



# Reverend Father Robert Anthony Hart VF

DEC 18, 1947 - SEP 25, 2008



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## **Reverend Father Robert Anthony Hart VF**

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**R**ev. Fr. Robert A. Hart VF, affectionately referred to as “Fr. Bob”, died Thursday morning, September 25, 2008 in Muskegon following a courageous battle with cancer. He was 60 years old. Fr. Bob was born December 18, 1947 in Muskegon to Barbee F. “Bob” and Josephine A. (Fakatty) Hart. He was raised in the faith at his home parish, Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Muskegon Heights, where he also attended elementary school. At the age of 14, he entered St. Joseph’s Seminary in Grand Rapids, MI where he earned his high school diploma. He also attended Aquinas College in Grand Rapids and received his bachelor of art degree at St. Mary’s Seminary College in Baltimore, Maryland, and received his master of divinity at St. John’s Providence Seminary in Plymouth, Michigan. On April 6, 1975 at the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Grand Rapids, he was ordained into the priesthood by the Most Reverend Joseph M. Breitenbeck. Fr. Bob’s assignments in the Diocese of Grand Rapids began as Associate Pastor of St. James Catholic Church in Grand Rapids in (1975-76); Chaplain of West Catholic High School in Grand Rapids (1976-80); Pastor of St. Mary of the Woods Catholic Church in Lakewood Club (1980); Pastor of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church in Muskegon (1980-1991); Pastor of Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Grand Rapids (1991-1997); Pastor of Prince of Peace Catholic Church in North Muskegon (1997-present). Fr. Bob was also appointed to the Presbyteral Council in 1980, coordinator of Pastoral Services to patients at Hackley Hospital in Muskegon (1980); Pro-synodal Judge of the Tribunal (1982); Dean of the Muskegon Deanery (1988-1991 and 2005-present); College of Consultors to the Bishop (2006-present); Administrator of St. James Catholic Church in Montague with Mission of St. John the Baptist in Claybanks (2007). Fr. Bob also served as past president of the St. Mary Cemetery Board in Muskegon; was current Chaplain for the Knights of Columbus Council #706; and was the founding member of the “Knights of the Roundtable” that met during the lunch hour every Monday at



## Obituary

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Suzi's Village Inn in Fruitport – his niece's restaurant. Fr. Bob was a devoted U of M sports fan who often boasted of his team's winnings at the end of Masses. He enjoyed gardening and was known over the years to offer gardening tips to his beloved parishioners for fuller tomato plants. Fr. Bob was also an extensive world traveler having hosted countless trips to many foreign countries including the Holy Land, Israel, Mexico, Germany, Ireland, and Italy. In more recent years, he discovered the joy of hosting groups of family and friends on cruise ships in the Caribbean Islands, Hawaii, the Panama Canal and the Mexican Riviera – where he always found a place to celebrate Mass for the group. Fr. Bob's 33 years of priestly ministry have been a gift from God to all the faithful he has shepherded. SURVIVORS include 3 brothers, Tom (Karen) Hart of Spring Lake; Dick (fiancée, Brenda Kordecki) Hart and Dave (Debra) Hart both of Fruitport; 1 sister, Maryann E. Beardsley of Muskegon; his nieces and nephews, Goddaughter Jennifer Marie Hart-Locke of Norton Shores; Lisa (Chad) Hart of Nunica, Amanda (Barry) Ghezzi of Fruitport, David Hart, Jr. of Fruitport, Bobby Hart of Muskegon, Tammy (Ben) Calkins of Muskegon; many great nieces and great nephews; his Goddaughter, Sophia Marie Cerniglia and his Godson, Alexander Dominic Barnhill. He was preceded in death by his parents and a great-nephew. THE MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL will be celebrated 11:00 AM Monday, September 29, 2008 at Prince of Peace Catholic Church (1110 Dykstra Road) with the Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley as celebrant, the Reverend Father Phillip J. Witkowski as homilist and Fr. Bob's brother priests of the Diocese of Grand Rapids concelebrating. INTERMENT will take place in the "Priest's Circle" at St. Mary Cemetery. VISITATION for the public will be held 2-9 PM Sunday at Prince of Peace Catholic Church where the Vigil Service for the Deceased will be held at 8:00 PM. IN LIEU OF FLOWERS, please honor Fr. Bob's memory with a contribution to The Rev. Fr. Robert A. Hart Scholarship Fund, c/o Muskegon County Catholic Education Foundation, 1851 Barclay St., Muskegon, MI 49441 or Harbor Hospice, 1050 W. Western Ave., Ste. 400, Muskegon, MI 49441. Arrangements handled by The Lee Chapel, Sytsema Funeral Homes, Inc., 6291 S. Harvey St., (231) 798-1100. Sign the guest book on-line at [www.sytsemafh.com](http://www.sytsemafh.com)



