



THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

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BLOG



V. Rev. Leonard J. Gilman, O.Carm. 1946-2015

Monday, June 1st, 2015

Fr. Leonard J. Gilman O.Carm, 68, entered into eternal life on June 1, 2015. He was a beloved brother of the Carmelites of the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary and a loving brother to his sister, Gilda M. Gilman. But to those of us in his flock in Tenafly, he was known as “Fr. Len” or “Fr. Leonard+” (as he liked to sign his weekly bulletin letter) and our hearts are broken at the loss of our dear pastor and friend.

He was born to the late Arthur J. Gilman and Alice I. (Lemieux) Gilman on October 27, 1946 in Salem, Massachusetts. Following his graduation from Danvers High School in 1964, Fr. Leonard earned a B.A. in Psychology from Curry College in Milton, MA. He also attended Boston University from which he earned a M. Ed. in counseling and worked

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with youth as a probation officer. He eventually pursued a successful career in marketing and rose to become a vice president at Lockheed Corporation.

In 1992, Fr. Leonard entered the Carmelites and professed his first vows on June 13, 1994. He studied theology at Washington Theological Union in Washington D.C. and the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. He also studied Native American studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. After making his solemn profession of vows on November 1, 1997 he was ordained a Carmelite priest on June 6, 1998.

Father Leonard's first assignment was from 1998 to 2001 as Parochial Vicar at St. John of the Cross Parish in Mississauga, Ontario. He was then appointed Vice President at Joliet Catholic Academy in Joliet, IL for one year. In 2003, Fr. Leonard was appointed Director of Vocations for the Eastern Commissariat of the Province; a position he held until 2006. He was appointed a Parochial Vicar at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Tenafly, NJ in 2004 and then as pastor in 2006. During his years as pastor, he was also elected Eastern Commissary Provincial from 2010 to 2014 and appointed as interim director of St. Therese Chapel in Paramus, NJ in 2013.

His tenure as pastor at Our Lady of Mount Carmel was marked by a period of tremendous growth for both the parish and the academy. In 2012, the Academy of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was awarded a prestigious National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence from the U.S. Department of Education. Fr. Leonard also presided over a complete overhaul and renovation of the physical plants for both the church and the school, designing much of the work personally.

But it's Fr. Leonard's warmth, generosity and humor that we will remember most. In true Carmelite fashion, through his leadership and example, he modeled a genuine sense of hospitality that invited and encouraged people to make Mount Carmel their spiritual home. Nowhere is that spirit more evident than in the words he crafted—well known to parishioners—that ultimately became an unofficial credo for the OLMC community:

No matter who you are, no matter what you've done, no matter where you're from, no matter where you're going, no matter how good or bad things seem, you are always welcome.

He was a fiercely intelligent man with a gift for translating abstract theological concepts into concrete terms and then manifesting those ideas through everyday actions. Most recently that gift was abundantly evident through his commitment to one of our community's youngest members, RJ Sy and his family.

Despite our profound sense of loss, we take comfort in the message Fr. Leonard offered us in this past Sunday's letter to the parish:

"Where have you bumped into God in the last week? I suspect that it was not while you were engrossed in some deeply theological discussion about the Most Holy Trinity. God does not use that kind of language with us...We experience God in creation. We see the beauty that God has created and that touches us. We know that God is a God of love. God touches us through other people. An unexpected phone call! A random act of kindness! An apology! God talks to us all the time."

Though we are experiencing tears and pain at the moment, we are consoled by his assurance that God will also speak to us again, at some point, through the laughter, warmth and kindness we experienced so abundantly with our beloved pastor.

We trust that this "God of love" has spoken to us time and again over the years through Fr. Leonard+. We also trust that he will continue to speak to us through his memory in the days and years to come and we believe—despite our grief—that death is not the final word.

Visitation will take place on Thursday, from 3 to 8 p.m. at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, 10 County Road, Tenafly, NJ. The Vigil Service will be held at 7 p.m. A Funeral Mass will be held on Friday at 10 a.m. at the church. Interment will be private.

← Honoring Our Oldest Living
Graduate: Mary Caliero-Buzzoni
OLMC Class of 1929

To the OLMC Parish Family →

ALSO ON OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL

<p>God's Garden, July 31, 2015</p>	<p>In Memoriam of Sr. Trinity Kenny, MFIC</p>	<p>Remembering Fr. Leonard</p>	<p>Our La Carme</p>
<p>8 years ago • 1 comment</p> <p>The geographic Mount Carmel that we take our Carmelite name from is a ...</p>	<p>6 years ago • 1 comment</p> <p>Our Lady of Mount Carmel is honored to host the funeral Mass for Sr. ...</p>	<p>8 years ago • 1 comment</p> <p>Remembering Fr. Leonard. When I found out that Fr. Leonard wanted me to ...</p>	<p>2 years ago</p> <p>Our Lun series co organ re</p>

3 Comments

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Best Newest Oldest**Renaud Fournier**

8 years ago edited

Father Leonard was an amazing man. We just learned of his passing yesterday. We attended his mass the day before his death and could not believe he was gone. His smile, humor and amazingly pure heart provided us comfort every time we came to church. We always shook his hand walking out the door and he would always high-five our young children. We will miss him more than words can express. We force ourselves to believe that God had a greater purpose for him. Our hearts will never truly heal from this loss.

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**William Watt**

8 years ago

Fr. Leonard, brought my brother Bob, to the Gates of Heaven. His memory, will be in our heart, soul and mind always.

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**Michele Kreisel**

8 years ago

Father Leonard, we will miss you always, today and EVERY day. Thank you Father for always being where with us and for us, and thank you, God for sending him to us.

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