

At Rest

Father Marvin Reif finds solace in the arms of the Lord



Father Marvin Reif, a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City, was laid to rest April 1. Father Ted Stoecklein presided at the funeral Mass at St. Patrick Church in Great Bend. Internment was at Holy Family Cemetery in Odin.

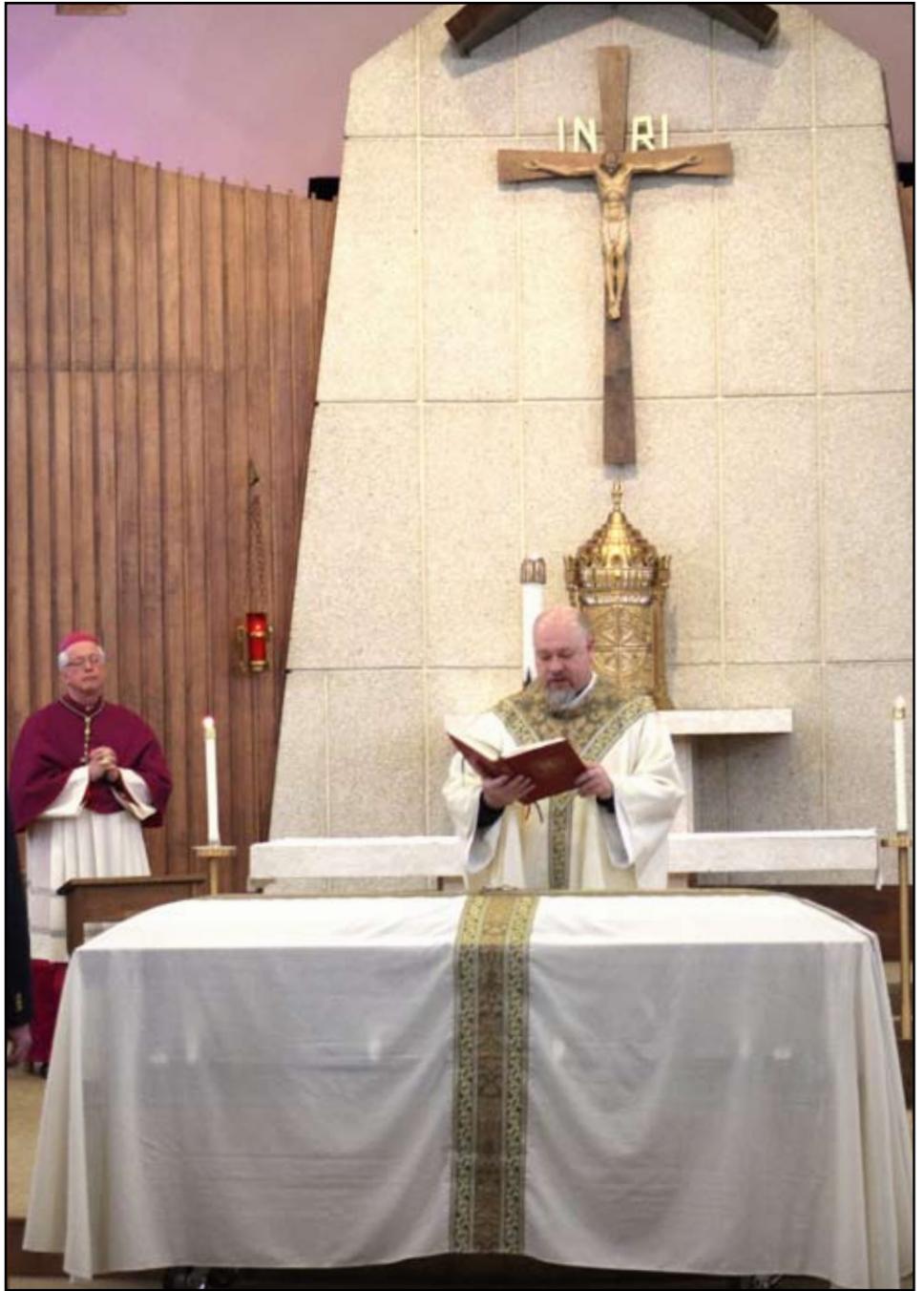
Father Reif, son of the late Albert and Dorothy (Frenzl) Reif, was born August, 19, 1963, in Hoisington. He took his seminary studies at Conception Seminary, Conception, Mo., Holy Trinity College, Dallas, Tex., and Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio. He was ordained to the priesthood June 3, 1989, by the Most Rev. Stanley G. Schlarman, bishop of Dodge City, at Holy Family Church, Odin, Kansas.

He served as an associate pastor at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Dodge City, and St. Rose of Lima, Great Bend.

His pastorates included: Immaculate Conception, Claflin, with Holy Family, Odin, and St. Catherine, Dubuque, and St. Joseph, Beaver, from 1993 to 1995; Sacred Heart, Ness City, and St. Alphonsus, Ransom, (1995-1999); St. Joseph, Ashland, and Holy Spirit, Coldwater, (1999-2000); St. Rose, Great Bend, (2000-2001); and St. Nicholas, Kinsley, with St. Joseph, Offerle, (2001-2002).