# Events


**Reverend Father Robert Anthony Hart VF**

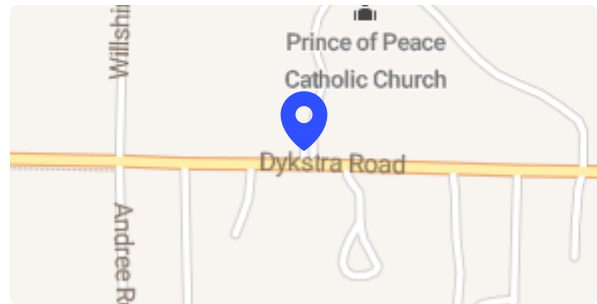
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## Visitation

 **Sunday**, September 28, 2008


 2:00 PM - 9:00 PM ET


 **Prince Of Peace Catholic Church**  
1110 Dykstra Road, North Muskegon MI 49445

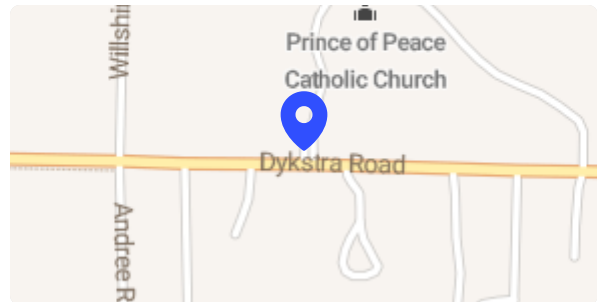


## Service

 **Monday**, September 29, 2008

 11:00 AM ET

 **Prince Of Peace Catholic Church**  
1110 Dykstra Road, North Muskegon MI 49445





## Tribute Wall

## Reverend Father Robert Anthony Hart VF

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**Anonymous** posted:

I too put off too long writing something. We will forever miss Fr. Bob. But, the gift of everlasting faith he gave us will be with all of the family at Prince of Peace. Thank you Fr. Bob for the love and kindness you showed to all, especially to our grandson, Gabriel. We will never forget!##imported-begin##William and Kathleen Sapp##imported-end##

October 11 at 4:45 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Hi webmaster!##imported-begin##Kazeliho##imported-end##

October 10 at 7:56 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

I kept putting this off, but knew that I wanted to write something about our beloved Fr. Bob. Throughout this last year, I was well aware, as all of us were, that Fr. Bob was battling pancreatic cancer. However, I never took the time to tell him how thankful I was for his presence in my life. I never took the time to say a proper good-bye. I just thought, or perhaps hoped, he would always just be there. So, thank you Fr. Bob for your guidance in Faith. Thank you for bringing Bill into the Catholic Faith. Thank you for singing beautifully and peacefully over my 2 precious daughters as you Baptized them into the Catholic Faith. Thank you for all of your smirks, jokes and wisecracks! Thank you for making us - and everyone who had the pleasure of meeting you - feel like we were indeed your best of friends. You had an incredible gift and it is up to us to make sure that your gift is not soon forgotten. God Bless your soul Fr. Bob and may the Lord greet you with open arms into your Eternal Life. Thank you for being our beloved Fr. Bob.##imported-begin##Heather Gaston and Family##imported-end##

