to go to the proper civil and church authorities when they have encountered inappropriate conduct from priests and those employed by the Church. We must protect our young people. I will keep you in prayer.



Jeff, on February 3, 2019 at 8:06 pm said:

Thank you, Father Joe. Your comments seem loving, supportive, and morally correct. If more Priests were honest and owned the problems and sins of the organization that supports the Church, I may have never left the seminary or the Church, but, alas, defensiveness and hypocrisy destroyed that path for me, fortunately before I had traveled too far down it...

I think your thoughts about lay parents having a presence, if not a majority, on review boards is a good and proper response... certainly better than the lying, misdirection, and other responses the church has offered.

Justice, amends, ownership, and contrition are distressingly lacking.



Matt Nash, on [February 3, 2019 at 3:52 pm](#) said:

Yes the whole thing gave the good ones a bad rap. I knew many good priests and nuns. I chose to pursue higher education at Notre Dame and medical school at Loyola and came across some very fine men and women who had dedicated their lives to the Church and who helped me along the way! I no longer have anything to do with the Church but my nieces and nephews are being educated in Catholic schools and we are strongly considering sending my step children to a Jesuit high school. I won't send them into a confessional and will share my stories with them and for the rest of all our lives we will be leery of priests with an interest in youth ministry and that is sad. What is really sad is that Ken Robert's abilities as a great speaker and educator and motivator gave him the power to do these horrible things. To all who have responded please stop defending this man. I am glad he helped you on your faith journey but you must understand the damage he did to so many and that the leaders of the Church did in covering this up. As for me I am no longer a Catholic and I have no faith in organized religion but seeing this obituary finally gives me some closure. I wrote my comments to ensure that all who loved this man could see who he really was and will stop making excuses for this deeply flawed man! Be well Father. I'm glad you are one of the good ones and I am sorry for what your church has done to cast doubt on you as a man and on your choice for a celibate life of ministry.



Matt Nash, on [February 2, 2019 at 11:01 pm](#) said:

Father Joe

Thanks for your response and for publishing my words. I also suspect one of the other responses came from my brother. It is a bit passionate but he saw first hand what this man's abuse did to his brother and to our family. The rest of the anger probably comes from the way the Peoria diocese sheltered it's priests. My family was very involved with the seminarian support in the diocese. Many of these predators were regularly in our home. Fr Robert's stayed with us when he was in Peoria and Monsignor Rohlf's and Bishop Meyers were frequently there as well. Monsignor Rohlf's married my sister and buried my mother. The irony that these men dined in the home of victims, with men who they knew to be predators and who they were shielding makes it all that much worse. Jeff notes 7 people, I know of another 5 and that was in Peoria alone. Fr. Robert's did youth ministry throughout the country. Just think of how many victims there are from him alone! Again thank you for posting all the posts. You don't need to post this one if you are uncomfortable with any of it but it really highlights how many people throughout the country were likely damaged by this debacle. Fr Robert's is just the tip of an enormous iceberg. Be well.

FATHER JOE:

I hope posting this comment is okay. If you and the family want this comment deleted, just let me know. It seems to me that the truth should be told as secrecy made this mess and subsequent scandal so much worse.

I teared up with the opening prayer or collect to the Mass tonight (Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time). It reads: "Grant us, Lord our God, that we may honor you with all our mind, *and love everyone in truth of heart.*"

I would appreciate any prayers you can send to heaven on my behalf. While I cannot imagine the pain felt by the victims, these revelations are also very demoralizing to priests who say their prayers, remain faithful to celibate love and live their lives for others.



Father Joe, on February 2, 2019 at 8:04 pm said:

If I come across as overly apologetic it is because Roberts had a profound spiritual impact upon me through his writings. Later he reached out to millions through recorded media and television. He offered retreats and workshops across the country. Admittedly, most of us were spared the dark side of his nature. His duplicity befuddles me and I shudder to imagine the pain he caused others. However, we should not allow the good that our Lord accomplishes to be invalidated by the sins of men. If anything, such cases demonstrate his immense power. Father Timothy Reid's testimony on EWTN's The Journey Home illustrates how even weak and broken instruments can assist searching men and women to grow in faith and perhaps to find their vocations. God's ultimate providence will not be circumvented by sinful men. The old saying is proven again and again, "God writes straight with our crooked lines." Reid was called out verbally by Roberts at a gathering, acknowledging that he felt moved by the Holy Spirit to direct this young man to a calling of priesthood. This vocation was later confirmed and realized.

Comments are closed.

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