

BORN

24 June 1932

DIED

3 June 2012

Monsignor Joseph P Or Patrick Higgins, 79

TODAY'S OBITUARIES

Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, WI) - Wednesday, June 6, 2012

PARENTS AND SIBLINGS

Martin A Higgins **father**
Dora Conlon Higgins **mother**
Mary Petersen **sister**
John Higgins **brother**

EXTENDED FAMILY

Gary Petersen **brother-in-law**
Catherine Higgins **sister-in-law**
Christine Mellace **niece**
Frank Mellace **nephew**
Colleen Stancato **niece**
John Higgins **nephew**
Michael Higgins **nephew**
Carol Higgins **niece**
Thomas Higgins **nephew**
Lori Higgins **niece**
Geoffrey Petersen **nephew**
Fibbi Petersen **niece**
Greg Petersen **nephew**
Elizabeth Stancato **niece**
Erin Higgins **niece**
Donald Stancato **nephew**
Megan Stancato **niece**
Daniel Stancato **nephew**
Joseph Higgins **nephew**
Paul Higgins **nephew**
Colin Mellace **nephew**
Nathan Mellace **nephew**
Evan Mellace **nephew**

MADISON/MIDDLETON - Reverend Monsignor Joseph P. "Patrick" Higgins, age 79, entered eternal life on Sunday, June 3, 2012, peacefully at his home.

He was born on June 24, 1932, in Beloit, the son of Martin A. and Dora (Conlon) Higgins. Monsignor Higgins received his primary education at Brother Dutton Catholic Grade School in Beloit, he entered St. Francis Minor Seminary, Milwaukee for high school. He continued his studies at St. Francis Major Seminary, Milwaukee with his collegiate studies in philosophy. He received his S.T.B. and S.T.L. degrees from the Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. Father Higgins was ordained by Bishop Martin J. O'Connor on Dec. 15, 1957, at the Pontifical North American College in Rome for priestly service in the Diocese of Madison. His Investiture as Prelate of Honor was conferred in 1997. He celebrated his first Mass in the basilica of St. Peter's in Rome on Dec. 16. His first Mass in the United States was celebrated on July 13, 1958, at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church in Beloit.

Monsignor Higgins first served the Diocese of Madison as Associate Pastor at St. Patrick Parish, Madison for three years. He then was appointed to the Chancery beginning as Assistant to the Chancellor, then Vice-Chancellor, Secretary to the Bishop, and finally, Chancellor for 33 years. During his tenure as Chancellor, he continued his active priestly ministry as Pastor at St. Mary Parish, Pine Bluff for eight years, and then St. Bernard Parish, Middleton, for 21 years until he retired in 2002. During his many years of priestly ministry, Monsignor Higgins faithfully served the Diocese of Madison as Vocations Director, part-time instructor at Queen of the Apostles Seminary (where he also coached basketball), Chaplain for the Serra Club, Dean for the West Dane Deanery, Diocesan Consultor, and Co-Secretary of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. He was also an active Board Member of the Holy Name Catholic Center; Catholic Charities; Diocesan Cemeteries; St. Raphael Society; Presbyteral Council; and the Diocesan Corporate Board. Throughout his retirement years Monsignor Higgins continued to serve in various parishes helping out with Sunday Masses. In his most recent years he helped out at St. Bernard's most Sundays. From a very young age, Father Pat developed a love and talent for golf. He spent many happy hours throughout his life on the links with friends.

He is survived by a sister, Mary (Gary) Petersen of State College, Pa.; sister-in-law, Catherine Higgins of Kenosha; nieces, Christine (Frank) Mellace of State College, Pa., and Colleen Stancato of Kenosha; nephews, John Higgins, Michael (Carol) Higgins and Thomas (Lori) Higgins all of Kenosha, and Geoffrey (Fibbi) Petersen of Allentown, Pa., and Greg Petersen of Santa Rose, Calif.; great-nieces, Elizabeth Stancato and Erin Higgins; and great-nephews, Donald (Megan) Stancato, Daniel Stancato, Joseph Higgins, Paul Higgins, Colin Mellace, Nathan Mellace and Evan Mellace. Monsignor Higgins was preceded in death by his parents; and a brother, John Higgins.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at ST. BERNARD'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, 2015 Parmenter St., Middleton at 11 a.m. on Friday, June 8, 2012, with the Most Reverend Robert C. Morlino, Bishop of Madison presiding. Burial will be in Resurrection Cemetery, Madison. Visitation will be at ST. BERNARD'S CATHOLIC CHURCH from 4 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 7, 2012, where a Scripture Service will begin at 7:30 p.m. Friends may also call on Friday from 9 a.m. until the time of Holy Mass at the church.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Joseph P. Higgins Memorial Fund, c/o Gunderson West Funeral Home, 7435 University Ave., Middleton, WI 53562. A sincere thank you from St. Bernard's Parish, as "Father Pat" had continued to assist and care for parishioners until his final days.

Gunderson West Funeral & Cremation Care

7435 University Ave.

(608) 831-6761

www.gundersonfh.com

WISCONSIN STATE  JOURNAL

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CITE THIS RECORD

Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin) 06 June 2012, obit for Higgins, Rev. Msgr. Joseph P., GenealogyBank.com (<https://www.genealogybank.com/doc/obituaries/obit/13F4835E9905AB90> : accessed 29 January 2018)