



Paul J. Bondi

January 21, 1921 - February 27, 2009

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Paul J. Bondi Obituary

Fr. Paul J. Bondi, a pillar of faith to his family and the Ballston Spa community he served as a pastor for over two decades, took his final step toward the Lord on Friday in the comfort of family and longtime friends. He was 88. The eldest son of Italian immigrants, Fr. Bondi was raised in the Albia section of Troy. He graduated Catholic Central High School in 1939. He attending classes at Siena College and graduated St. Joseph's Seminary, in Dunwoodie, in 1948. He was ordained a priest of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany on April 17, 1948 by Most Reverend Edmund Gibbons at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. He was first priest ordained from his home parish of Sacred Heart in Troy. He served as a Chaplain in the United States Air Force. Over the next 18 years, he served as an assistant pastor at eight churches throughout the Diocese: St. Mary's in Frankfort; Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Schenectady; St. Anthony's in Herkimer; St. Peter's in Stillwater; St. Catherine's in Albany; Mt. Carmel in Gloversville; St. John's in Rensselaer and St. Thomas in Delmar, where he ministered for 11 years. He was named the pastor of Sacred Heart in Stamford in 1966 and stayed just over three years. He was named pastor of St. Mary's in Ballston Spa in September, 1969. Fr. Bondi spent the next several decades in and out of the church, splitting time between the rectory there and St. Petersburg, Fla. through his retirement years. Under his leadership the parish swelled to over 1,000 families packing four weekend masses. Father Paul, as he was called by parishioners, acquired a widespread reputation for brevity, with one parishioner joking he could "say a Mass in one breath." He rarely offered a homily that was not succinct. ("If you can't make your point in eight minutes, then you don't have a point to make," he once said.) He was tirelessly devoted to the advancement of Catholic education. He worked closely with Sr. Annette Marie Allard to endow scholarship funds for St. Mary's grammar school, where she served as the principal, and in the final years of his tenure helped steer emergency renovations after a water main break flooded its basement. Fr. Bondi was also supportive of St. Peter's Academy and Saratoga Central Catholic High School. In addition to his service of the Lord, Fr. Bondi until the final hours of his life maintained a passion for basketball. He played for Catholic High as well as Siena, and competed with several semi-professional teams in Troy and Utica. For years, he coached basketball at St. Mary's and in various CYO leagues. He was a devoted fan of the Siena Saints, as well as the New York Yankees and Giants. In 1996, Fr. Bondi was granted a slight extension beyond the mandatory retirement age of 75 so he could celebrate St. Mary's Centennial Mass. When he did retire, he was presented with a key to the town of Milton and a pass to the Saratoga race course, where he enjoyed spending many August afternoons. Over 4,000 people came to wish him well at an event held at the Saratoga County Fairgrounds. "God made us a family," he said that day. "We need one another, we love one another, we forgive one another. We work together, we play together, we worship together. Together, we use God's good Word, together we follow Christ, together we just love all men. Together we serve our God. Together we hope for heaven. These are our hopes, our ideals." Fr. Bondi is pre-deceased by his parents, Anna Gatto and Joseph P. Bondi, as well as his sister, Rita Bondi Vielkind, to whom he remained intensely devoted his entire life, and whose funeral he ministered in 2007. He is survived by a younger brother, Vincent J. (Leota) Bondi, of Waterford. Also remembering Fr. Bondi are his six nieces and nephews: David V. (Annemarie) Vielkind of North Greenbush; Paula A. (John A. Neun) Vielkind of Clifton Park; Mary Ann B. (Les) Fox of Latham; Donald M. Vielkind of Wynantskill; Patricia D. Vielkind of East Greenbush and Theresa C. (Kim) Lenihan of Mechanicville. He is also survived by several great-nieces and nephews, for whom he performed initiation sacraments and served as a model of faith. Reception of Fr. Bondi's body will be on Sunday March 1, 2009 at St. Mary's Church, Milton Avenue, Ballston Spa from 4:00PM to 8:00PM. Fr. Bondi's Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Monday March 2, 2009 at 11:30 AM at St. Mary's Church, Milton Avenue with the Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard officiating. Burial will follow at St. Joseph's Cemetery, Troy, NY. Memorial contributions in memory of Fr. Bondi may be made to St. Mary's School, 167 Milton Avenue, Ballston Spa, NY. 12020 Arrangements are by Mevec Funeral Home, Ballston Spa