Father Reif served the diocese in the positions of Director of the Office of Liturgy and Worship, Director of Vocations, and was a member of the Presbyteral Council and College of Consultors.

While serving in the diocese, he was recognized and admired for his zeal for spreading the Gospel message. In his years of active service, Father Reif built a large contingent of friends and



Father Ted Stoecklein, Parochial Vicar at Prince of Peace Parish in Great Bend, prays over the body of Father Marvin Reif, a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City. At left is the Bishop John B. Brungardt. Following the April 1 Mass and reception, Father Reif was laid to rest at Holy Family Cemetery in Odin. *Photo by Dave Myers*

Seeking the Sacred Heart

As a little boy, Marvin Reif used to like to hide; sometimes he'd go and play with the kittens in order to avoid work, said Father Ted Stoecklein, Parochial Vicar at Prince of Peace Parish, to all those gathered for Father Reif's Funeral Mass April 1.

Or sometimes, "things got too tense and he'd climb a tree. And he wasn't coming down until he was good and ready. Marvin had a tendency to hide—to hide *from*."

"But as a priest," Father Stoecklein continued, "Father Marvin would tell you often to 'be still,'" and listen to God. "This was, in a sense, a hiding in the heart of the Father; hiding in the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

Father Stoecklein, a humble priest with a wry wit, said that he was teaching adult formation "and just wrapping up a session, when I asked if there were any questions. I prayed that there weren't any," he said to laughter.

"A woman in the front row raised her

hand and asked, 'Why does God allow bad things to happen?'

"I knew this woman had been through tremendous suffering I hemmed and hawed, back-peddled, and started talking about how because of sin, death came, about the mystery of sin ... and I must have taken a breath, because a woman in the back said, 'In order that a greater good might come.' *In order that a greater good might come.*

"I stood marveling at this woman for her courage and faith," Father Stoecklein said. "I realized everyone was looking at me. I said, '*What she said.*'"

"It's a beautiful truth, a hard concept to grasp while we are suffering...but it's really a truth. Nothing happens without God allowing it. Absolutely nothing.

"God does not allow [things to happen] without purpose, even in our suffering. ... We know that *all things work for the good for all those who love the Lord and are*

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admirers.

He was a 3rd degree member of the Knights of Columbus, enjoyed music, singing, nature and was very proud of his extensive collection of religious books.

Survivors include three brothers, Gary Reif and wife Karen of Great Bend, Duane Reif and wife Debbie of Hoisington, Eldon Reif and wife Karla of Holyrood; two sisters Karen Winkelman and husband Tim of Great Bend and Nancy Jensen and husband Mark of Ellsworth; and numerous nieces and nephews. Father Marvin was preceded in death by his parents and one brother, Leonard Reif.

“Father Marvin is remembered by so many people of our diocese: grateful for his love of the sacred liturgy; still able to hear his voice as he sang and preached; continuing to feel his compassionate and gentle pastoral care,” said the Most Rev. John B. Brungardt, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City.

“Father Marvin will continue to be remembered as one who sought to serve others in and out of the various changes of his life. He experienced such joy and suffering in his earthly life, and trusted in our Savior Jesus for his eternal life.

“May the Lord, who Father Marvin sought to praise and serve, continue to give him eternal rest and peace. May that same Lord grant comfort and consolation to his family and all of us who grieve for him.”

On April 3, 2017, Father Reif walked away from his residence

at Valley Manor Nursing home in Protection, where he had been receiving treatment for mental illness from which he had suffered for several years.

An extensive search, which included 70 volunteers and Bishop Brungardt, failed to locate Father Reif.

His body were discovered in a pasture near Protection on March 27, 2019.

In March of 2017, Father Reif shared this Lenten message on a Facebook post. It reads, in part:

“As we know, God’s wisdom is so different than our wisdom. His ways are far above our ways. His thoughts above our thoughts.

“... What does this teach us? It teaches us lots of patience. And it teaches us to surrender, trust and hope. If we want to pray hard and pray well, we need to pray correctly.... It’s the simple prayer of Mary, when the angel came to her in the annunciation: ‘Thy will be done!’

“It is hard at first, but it becomes easy when we understand and believe that God always has the perfect plan for our lives, and yes, even in the struggles and situations in which we find ourselves.

“... He has a perfect plan for your life, and that plan is sometimes oh, so different than your plan. Surrender to Him, and let His holy will guide you in all things.”

Memorial Funds have been established with Texas EquuSearch-Kansas Chapter or Seminary Burse Endowment Fund, in care of Nicholson-Ricke Funeral Home, PO Box 146, Hoisington, KS, 67544.

Seeking the Sacred Heart

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called according to His plan, says St. Paul. We must trust this and allow God to work his mystery of life and death in Father Marvin and through Father Marvin, and in us and through us, as difficult as it might be.

“I would encourage you during this time of grief ... not to hide from one another, not to hide from God, and not to hide from yourself. Find our Lord, and hide in Him.”

-- Dave Myers





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-- Father Marvin Reif