October 1 at 4:35 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

There are no words, he will be sadly missed by all that knew him.##imported-begin##Tim and Cindy Mansfield##imported-end##

September 30 at 2:42 PM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** posted:

My condolences and prays go to the entire familyLove Herm###imported-begin###Herman Hart###imported-end##

September 30 at 4:44 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

My condolences go to Father Bob's Family and friends from Prince of Peace Church.He will be truly missed.###imported-begin###Rod Obermiller###imported-end##

September 29 at 4:35 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Our thoughts and prayers are with Fr. Bob and Family. May he rest in peace.###imported-begin###Jack & Mary Jo Grevel###imported-end##

September 29 at 2:56 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Our deepest condolences to the Hart Family.I know this is a very difficult time for you but it might help to remember the twinkle in his eye and his keen sense of humor. He did love to tease all of us, didn't he?You should be very proud of his service to God's community. He always spoke so lovingly of his family. He was so very proud of all of you and loved you very much.Thanks for sharing him with us. He was one of a kind and his passing has left a void in our lives.Time will ease the pain. You will be in our thoughts and prayers.###imported-begin###The Host Family###imported-end##

September 29 at 12:08 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Dear Hart Family:(from a Hallmark card)Wishing You PeaceA Message of SympathyListen for angelshovering near,whispering wordsyou are longing to hear--Love is not over...life is not gone...now and forever,the spirit lives on.Even in your sadness,may you find comfortin knowing that the angelsmust be smilingbecause your loved oneis among them now.With SympathyLove,Jason and Kimberly Willbrandt###imported-begin###Jason Willbrandt###imported-end##

September 29 at 11:31 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** posted:

Fr. Bob you will be greatly missed by all, but especially all of the young people you have touched throughout the years. I remember our son talking about the Friday nights you and your brother Dick cooked fish for many of them. You are now in God's gentle hands, telling stories, planning trips, and maybe cooking a little fish.##imported-begin##Steve & Dee Horan##imported-end##

September 29 at 11:13 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Our condolences go to Father Bob's family. He was a wonderful man, who will be greatly missed.##imported-begin##Charles Thomas, Joanne & Amy Gonyo##imported-end##

September 29 at 10:46 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

My condolences to Bob's family. I was a classmate of Bob at St John's Provincial Seminary in Plymouth. I have very fond memories of Bob. Whenever he was in my room at the seminary and the telephone rang, he would always answer it "Lew Crusoe's room, upstairs butler"--hence my mother always new him as "The Butler"-- she she also sends her kind regards and sympathy.Lew Crusoe##imported-begin##Lewis D. Crusoe##imported-end##

September 29 at 8:57 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

I first met Fr. Bob when he was a deacon at Holy Trinity and later got to know him better when he was sent to St. James and assisted him with a series of retreats one year for West Catholic. Even after all these years, I remember so well his enthusiasm and passion. He gave so much to so many. To his family I send my condolences. You will be in my thoughts and prayers.##imported-begin##Lynn Smith Houghton##imported-end##

September 29 at 6:04 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

God Bless You, Fr. Bob.You touched many souls and lived the gospel, Thank you, we love you.##imported-begin##Michael, Marie & Emily Horn##imported-end##

September 29 at 5:34 AM



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**Anonymous** posted:

To the Hart Family- Our deepest sympathy during this difficult time. It has been 20 plus years since I have seen Fr. Bob and one my greatest memories of him was coming to our house to relax a bit. He would just take of his shoes and kick up his feet with his favorite beverage. He was also there for our family when our mother got sick. He was such a wonderful gift to all of us. He will be missed. Our thoughts and prayers go out to your family and the Prince of Peace family as well. God Bless the Hart family. Mary Haggerty Collins and family##imported-begin##Mary (Haggerty) Collins##imported-end##

