



Father Paul Joseph Rutten of Lincoln, Nebraska

September 9, 1932 - March 20, 2019

Rev. Paul Joseph Rutten, 86, faithful priest of the Lincoln Diocese for the past 60 years, died March 20 at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln. Father was born on September 9, 1932 in David City, NE. He was one of three children born to Theodore and Elizabeth (Lettelier) Rutten of rural David City, NE. Father Rutten graduated from Assumption High School in Dwight, Nebraska in 1950 and attended Saint Thomas Seminary in Denver, CO. Father was ordained on June 5, 1958 at Saint Francis Church in David City by Bishop James Casey, D.D. Following ordination, Father served in Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Falls City, Nebraska and Sacred Heart Parish in Lincoln, as well as teaching at Pius X High School. Father was Director of Guidance and Counseling at Aquinas High School in David City from 1965 - 1984. He lived in residence for 6 years at Presentation Parish, Bellwood, and then became pastor there and at Saint Joseph Parish in Bellwood, Nebraska from 1971 – 1984. Following that assignment, Father served at All Saints Parish, Holdrege, Saint Joseph Parish, Lincoln, and Saint Mary Parish, Lincoln. Father finished his active priestly duties as beloved assistant chaplain and then chaplain at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital and other health care facilities in Lincoln from 1991 – 2008. Father retired and moved to the Bonacum Retirement Home for priests in 2008. Bonacum is managed through the loving care of the Sisters of Saint Francis of the Martyr Saint George. Father Rutten said that the religious sisters who ministered at the Bonacum house became his family and that this home for retired priests is one of the great blessings in the diocese.

Father Rutten often said that the two best days of his life, besides being baptized, were the day he was ordained and the day he embraced sobriety. Through the support of many people who loved him, especially members of the Alcoholics Anonymous community, Father was able to be sober and free the last 27 years of his life. He was very grateful for that gift and used it to help others who struggled with addictions.

Father is survived by cousins Pauline Bouges and Rita Divis. He was preceded in death by his brother, Robert, who died in 1944 in Germany during World War II, his sister, Betty, who died in 1961 and his parents. Memorials may be given the Aquinas High School Endowment Fund, David City, Nebraska or the Madonna Foundation, Lincoln, Nebraska. Visitation; Sunday, March 24, 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. at Butherus, Maser, & Love Funeral Home and Monday, March 25, 2019 9-4pm at funeral home and 6-7 at church with a Rosary: at 7 p.m. Mass of Christian Burial 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, March 26 at Saint Joseph Parish, 1940 South 77th Street, Lincoln. Officiant: The Most Reverend James D. Conley, D.D., S.T.L., Bishop of Lincoln. Burial: Saint Francis Cemetery, David City.