



Father Ned Shinnick

Father Edward “Ned” Shinnick, a Catholic priest for 60 years, died on Tuesday, August 30, 2016, at the Billings Clinic, in Billings, MT after a battle with esophageal cancer.

Father Ned was born in Fermoy, County Cork, Ireland, on July 24, 1931, near his home town of Ballyhooly, the 9th of ten children. His parents were Edward and Margaret (Barry) Shinnick, Sr. He attended Irish Christian Brothers High School in Fermoy, County Cork, where he followed the call of the Lord to priesthood. Fr. Ned entered St. Columban’s Seminary in Fermoy, and completed his theological studies at St. Patrick’s Seminary, in Thurles, Ireland. There, the seminary president said, “They are short of priests in Montana. Would you go there?” Not knowing what part of the country it was, he said yes anyway.

Fr. Ned was ordained for the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings on June 10, 1956, at the Cathedral of the Assumption in Thurles. He traveled immediately to Montana, and his first assignment was to St. Philomena (later St. Matthew) Parish in Sidney and its missions. Fr. Ned spent his first Christmas there and was deeply lonely, but in time he truly made his home in eastern Montana.

He remained in Sidney as assistant priest until September 1961 at which time he was transferred to Sacred Heart Parish in Miles City, also as an assistant priest, as well as a teacher of Latin I and II, and Religion III, and also Chaplain to the State School. In October 1963, Fr. Ned moved to St. Mathias Parish in Moore where he served as an administrator. In June 1966, he was assigned as pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Medicine Lake. Fr. Ned spent one year in Culbertson at St. Anthony’s Parish, starting in July of 1968, and moved to St. Philip Bonitus Parish in Scobey and its missions in August of 1969.

At the Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia in 1976, Bishop Schuster asked, “Would you like to go back to Sidney?” He replied that he hated leaving Scobey, but he felt, “It was time to move on.” So in August 1976, Fr. Ned began his long service to St. Matthew’s in Sidney where he began his priestly ministry, retiring on July 31, 1996. He often noted, “I enjoyed every parish and its communities in eastern Montana.”

He was a member of the Knights of Columbus, Kiwanis and Richland Emergency Shelter Coalition.

Father Ned retired to his cabin, dubbed “Ballyhooly,” outside of the town of Crane, south of Sidney. He was not only a beloved priest to the Catholics in the parishes he served, but a friend and neighbor to countless people whose lives he touched with his good humor and kind heart. He also was comforted during retirement by the friendship of his beloved dog, Cain. Special thanks are due to Father Ned’s remarkable caregivers, Becky Wheeler, Sharon Olson and the Kesslers.

He celebrated his 60th Anniversary of priesthood at Ballyhooly, joined by his many friends, on June 10 this year. He will be deeply missed by his brother priests, parishioners, and people spread over much of eastern Montana.

He is survived by: his sister, Brid O’Sullivan, Cork City, Ireland; many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

He was preceded in death by: his parents, his siblings, Peggy, Ita, Neil, John, Patrick, Betty, Mary and Ann and his faithful companion-Cain in 2015.

Memorials may be sent to: Cancer Center, c/o Sidney Health Center, the Priest Retirement Fund, c/o the Catholic Foundation of Eastern Montana, P O Box 1399, Great Falls, MT, 59403 or a charity of one’s choice.