

OBITUARY

Msgr John Esquivel

MAY 6, 1942 - AUGUST 16, 2025



IN THE CARE OF

Whitehurst Sullivan Burns & Blair Funeral Home

Rev. Msgr. John Esquivel, born on May 6, 1942, passed away peacefully on Friday, August 16, 2025, at the age of 83. He was a beloved resident of Reedley, California.

Fr. John was the first priest ordained in the Diocese of Fresno. He went on to serve the diocese for over 50 years in over twenty ministerial assignments including Episcopal Vicar for Hispanic Affairs, and Co-Chair of the Diocesan Capital Campaign. Monsignor Esquivel also led two major fundraising efforts for the Fresno diocese: the first to refurbish St. John's Cathedral in Fresno, and then spearheaded the construction of St. Anthony of Padua church in Reedley, CA. Throughout his life, Fr. John also continued to maintain his role as the spiritual head of his family, presiding over baptisms, communions, weddings and funerals for several generations of family members; and he was very much beloved by all the many parishioners whom he served in his various pastoral assignments throughout the Diocese of Fresno.

Fr. John was born in Visalia, CA on May 6, 1942, the son of Teodoro Camacho Esquivel (1903-1984) and Florinda Pineda Flores (1907-1992). He is survived by two siblings: Nieves (Niva) Esquivel, IHM (b. 1940), and Teodoro (Ted) Esquivel (b. 1944). Predeceased siblings include Epifania Esquivel (1928-1929), Antonia (Toni) Esquivel Werner (1929-2015); Frances (Fran) Esquivel Tywoniak (1931-2020), Susana (Sue) Esquivel Molletti (1936-2024), and Severo Esquivel (1938-2020).

Msgr. Esquivel's formation for the priesthood began at Ryan Minor Seminary in Fresno, CA followed by studies at St. Johns College in Camarillo, CA. Ordination was held in Visalia, CA at St. Mary's Church on April 27, 1968. Bishop Timothy Manning (the first Bishop of the Diocese of Fresno) was the presider over the ordination, and on that day Fr. Esquivel became the first priest to be ordained in the Fresno Diocese.

Following ordination, Fr. John held pastoral assignments at St. Peter's, Lemoore (1968-1970), St. John's Cathedral, Fresno (1970-1980), St. Mary's, Delano (1980-1983), St. Joseph's, Bakersfield (1983-1994) and Our Lady of Guadalupe, Bakersfield (1991-1992), St. Joseph's, Selma and St. Lucy's, Fowler (1994-1998), St. John's Cathedral, Fresno (1998-2007), and St. Anthony of Padua, Reedley (2007-2020). Monsignor Esquivel celebrated his Golden Jubilee as an ordained priest on April 27th, 2018 with a 50th Anniversary Celebration in Reedley, CA.

A visitation will be held on Tuesday, September 2, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Saint Anthony of Padua North, located at 1018 N Frankwood Ave, Reedley, CA 93654. The Recitation of the Holy Rosary will follow at 7:00 p.m.

The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Wednesday, September 3, 2025, at 10:30 a.m., at Saint Anthony of Padua North, located at 1018 N Frankwood Ave, Reedley, CA 93654. Immediately following the Mass, Msgr. Esquivel will be laid to rest at Visalia Cemetery, located at 1300 W Goshen Ave, Visalia, CA 93291.

Rev. Msgr. John Esquivel will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him. His memory will live on in the hearts of his family, friends, and the many lives he touched throughout his ministry and life of service.

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