

## Father Jim Smith

February 15, 1941 - January 3, 2022

Father James Robert Smith, age 80, of Storm Lake, Iowa died January 3, 2022 at Methodist Manor Retirement Community in Storm Lake.

Funeral Mass will take place Monday, January 10, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Early, Iowa. Burial will be in the church cemetery. Visitation will be Sunday from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church. A KC Rosary will be at 2:00 p.m. and a parish vigil service at 4:45 p.m. all at the CHURCH. The Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Home in Storm Lake is in charge of the arrangements.

Father Smith was born February 15, 1941, in Sac County to Henry and Hannah Marie (Brady) Smith. Father Smith graduated from Sacred Heart High School in Early. He received a bachelor's degree from Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. He then attended Aquinas Institute of Theology and Mount St. Bernard Seminary from 1963-1967, receiving a master's degree in theology. He also attended Creighton University in Omaha the summers of 1963 through 1970, receiving a master's degree in educational administration and guidance counseling. He was ordained June 3, 1967 and celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination with a family celebration in 2017.

Father Smith was the youngest of 9 children. He was preceded in death by his parents Henry and Marie Smith; brothers: Cecil, Edward, Joseph, and Frank;

his sister Eileen Martin; brothers-in-law: Robert Martin and Don Reisch; sisters-in-law Pat Smith, Marvel Smith, Luella Smith, and Joan Smith. He is survived by his brother William (Storm Lake); sisters Marilyn (Stan) Hall (Arlington, Virginia) and Anne Reisch (Chesapeake, Virginia); and sisters-in-law Monica Smith, Storm Lake, IA and Joyce Smith, Surprise, AZ.

Father Smith served as parish priest, teacher, counselor and/or school administrator in numerous parishes and schools in the Sioux City Diocese (northwest Iowa), including St. Joseph Bode, Garrigan High School in Algona (counselor), St. Lawrence Parish in Carroll, Kuemper High School in Carroll (teacher, then Superintendent), St. Benedict Parish in St. Benedict, St. John the Baptist Parish, Bancroft, Iowa, Immaculate Conception Parish, Cherokee and St. John's Parish, Quimby, St. Bernard Parish, Breda, and St. Mary's, Spirit Lake. At the time of his death, he was "retired" but kept active in the community, including saying mass at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Storm Lake, St. Joseph Church in Schaller and at his home parish of Sacred Heart Church in Early, Iowa.

Father Smith had several cousins and many nieces and nephews, great nieces and nephews, great-great nieces and nephews, and even a great-great-great niece. He knew all of their names. He was the family historian for his multi-generational family whose roots in America began in the late 1800's as immigrants from Europe. He was instrumental in organizing several family reunions of the Henry Smith siblings (the seven children of Frank and Mary Smith). These reunions took place across the country, including Wisconsin, Early, Iowa, Virginia, and Maine. The Early, Iowa reunion, attended by about 400 in 1997, was written up in the Des Moines Register. The latest reunion, with over 100 in attendance, was held in July 2021 to celebrate Father Smith's 80th birthday and his sister Anne's 90th birthday.

Father Smith was famous for his plain-spoken sermons, often drawing on his

farm upbringing and stories of family shenanigans, some true, some embellished, but always insightful. He was always ready to marry nieces and nephews, baptize babies, and provide counsel. On Sundays and holidays, he used to travel from the homes of one brother or sister to another's nearby home, passing along information as he enjoyed a meal at each spot. He was a strong supporter of the Catholic faith and worked hard to strengthen his family's and parishioners' understanding and commitment to it. He often preached the story of John 15 where Jesus is the vine and we are the branches, to point out that we are connected and need to love one another. He enjoyed traveling and was always up for a trip. He loved to laugh, easily saw humor in life and passed it on via so many stories.

In lieu of flowers, should you wish to make a memorial contribution, please consider a donation to St. Mary's School.

