



## Rev. James F. Leary

September 21, 2021

Rev. James Francis Leary, died Tuesday, September 21, 2021 in Farmington. A proud native of Waterbury, he was born to the late James and Myrtle Leary, he attended SS. Peter and Paul Grammar School and Sacred Heart High School within the city. Upon deciding to study for the priesthood, he went to St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield during his collegiate years and then attended St. John Seminary in Brighton, Massachusetts, for theological studies. He was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Hartford at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Hartford by the Most Reverend Joseph F. Donnelly on May 23, 1968. Fr. Leary's first assignment was as an assistant at St. Lawrence O'Toole Church in Hartford. He then returned to St. Thomas Seminary, serving there for several years as an instructor. In 1981, he returned to fulltime parish ministry, serving at St. Timothy Church in West Hartford. In addition to parish ministry, Fr. Leary was a chaplain at St. Francis and Hartford Hospitals, a member of the Presbyteral Council, and Dean of multiple Deaneries in the Archdiocese. As a pastor, he led the people of St. Joseph Church in Bristol (1986-2004) and then St. Peter Claver Church in West Hartford, where he would remain until his retirement in 2015. Fr. Leary was a scholar of scripture and authored two books on the Old and New Testament, as well as working as an adjunct professor at the University of St. Joseph. Fr. Leary was a true disciple. He heard God's call and responded. His motto always was: For God and For God's People. Father Leary is survived by his cousins, Cassandra Nikituk (Stephen), Dr Kevin J. Croce (Dr. Kathryn

Gorski-Croce) and their children godchild Owen and Cameron Croce. The family wishes to thank the friends of Fr. Leary, the staff of Arden Courts for their care, and Fr. James Manship. In lieu of flowers, a memorial donation to a charity of your choice.

The wake for Father Leary will take place from 9:00 to 10:45 AM on Thursday, September 30th in the Chapel of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center, 467 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial in the Chapel at 11:00 AM with His Excellency, the Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair, Archbishop of Hartford, as the main celebrant. He will be laid to rest immediately following the Mass in Old St. Joseph Cemetery, in his beloved Waterbury. Molloy Funeral Home has care of arrangements.

# Previous Events

## Calling Hours

SEP 30. 9:00 AM - 10:45 AM (ET)

St. Thomas Seminary Chapel  
467 Bloomfield Ave.  
Bloomfield, CT

## Mass of Christian Burial

SEP 30. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Thomas Seminary Chapel  
467 Bloomfield Ave.  
Bloomfield, CT

# Tribute Wall



“ *Father Jim was a cousin on my mother's side. Although he lived nearby we only discovered him when doing genealogy research, and it was such a pleasure to connect with him in that way. My sincere condolences to his family.*

*Patricia Temple*

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**Patricia Temple** - October 08, 2021 at 10:08 PM

“*Father Jim was a big part of my life and my parents. He taught my mom as a undergrad and my father as a graduate student. When I was maybe four my parents found out that Father Jim was at Saint Joseph Parish in Bristol. Most Sundays I would have a picture colored ready to give Father Jim at the end of the service. He was always warm and appreciative of this small gesture. When I started at St. Joes as a student I would often see Father Jim outside with his dog, Major. I also got to see him walking around the school to see what all the kids were up to. As I got old enough I was able to become one of the first female alter servers. Father Jim was good about teaching me how to hold the cross so that I didn't end up tipping it backwards and possibly knocking someone in the head. I then was able to become a lector.*

*When I was in high school Father Jim was my sponsor and faith partner for Confirmation. I loved being able to work with him that year and learn more about my faith from him. During my junior year he let me come to one of his college classes so that I could get a feel for what a religious studies class would be like. He was supportive of me during my senior year when it was time to pick colleges and wrote me a beautiful recommendation.*

*Father Jim and I shared a love for Ireland. He had been a couple times throughout his life and when I told him I was going for the first time he loved sharing all his stories and gave me excellent suggestions of what to see and do.*

*When I got older I followed Father Jim to his new parish in West Hartford. I took on the role of lector there as well. My favorite times with Father Jim were always before mass started. I could talk to him about whatever was going on with my job or just life in general.*

*When I started dating Father Jim got to meet my boyfriends and was very honest about whether or not he approved. Thankfully, they all passed and were accepted. Father Jim ended up doing marriage counseling for my now husband and myself. Since Jim knew my*

*family so well, my dad served with him as a deacon at both St. Joes and St. Peter Claver, he loved making jokes about how he was going to call my dad and have him on speaker for our talks. :-)*

*Father Jim was a co officiant at my wedding and then a couple years later he got to see me become a mom for the first time. He always loved seeing my son after church and one of his favorite questions was "who does Liam look like now?"*

*I was very sad when he retired. I never got to say goodbye which still bothers me. He was a major part of my life and helped to shape me into the person I am today. I am sure that God welcomed him home with open arms.*

*Sending hugs, and prayers to his family and other close friends.  
Katie Palmiter*

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**Katie Palmiter** - September 26, 2021 at 03:45 PM