



Media Release

For Immediate Release

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Father Joseph Vincent Gallagher, C.S.P. died today at age 84, from complications of Parkinson's disease. He died at Hecker House, the residence of the Paulist Fathers in Grand Rapids Michigan.

From 1986 through 1994, Gallagher served two terms as President of the Paulist Fathers, the first community of Catholic priests founded in the United States. During his administration, Gallagher guided the Paulists to adopt a new mission direction statement that determined the Paulist mission around three major priorities: evangelization, ecumenism and reconciliation. The mission direction statement that Fr. Gallagher nursed into reality continues, today, as the operative expression of Paulist Ministry. While President, Fr. Gallagher conducted the first nation-wide capital campaign for the Paulist Fathers, renovated the seminary at a time when seminaries across the United States were closing or amalgamating, and helped to secure the retirement needs of aging Paulists with an endowment fund. Fr. Gallagher fostered a resurgence of interest in the spirituality of the Paulist Founder, Fr. Isaac Thomas Hecker. He was a strong advocate of the influence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Paulist priests and associates, and worked tirelessly in advocating a deepening role for the laity in ministry. Fr. Gallagher believed as strongly as the Paulist founder did, that creating a "future brighter than any past" would demand ministries that reached beyond local churches into the marketplace at the nexus of culture and faith.

Fr. Gallagher's directives as President of the Paulists came from a rich experience in pastoral settings. Ordained on May 1, 1961 at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle in New York City, Gallagher served at the Catholic Information Center in Boston, Massachusetts from September 1961 to 1964. He was Director of the Paulist Institute for Religious Research in New York City until 1970, and was then appointed pastor and superior of St. Paul the Apostle Parish at New York's Lincoln Center. In 1978 Fr. Gallagher was elected the Vice-President of the Paulist Fathers. While serving as Vice President, Gallagher also served as superior of the Catholic Information Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 1982 Fr. Gallagher left Grand Rapids, and became pastor and superior of St. Paul the Apostle Church, located in the Westwood neighborhood of Los Angeles, where he remained until he was elected president of the society.

At the conclusion of his term as Paulist President in 1994, Fr. Gallagher chose to work as an associate and then retire at the Catholic Information Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan where he remained a vibrant spiritual presence until his death.

The former Paulist President, was educated at Portsmouth Academy, and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame in 1942. After graduation he served as a commander of landing ships in the Pacific during World War II. After the war he earned a law degree from Fordham University and practiced maritime law in New York until he joined the Paulists in 1956. Gallagher also earned a master's degree in theology from St. Paul's College in Washington, D.C.

A native New Yorker, Gallagher was born on March 5, 1923 to Joseph V. and Alice P. (McGovern) Gallagher. He is survived by his brothers, Mr. John Gallagher of Chicago, Mr. Peter Gallagher of Florida and numerous nieces and nephews including his nephew, Paulist Father David Dwyer, CSP.

In Grand Rapids, a wake service for Fr. Gallagher will be celebrated on Monday, November 19, at 7:00pm at St. Andrew's Cathedral. A Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated the following day at 11:00am at St. Andrew Cathedral. Fr. Gallagher's body will then be flown to the Paulists mother church, St. Paul the Apostle in New York City where arrangements have not been finalized. He will be buried at the Paulist cemetery in Oak Ridge, New Jersey.

The Paulist Fathers are a community of priests whose mission is to reach out with the gospel message, bridge the gaps between various Christian and interfaith groups, and help people to find the presence of Christ again in their lives. Since their founding, the Paulists have searched, throughout North America, to share old truths in new ways through the use of modern media, and with a keen sense of the American spirit, while fostering a deeper awareness of the role of the Holy Spirit at the nexus of faith and culture.

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