



## FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

Earlier this month I attended a funeral Mass for one of the senior priests of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Fr. Bill Gubbins ministered in a variety of appointments during the 67 years of his priestly service. Some of his assignments were at the chancery of the Archdiocese. The majority of his assignments were as a parish priest, both in the city as well as in the suburbs of Chicago. He “retired” back in 1999. He spent the first year of his retirement in Chicago, and the last 22 years of his “retirement” living and ministering at St. Elizabeth Seton Church in Orland Hills.

Cardinal Cupich celebrated Fr. Bill’s funeral Mass. Bishop Ron Hicks, the bishop of Joliet, IL, was a concelebrant. There were thirty priests and a handful of deacons at the Mass. Some members of the ordination class of 1955 were in attendance, in wheelchairs. In addition to members of the class of 1955, there were much younger priests, ordained in 2021 – less than one year after ordination they were there to participate in the funeral Mass of a “servant of the people of God.” Fr. Bill was active in serving God’s people until he died from a health episode earlier this month.

The seating capacity of St. Elizabeth Seton Church is 1,200. The church was at near capacity for the funeral Mass of Fr. Bill who gave of his heart, his faith, and his priesthood to the people of God across the Archdiocese, to his fellow priests, and to the Church. He was ordained prior to the Second Vatican Council. He faithfully led people through the changes brought about by Vatican II and ministered with energy, joy, and peace - loving God and loving God’s people in dedicated and faithful service.

The funeral Mass was a celebration of faith from the opening hymn to the closing hymn. The funeral Mass started at 10:00am and commenced with the casket containing his mortal remains being placed in the hearse at 11:40am. A dear friend of his preached the homily, a nephew who is a permanent deacon offered some words of tribute, Cardinal Cupich added his words of support to Fr. Bill’s family and friends and the pastor of St. Elizabeth Seton also shared his words of appreciation for the life, the spirit, and the ministry of Fr. Bill Gubbins.

The pastor made a comment stating that Dr. Fauci might need to be contacted and told that a cure for COVID has been found. He said; “Fr. Bill may have been the cure. His funeral Mass brought more people back to the parish than have been in attendance in one space since before the COVID outbreak two years ago.” A packed church, filled with generations of believers gathered together to celebrate a life of 92 years well lived, in service to the church for 67 years and a loving member of his family throughout his life.

I had the very good fortune of being supported by Fr. Bill as well as sharing in the priesthood with him. We went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land back in the 1990s of which the memories of journeying with Fr. Bill in the footsteps of Jesus remain very strong in my mind and heart. I spoke with him just a month or so ago, and he shared with me that he was slowing down, unable to do as much as he tried to do for many of those 67 years. I pray that Fr. Bill Gubbins - a son, a brother, an uncle, a priest and a lifelong believer - rests in the peace of our Savior.

The cover of the worship aid for the celebration of life of his funeral Mass had the following saying; **“Those we hold more dear never truly leave us....They live on in the love they brought into our lives.”** For those reading this article, who are grieving the loss and the death of a loved one, may eternal hope we place in our crucified and Risen Lord be a consolation in our prayer.

May God bless you with a spiritually enriching and renewing Lenten season,

*Fr. Mike Macur*