# Previous Events

## Rosary

JAN 9. 2:00 PM - 2:15 PM (CT)

Sacred Heart Catholic Church --Early, Iowa  
501 Church Street  
Early, IA 50535  
<http://www.nemahaweb.com/sacredheart/>

## Visitation

JAN 9. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Sacred Heart Catholic Church --Early, Iowa  
501 Church Street  
Early, IA 50535  
<http://www.nemahaweb.com/sacredheart/>

## Vigil Service

JAN 9. 4:45 PM - 5:30 PM (CT)

Sacred Heart Catholic Church --Early, Iowa  
501 Church Street  
Early, IA 50535  
<http://www.nemahaweb.com/sacredheart/>

## Funeral Mass

JAN 10. 11:00 AM (CT)

Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery -- Early, Iowa  
Church St.  
Early, IA 50535



# Tribute Wall



“ We are grateful for Father Jim’s life of service in his many roles as parish priest, teacher, counselor and school administrator as well as family historian. We attended many of the reunions he worked on and because of his efforts we were able to keep in touch with family spread far and wide.

*In May of 2019 my daughter Monica and I visited Storm Lake and Father Jim graciously invited us to his condo. He also invited Monica Smith and Bill Smith and we really enjoyed sharing stories. He was a wonderful host and dedicated to gathering family and sharing our history!*

*Donald McKenna (first cousin) and family*

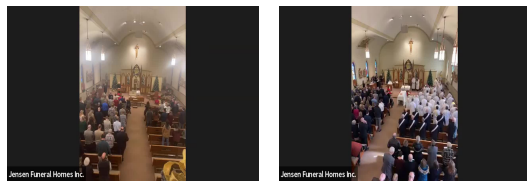


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**Donald McKenna** - February 23, 2022 at 08:27 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Service



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**Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Home** - January 11, 2022 at 11:35 AM

RC

“ Deepest sympathy to the family of Father Smith. And sympathy to his extended families in the parishes he was a part of. Father Smith was not only our priest, but a friend to us. We shared many happy times with him and a few sad. He came to my dad’s funeral and gave me moral support when I needed it. He loved talking about farming and even helped Ron get and old 560 to another farmstead. We laughed about that every time we got together. The conversations, the advice and friendship will be missed. Rest In Peace dear friend.

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**Ron and Sharon Crowley** - January 10, 2022 at 11:20 AM

BE

“ Fr. Smith was a wonderful shepherd to us all at Spirit Lake St. Marys. A big kid at heart, he loved to be involved with the CCD Classes. We did the Christmas program together the years he was here and everyone there will remember his belting out The 12 Days Of Christmas as the 6th Graders acted out the parts! Then all the kids got a bag of candy he had lovingly prepared. Now Master, dismiss your servant in peace. You have fulfilled your word.

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**Bob and Mary Emgarten** - January 09, 2022 at 06:03 PM

GD

“ Father Jim and I went to the same school and as we went on our different paths no matter when we would meet he would treat you like a long lost friend. Fr Jim was a great role model for young people.  
I am proud to have known him.  
Rest in peace Father  
Greg Dahm

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**Greg Dahm** - January 09, 2022 at 03:01 PM

FH

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Homes - January 09, 2022 at 12:45 PM

SN

“ Father Smith was an amazing priest. When I found myself faced with an unexpected pregnancy as a teenager, instead of shame, he encouraged me and let me know that everything would be ok. He encouraged me to reach out to him if I ever encountered an issue with anyone in the church passing judgment on me. He baptized my son shortly after his birth and helped me along with that sacramental journey. My son is now 12 years old. I often think about his kind words when times would get rough. ❤️ Rest easy Father Smith. I will forever remember your kindness.



