

Msgr. Gerald Stessman, 83

DES MOINES — Monsignor Stessman graduated from St. Joseph High School in Earling, Loras College and Mount Saint Bernard Seminary and was ordained to the priesthood on May 31, 1959 at St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines.

He served as Assistant Pastor at Sacred Heart in West Des Moines and then assistant pastor of Assumption, Granger and St. Ann, Woodward in 1959. He began serving at St. Anthony in Des Moines in 1962 he also taught part time at Dowling Catholic High School. He became Pastor at St. Patrick in Council Bluffs in 1972 and then pastor of St. Mary in Guthrie Center and St. Cecelia in Panora in 1980. In 1986 he became Pastor at Holy Spirit in Creston, St. Patrick in Lenox and St. Edward Afton. He was then made Rector of St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines in 1990 where he served until he became Pastor of Holy Trinity in Des Moines in 1993. In 2003 he retired and moved into the Priest Residence at Dowling Catholic High School.

Monsignor Stessman served at Moderator of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women for 15 years. He was a Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus and served as the Friar for Dowling Assembly and also as Friar for the State of Iowa.

Monsignor Stessman will be remembered for his excellent work as a pastor, chaplain and moderator of many organizations. He was known for his hospitality. He was spiritual director for many persons and was known for his willingness to help out wherever he could. He is also known for his many puns and also his love for the Iowa State Fair and playing cards. He made frequent visits to his large family. Msgr. Gerald J. Stessman died Monday, April 4 at Mercy Hospice in Johnston at age 83.

Monsignor Stessman was preceded in death by his parents, Leonard and Isabel (Assmann) Stessman and brothers, Raymond, Joseph (Jack) and Vern. He is survived by his brothers and sisters: Marcus Stessman and wife Peg of Earling, Rita Wall and husband Don of Omaha NE, Dolores Klein and husband Marvin of Dunlap, Donald Stessman and wife JoAnn of Dunlap, Leo Stessman and wife Mary of Omaha NE, Helen Reisz of Woodbine, Ronald Stessman of Omaha NE, Gail Stessman and wife Maureen of Dunlap, sisters-in-law, Kathryn Stessman of Dunlap and Connie Stessman of Bellevue NE and many nieces and nephews.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Des Moines on Monday, April 11 at 11:00 a.m. Visitation will be from 2 – 7 p.m. Sunday, April 10 at Holy Trinity Church with a Vigil Service at 7:00 p.m. Burial will be in Earling at St. Joseph's Cemetery at approximately 4:30 p.m. following the funeral. He will be sorely missed.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials be made to the charity of one's choice or Holy Trinity Parish, Des Moines.