

## Reverend Robert James Fox

A Mass of Christian Burial for Rev. Robert James Fox will be celebrated at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Poplar, MT, on Friday, September 18, 2015, at 2:00 p.m. A Vigil service will be held on Thursday, September 17, 2015, at Immaculate Conception Church in Wolf Point, MT at 7:00 p.m. Interment will follow the Mass at the Poplar Cemetery. Bishop Michael Warfel of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings will officiate.

Father Fox died on Thursday, September 10, 2015, at the Faith Lutheran Home in Wolf Point. He was born on October 14, 1931, along with his twin brother, William, in Bandon Township, Renville County, Minnesota. He is predeceased by his parents, Frank and Angela (Farrell) Fox, siblings John, Mary, Edward, and William. He is survived by his brother Jerome (Toni) of Inver Grove Heights, MN and sister Rosanne (Sister of St. Joseph of Corondelet) of St. Paul, MN., sisters-in-law Joan (Edward) Fox of Redwood falls, MN, and Mary Jo (William) Fox of Minneapolis, along with four generations of nieces, nephews, and cousins.

He was ordained June 6, 1959, St. Mary's Cathedral, St. Cloud, Minnesota, by Bishop Peter Bartholomew and said his first Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Franklin, Minnesota on June 7th.

After attending grade school in Franklin, Minnesota, he and his brother Bill lived with uncle and aunt, Jim and Mary Redmond, while attending St. Mary's Institute in Great Falls. His college education started at Mount Angel Seminary, Saint Benedict, Oregon, and continued for three years at Basselin College of the Catholic University, Washington, D. C., studying philosophy and four years at the Theological College, Catholic University, Washington, D.C. He earned his B.A. in 1953, M.A. in 1954, Philosophy, S.T.L. 1959, and his Ph.D. in 1963. During his college years, he spent four months traveling Europe which he felt was comparable to a couple of years of college. He aided many a niece and nephew over the years to attain college degrees and encouraged them to travel and learn.

In 1959, he was assigned to St. Patrick's in Billings and taught at Central Catholic High School while continuing his studies. In August 1962, he was moved to Great Falls as a Professor of Philosophy at the College of Great Falls. He became Chaplain and Head of the Philosophy Department in 1964, serving at the College for twenty-five years. Additionally, he served the people and priests of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings as chairman to the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission, Priests' Personnel Board, Judge of the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal, Chancellor of the Diocese, and Vicar for Ministries. Over the years, he served the parishes of Blessed Sacrament, Black Eagle, Ursuline Academy, Great Falls, Immaculate Conception, Fort Benton, Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Stockett, and Holy Family, Great Falls before being assigned to St. Raphael's in Glasgow in 1982 for six years. In 1989, he became pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes in Poplar, with additional duties at Immaculate Conception Church from 1991-1994. He served in Poplar until his retirement in 1996.

His thesis on nuclear war, "Sovereignty and World Order," was published in the *American Ecclesiastical Review* in February 1964, and he authored and published many book reviews, letters to editors and articles for Catholic publications over the years. Always having an interest in Dorothy Day and her work with the poor, he began a book to introduce the reader to her life and her works. In 2014, his book, *Dorothy Day's Visit to Montana*, was published. An avid reader, his collection of books would amaze his visitors. He often authored a short poem or story that he would relay in his correspondence to a vast array of friends and family.

His ministry with the Native Americans on the Fort Peck Reservation was his calling. During his years in Poplar and after his retirement, he offered whatever he had to whomever needed it, whether it be a sandwich, clothing, or counseling. His belief in the Beatitudes was well-practiced.

Father Bob loved animals, having two black Labradors, Bosco and Jake, during his years in Glasgow and Poplar. At the Faith Home, he cared for Gracie, one of the Home's "community" cats, who took up residence in his room. He loved to see a dog or a puppy come to visit. Young children were also a favorite. He kept a stash of Oreo cookies and candy for their

visits. He encouraged older ones to read and write letters, often quizzing them on what they had learned in school.

He also enjoyed his years sharing “The Cabin” on the Missouri River at Dearborn with family, friends, and fellow priests. Work was always to be done, but there was also lots of time for praying, meditation, cards, good food and visiting. Golf was his game, and he savored the winters he could spend in Arizona with family and friends pursuing the sport.

He was an integral part of the brotherhood of priests in the Diocese and served as the patriarch of the Fox Family. He was keenly aware of the needs of others and was so easy to talk with whether you were experiencing a problem in your life, or just wanted to share an event. Never judgmental, family, friends, and strangers sought him out for counseling or just to clarify a question they had about the Church. He offered Bibles, rosaries and books to anyone who showed the slightest interest in renewing or strengthening their faith. During his time at Faith Lutheran Home, he led the Rosary, helped with Mass, consoled fellow residents, and served as President of the Resident’s committee. He will be deeply missed by all.

Memorials may be made to the Priests’ Retirement Fund, Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, P O Box 1399, Great Falls, MT, 59403, or to Faith Lutheran Home, 1000 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Wolf Point, MT, 59201.