Stephanie Niccum - January 09, 2022 at 12:32 PM

 Whitney Gibbins

“ Whitney Gibbins lit a candle in memory of Father Jim Smith



Whitney Gibbins - January 07, 2022 at 11:16 PM

JS

“ As my husband was put on the helicopter to Rochester, MN, with a brain-stem stroke, Father Smith gave me his rosary. I have treasured that.  
*Judy Stukey St. Mary's in Spirit Lake, IA.*

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**Judy Stukey** - January 07, 2022 at 06:01 PM

JE

“ My sincere condolences to the Smith family! Remembering, Fr. Jim as a truly Good and Faithful servant to Our Lord! I'm remembering the good times ,laughs and some trouble we got into at Rohlman Hall (Loras College). And, of course, most recently the visit we had with Fr. Don Slaven.  
*Rest In Peace!*  
*Jim Eiselt (Fellow Seminarian )*

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**Jim Eiselt** - January 07, 2022 at 10:32 AM

TC

“ Our sympathy to the Smith family... God calling this one home leaves a huge hole not only in your family but in the hearts of so many people Fr. Jim connected with. He was “One of the good ones”....never losing his easy way to talk to people....never talking “at them”....God Bless Fr. Jim

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**Tim and Pegi Cavanaugh** - January 05, 2022 at 06:50 PM

LD

“ I hope they let you drive tractors up there, Father! You have always bee so good to me - hiring me back in 1996 to be the DRE in Cherokee. Your down to earth common sense, spirituality, and your sense of humor were always so good for us. You always came and visited with me at any event we saw each other at. May angels lead you in to your heavenly reward.

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**Laurie Dreier** - January 05, 2022 at 02:20 PM

BR

“ *Rest In Peace Fr.Jim. You will be missed... Thank you for being with us when Becky passed away.* ❤️💜💖🙏🏻🙏🏻



Bev Reis - January 05, 2022 at 12:20 PM

WT

“ *Fr. Smith. thank you for all the time you gave to help our parish run smoothly. We will miss your friendly smile. May you rest in peace.*



Wilbur & Karen Triplett - January 05, 2022 at 09:19 AM

RN

“ *Rest In Peace Father Smith- such a nice man who had a funny witty sense of humor. Our twin boys served as alter boys while you were in Spiritlake. Rest easy our friend.*

Rob and Jean Newman - January 04, 2022 at 10:13 PM

TP

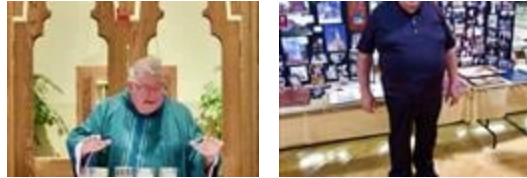
“ *Thomas Prchal lit a candle in memory of Father Jim Smith*



thomas prchal - January 04, 2022 at 07:50 PM



“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



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**David Tallman** - January 04, 2022 at 06:58 PM



“ Our condolences to the entire Smith family. A great person/priest was lost. He always had great messages to pass on through his homilies. He was always present at many church and Knights of Columbus events. He will truly be missed. Our prayers are with you.



*Kevin & Julie*

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**Kevin & Julie McKinney** - January 04, 2022 at 05:56 PM



“ Jeff/Jean Chindlund sent a virtual gift in memory of Father Jim Smith



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**Jeff/Jean Chindlund** - January 04, 2022 at 05:35 PM

PG

“ WE HAVE LIT A CANDLE IN MEMORY OF OUR DEAR FRIEND, FATHER JIM. HE WOULD BE PRAYING MANY TIMES WHEN I WAS IN CHURCH. WE WERE BOTH PRAYER WARRIORS. WILL CERTAINLY MISS HIM. HE IS NOW AT PEACE WITH JESUS. PRAYERS FOR EXTENDED FAMILY.



*JOY, PEACE & LOVE, PATTY & LARY GUNVILLE*

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**PATTY GUNVILLE** - January 04, 2022 at 03:42 PM

DH

“ *Fr. Smith-we miss you already. Thank you for being the celebrant at our wedding so many years ago in Cherokee and for the decades of friendship since. Thank you for the many, many sacraments that have blessed our lives and those of countless others.*



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**Dale and Laura Hanna** - January 04, 2022 at 01:02 PM