

Sad News - Our parishes mourn the death of Rev. Kevin Ashe who passed away on March 9th

Arrangements: Saturday, April 5th at Sacred Heart Church.

Visitation 10-11am, Funeral Mass at 11am.

Meet & Greet afterwards in the Parish Hall.

Rev. Kevin Patrick Ashe, a tireless advocate for the poor, disenfranchised, and the environment, died surrounded by loved ones at the home he and his father, the late Thomas, built in 1958 as a summer residence in Brick, NJ. His parents eventually retired to Brick in 1970.

Fr. Kevin was well known at the Jersey Shore, serving several Roman Catholic parishes including, Sacred Heart in Bay Head, St. Catherine in Spring Lake, and St. Dominic in Brick. He celebrated his 60th anniversary as a priest in 2023. He was 87 years old.



Never hesitant to roll up his sleeves and fight for the poor, a Washington Post article from 1996 highlighted his battle with the state of NJ to turn a theatre in Union City into a nonprofit community arts center. The writer described him as “an Irish Catholic priest right out of central casting.”

A graduate of Seton Hall University and Immaculate Conception Seminary in Darlington, NJ, Fr. Kevin began his ministry in 1963. He served in parishes throughout the state and immersed himself into each community living as a shining example of the Gospels in action. His humility was evident in everything and everywhere he went.

While at the Little Flower parish in Berkeley Heights, Fr. Kevin was named the Jaycee Man of the Year and was a member of the Union County Children's Shelter. At St. Paul's Greenville in Jersey City, Rev. Ashe established a housing resource center (Greenville House) for those in need and a municipal housing court. While at St. Paul's, he earned his Associates Degree in Urban Studies from St. Peter's College in Jersey City. As pastor of Holy Family Church in Union City, he established the Park Performing Arts Center, the subject of the brouhaha covered by the Washington Post, and served as chaplain to the Police and Fire Departments.

Fr. Kevin received a Lifetime Achievement Award for establishing the Park Performing Arts Center and America's longest running production of the Passion Play, which was named one of the top 100 tours from the American Bus Association. Raising more than \$1 million for capital improvements and expanded programs at the Park, he brought arts programs into an urban area lacking cultural opportunities and became a hero to the largely Latino community. He established the Northeast Folk Art Center and subsequently was given the prestigious Governor's Tourism Award.

More recently, upon his retiring as full-time executive director of the Park, Fr. Kevin turned his time and attention to the poor at the Jersey Shore, becoming a founding member of Seeds of Service in Brick, which advocates and distributes food, clothing, and household items to the sick, the poor, and the needy. He also served on the NJ Board of Americas Gleaned Seafood, which takes bycatch and distributes it to the hungry.

An avid outdoors man, who loved to ramble through the woods, sail, ski, hunt, and traveling the world, Rev. Ashe also served on the Brick Open Space Savers, a citizens advisory group that evaluates properties for potential acquisition to support open space, conservation, and recreation.

Fr. Kevin will be sorely missed. His sermons that spread the message of tolerance, love, mercy, and welcome will be remembered. May we live up to his expectations and follow his example.

He is pre-deceased by his father, Thomas, and mother, Catherine nee' Malloy and his sister Catherine. He has many loving cousins here and in Ireland.

In lieu of flowers please make donations to his two favorite charities, Seeds of Service and Americas Gleaned Seafood.

Arrangements by O'Brien Funeral Home, Wall, NJ