

Letter of the Superior General regarding the death of Rev. Kenneth Walker, FSSP



Fr. Kenneth Walker, FSSP
Requiescat in Pace.

Dear Friends of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter,

In the midst of mourning for our dear confrere, Fr. Kenneth Walker, one great consolation has been the outpouring of prayers and condolences expressed by so many bishops, religious communities, fellow priests and faithful. Many of you have informed us of the hundreds of Masses which have already been offered for the repose of his soul and for the health of Fr. Joseph Terra. By the grace of God and thanks to your prayers, Fr. Terra's life is out of danger and we expect him to make a full recovery.

By now you have read on various news outlets and websites about the virtues of Fr. Walker as a priest and how badly he will be missed by his confreres and parishioners. In an age where we seem so centered upon 'clerical stars' and are constantly searching for the 'newest approach to evangelization', the life of our confrere gave witness to one of the greatest priestly virtues, a quiet and consistent strength, which is a mark of the Good Shepherd who watches vigilantly over his flock in season and out of season.

He has been described by the parishioners he served in the same manner that he would be by his confreres; he was earnest: he was persevering; he was ready first to serve; nothing ever seemed to inconvenience him. Our Lord's description of Nathaniel perhaps fits him best: he was a man without guile. He will perhaps be remembered as an example to us as confreres more for what he did not say; one would be hard pressed to find anyone who ever heard him complain or speak badly about anyone. As a former professor of Fr. Walker in the seminary, and as superior, I also knew him as one who took correction well; never pridefully objected; and sincerely sought to improve in all areas of formation both as a seminarian and a later as a priest.

In such tragic circumstances I realize that it can be easy to fall into hyperbole, but there was an innocence to Fr. Walker which is rarely found in this valley of tears.

His life and his priestly work here below have been cut tragically short – just two short years serving in the vineyard of Our Lord. But we are grateful for the time he had to serve in the Fraternity and that he was given the vocation that he sought. His reason for becoming a priest was already beautifully formulated in his application to the seminary:

“God, in His infinite love, desires all men to be saved and so achieve their true end. Along with the Church, then, I am deeply grieved by these errors concerning the nature and dignity of man accepted by so many people in the world, which deviate them from their supernatural end. In full view of the situation in the world, then, the only vocation that I could be satisfied with, as a work, would be one that would be dedicated to bringing people to salvation in whatever way God wills for me to do so.”

As confreres we know that Fr. Walker would not want us to waste our time in anger over what has happened; over the gross injustice which has been done. As great as this is a tragedy for us, so too it will bear great graces for our Fraternity: *O altitudo divitiarum sapientiæ, et scientiæ Dei: quam incomprehensibilia sunt judicia ejus, et investigabiles viæ ejus!* [1] The first grace will be as an encouragement to each of us to take nothing for granted in the call of Our Lord to the Sacred Priesthood. We are His instruments to serve, and must do so always more faithfully in accordance with His will and that of the Church for His greater glory. For the moment let us waste no time, and simply concentrate our efforts in praying for the repose of the soul of Fr. Walker.

We thank the many parishes which have organized Holy Hours and will hold Masses of Requiem on Monday; again, we are humbled by your charity. Fr. Eric Flood, District Superior of North America, will offer a Requiem in Phoenix on Monday in the presence of Bishop Thomas Olmsted, and I will offer one here at the Basilica of Notre-Dame in Fribourg on the same day. The funeral arrangements are on hold until the body of Fr. Walker can be transferred to Kansas. The Fraternity will of course publish these details when they are in place.

*Veni Sancte Spiritus, Consolator optime;
In fletu solatium, reple cordis intima tuorum fidelium!*

Mater Misericordiae, Ora pro nobis

*Requiem Aeternam dona ei, Domine. Et lux perpetua luceat ei.
Requiescat in pace.*

Ember Saturday of Pentecost, June 14, 2014

Very Rev. John Berg
Superior General FSSP