



Rev. James Thomas Ramsey, Jr.

April 30, 1944 - November 27, 2024

Rev. James Thomas Ramsey, Jr., was born on 30 April 1944, and went peacefully to his eternal rest on 27 November 2024, surrounded by his two sisters and his long-time friend and mentee, Fr. Kris Fuchs.

James was known and loved by many as Jimmie, Jim, James, Brother, Fr. Ramsey and Fr. Brother. He was a 4th generation Texan and a 4th generation native Houstonian.

He is survived by his two sisters, Judith Ramsey Bott and her children, Kasey (and Dan) Lakey and their six children (David, Aaron, Faith, Nathaniel, Hope and Grace) and Kevin (and Jennifer) Bott and their four children (Caleb, Jonathan, Emily, and Noah), and Linda (and Clifford) Ramsey Steakley and their two children, Eric Ramsey Steakley and Nicole (and Jim) Rogers and their 2 children (Piper and Collins), and his cousin, Van Metzler.

James' younger years were spent attending church at Baptist Temple in the Houston Heights. He became involved with St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in the Heights during high school through one of his long-time Boy Scout scoutmasters. He stated that "the worship there resonated with him, and he

was drawn to the reverence, grace, dignity, beauty, and order of the Episcopal liturgy, as well as the bells, incense, genuflection, vestments, candles, flowers, and colored hangings adorning the church.”

He learned that St. Andrew’s was looking for a new organist and being a life-long pianist and emerging organist, he applied for and was given the job in 1960, at the age of 16. He took instructions there and was confirmed in May of 1961. After attending the University of Texas and receiving his bachelor’s degree in music, James joined the Peace Corps and served in Malawi, Africa, from 1967 to 1969.

Returning to the U.S., he attended Virginia Theological Seminary and received a Master of Divinity. Following his ordination as a Deacon, he was sent to St. Francis Episcopal Church in Prairie View, Texas and was ordained a Priest there on 19 June 1972. Bishop Richardson sent him back to Malawi as a missionary from 1975-1977. On his return, he was appointed Vicar at the mission of Sts. Simon and Jude Episcopal Church in east Houston, where he facilitated a beautiful remodel of the church building.

In 1979, Fr. Ramsey, along with the help of Fr. James Moore and other likeminded Episcopal priests, submitted a petition to the Vatican to let them enter into full communion with the Catholic Church while retaining their Anglican liturgy and some of their traditions. Pope John Paul II responded in 1980 to their petition by issuing the Pastoral Provision.

Fr. Ramsey taught at Memorial Hall, a private school in west Houston during this interim. With the help of some of Fr Ramsey’s former parishioners, Fr.

Ramsey and Fr. Moore prepared their dossiers seeking Holy Orders in the Catholic Church under the Pastoral Provision and submitted them to Rome. Approval arrived from the Vatican Dicastery for the Propagation of the Faith in early 1984. On 6 April 1984, they were ordained priests and, along with 19 laypeople, were received into the Catholic Church. They comprised the Church of Our Lady of Walsingham (OLW), which was officially erected as a parish of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston that day. Fr. Ramsey served OLW as co-pastor for a short time and was then appointed pastor of St. Nicholas, the oldest African American parish in the Catholic diocese, where he spent five happy years and celebrated their 100th anniversary in 1987. Fr. Ramsey then became pastor of St. Philip Neri Church, until Father Wayne Flagg, charter member of OLW and the first seminarian from OLW, became pastor of St. Philip Neri in 1991. Fr. Ramsey was then transferred to St. Michael's Church in Needville, Texas, where he served for 18 years, overseeing the flourishing of the parish in many ways. At his longest assignment, the friendships and impact he made were deep with the people of Needville.

He returned to OLW as pastor in 2009, where he served until his retirement in 2012 when OLW became the principal church, now Cathedral, for the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. He retired to his home in Blessing, Texas, and served in the Diocese of Victoria, taking Masses as needed for parishes throughout the diocese, which he enjoyed very much until his last days.

Fr. Ramsey was a voracious reader and left a large library of books on many subjects, mostly pertaining to world, European monarchy, and religious history. He had also collected coins since he was a teenager. Much of his spare time throughout his life was spent researching family genealogy. His

passion was visiting small town libraries, cemeteries, and locating distant relatives to gather information. At least seven large books of his research pertaining to his mother and father's genealogy had been bound, and several others were near completion or works-in-progress.

He lived life to the fullest and his last outing, three days before his homegoing, was to attend Mass at St. Mary's in Victoria, Texas. Fr. Ramsey loved his family and never met a stranger. His great sense of humor and his love of laughter will be missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

A visitation and Evensong will begin at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 19, 2024 at Our Lady of Walsingham, 7809 Shadyvilla Lane in Houston, Texas. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m., on Friday, December 20, 2024 also at Our Lady of Walsingham. All are invited to a reception immediately following the Mass.

Tribute Wall

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“ *Helen Dolezal lit a candle Father Ramsey was a wonderful priest. We always enjoyed having him serve as priest at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Palacios, TX whenever he could come. He was a dedicated servant of the Lord and a true inspiration to those who knew him. May Father Ramsey rest in peace and may perpetual light shine upon him.*



Helen Dolezal - December 20, 2024 at 12:00 AM