

# Death of Monsignor Richard Hughes of the Archdiocese of Washington

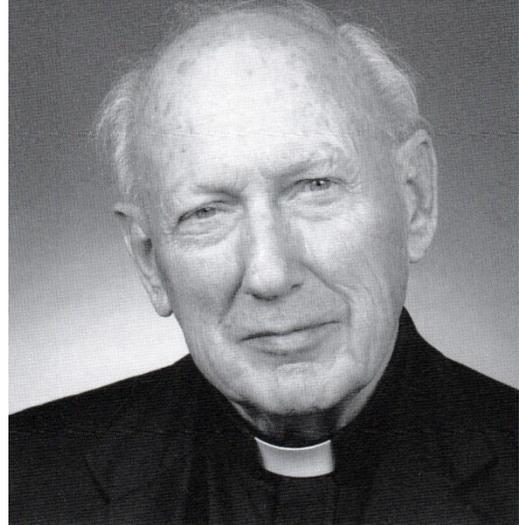
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## Longtime Pastor, Fondly Remembered as a “True Spiritual Father”

***October 10, 1928 to March 6, 2017***

In a letter sent to priests Cardinal Wuerl announced "with sorrow" the death of Reverend Msgr. Richard A. Hughes on March 6, 2017. He was 88 years old and a resident of Sacred Heart Nursing Home in Hyattsville, MD.

The Washington native was ordained to the priesthood on December 20, 1952 at the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome. His seminary formation took place at St. Charles College in Catonsville, St. Mary's Seminary (Paca Street) in Baltimore and the North American College in Rome with classes at the Gregorian University.



His first assignment as parochial vicar was at the Church of the Little Flower in Bethesda and in 1962 as parochial vicar at Saint Teresa of Avila Parish, Washington, DC. In 1965 he was named pastor of Holy Angels Parish, Avenue, MD and in 1968 pastor of Saint Margaret of Scotland Parish, Seat Pleasant, MD. He was named pastor of Saint Mark the Evangelist Parish, Hyattsville, MD in 1970, then pastor of Saint Michael Parish, Baden, MD in 1987 and in 1994 as pastor of Saint Mary of the Assumption Parish, Upper Marlboro, MD. He retired in 2007 and resided at Mount Calvary Parish, Forestville, MD. In 2013, he moved into Sacred Heart Nursing Home, Hyattsville, MD.

Msgr. Hughes was named a papal chamberlain in 1972 and a domestic prelate in 1978. He served on the Priest Senate, as Censor Librorum for the Archdiocese of Washington and on the Archdiocesan Board of Education as a parish priest examiner. He was dean of Southern Prince George's County, chaplain of various Maryland Knights of Columbus Councils (4076, 3022 and 1955), served as a Faithful Friar for the Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree, spiritual director for the Knights of St. John, and confessor to Mother Teresa's sisters.

His vigil was held on Thursday, March 9, 2017, from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM at St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Upper Marlboro, MD. The vigil Mass was at 7:30 PM and Rev. Thomas LaHood preached. Cardinal Donald Wuerl celebrated the funeral Mass at Saint Mary of the Assumption Parish at 10:30 AM on Friday, March 10, 2017. Rev. Joseph Jenkins preached. He had served with Msgr. Hughes at St. Mary of the Assumption back in the 1990's and they remained close friends. Interment was at Resurrection Cemetery, Clinton, Maryland.

At the Mass of Christian Burial, Father Jenkins remembered Msgr. Hughes as “a true spiritual father” with a priestly “devotion that would put many of us to shame.”

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*The article in THE CATHOLIC STANDARD (March 23, 2017) continued as follows:*

Every moment of his life, Msgr. Hughes was praying, saying Mass or serving God's people. The homilist related how Msgr. Hughes routinely read the death notices in the morning's paper, took notes and prayed for the dead. While many people at the funeral Mass "are fairly convinced that Monsignor is a saint; he would tell us to keep praying," because if he is in heaven, then those graces would go to another soul who needs them. "Nothing is wasted in God."

Msgr. Hughes took his role as pastor and teacher seriously, approving textbooks for religious education, handing out at Mass copies of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and teaching RCIA classes. The homilist remembered a particular time when Msgr. Hughes taught about Jesus at RCIA. Without using notes he recited Scripture. By doing this, Msgr. Hughes was "giving as a gift to all of us" the Jesus that he had come to know throughout his whole life. "He made it possible for a lot of people to have that same saving encounter with Jesus." In everything that Msgr. Hughes did, his objective was clear— it was to save souls.

"Many men were inspired to be priests because of him; many men stayed priests because of him; and many men became better priests because of him."

Msgr. Hughes also enjoyed looking at the stocks in the morning paper— and he was very good with money. "Nevertheless, he never treated what he made for himself as his own." If a student's family could not pay for tuition, Msgr. Hughes would do it for them; and if a family was losing hope and could not pay their bills, he would take care of it. At his death, he left everything to the Church.

In particular, the homilist remembered Msgr. Hughes' interactions with a beggar who continually returned to the church rectory to knock on the door. Msgr. Hughes would always open the door, talk to the man, ask him to change his ways and give him some money before he left. When it happened repeatedly, his associate priest asked him about it, and found out that the man was once a boy from a parish at which Msgr. Hughes used to serve. Before the boy's parents died, he had promised to look after their son, and "when Monsignor made a promise, he meant it." "Years later he was still trying to help the boy." As priests, our hearts are broken... we weep with our people, but we never give up."

Msgr. Hughes began a clothing bank at St. Michael's in Baden, where people could buy articles of clothing for a dime each. He called it, "a dime with dignity" because the poor were able to buy their own clothes like everybody else.

"Everyone who knew him saw him as their priest in a very personal way."

At the conclusion of the Mass, Cardinal Wuerl offered his sympathy to Msgr. Hughes' family. He said it seemed appropriate that God would be calling him home during the Lenten season, while the Church reflects on the mystery of new life in Christ, because it is in this mystery that Msgr. Hughes found his purpose and his calling.