September 29 at 5:16 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Fr Bob will be missed by the Musekgon community as a whole. But missed more by those who's lives he touched with his awesome messages from God... he had a gift of speaking to us from Him. We knew and felt it always... Go ahead of us and pave the way for those of us you have herded towards the Lord. We'll be looking for you on our special day.##imported-begin##Jackie ##imported-end##

September 28 at 6:59 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

The family of Uncle Leonard Hart wishes to convey our sympathy to Father Bob's family. He was a special man who will be missed. We wish the miles could have been shorter so we could spend a little time with everyone in Muskegon.Kenny##imported-begin##KEN L HART##imported-end##

September 28 at 5:07 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

For the Hart Family: I am saddened to hear of Fr. Bob's passing. The memory of him will always be in my heart. My thoughts are with you now, and I send you my deepest sympathy.##imported-begin##Carmen (Martinez) DeFabrizio##imported-end##

September 28 at 4:36 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Dick and Brenda,As you grieve know that we are remembering you and honoring the memory of Bob.##imported-begin##Gary and Colleen Klingler##imported-end##

September 28 at 4:17 PM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** posted:

Sorry for your loss. He was special perso to all, and his family##imported-begin##paul lomeo##imported-end##

September 28 at 3:12 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Peace##imported-begin##Brian Goodman family##imported-end##

September 28 at 2:52 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

My condolences to Fr. Bob's family for the loss of their brother and loved one. I have good memories of Fr. Bob.##imported-begin##AJ Restrew##imported-end##

September 28 at 2:20 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Our condolences to Fr. Bob's family. We recently lost Bill's brother, Ron, and know how hard it is to lose a sibling. Bill remembers the family gatherings from childhood and enjoys the pictures he has from those days. Our prayers are with you druing this time of loss.##imported-begin##Bill & Joni Fixel##imported-end##

September 28 at 2:17 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Fr. Bob dedicated his life to God and brought many blessing to those around him. Praise to God for his life and service.##imported-begin##Brian andJanet Bates##imported-end##

September 28 at 11:18 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** posted:

The world was truly blessed to have such a wonderful priest and friend with us all. I will truly miss Father Bob. He was a true friend to me in the goodtimes and bad times. May God console all of his family and friends during their time of sorrow. Rest in Peace old friend. ##imported-begin##John Jaques##imported-end##

September 28 at 9:06 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

We will miss Father Bob very much. He was an outstanding Spiritual Leader and person. ##imported-begin##Ben and Marilyn Schramski##imported-end##

September 28 at 7:42 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

G'bye, Bob, We were classmates for 4 years at St. Joe's - I was one of the majority who dropped out along the way. Doin' OK, doin' OK - thanks for asking. I see you've been a peripatetic pastor in the interim - well, I've been round the block a few times, too. Stayed in the Detroit area a few years, married and remarried, raised a few kids. I remember a reunion back at Old St. Joes, many years back - Denny Morrow, your BFF, organized that one, as I recall. You looked pretty happy. Sorry to hear about your illness - I hope the medical people were able to keep the pain and suffering part to an absolute minimum for you. I remember you as always being fun to be around, and I'd hate to think of you hurting. Rest now, sweet boy. Others will do the work you can no longer do. If I see you again, we'll talk, OK? ##imported-begin##Jim Marfia##imported-end##

September 28 at 4:40 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Our deepest Sympathy to Fr. Bob's Family and Friends. We will surely miss his visits. Your friends at Michigan Coastal Credit Union ##imported-begin##Michigan Coastal Credit Union##imported-end##

September 27 at 6:50 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you! ##imported-begin##Deb, Tom, & Steffany DeVoursney##imported-end##

September 27 at 5:54 PM



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**Anonymous** posted:

We are so sorry to learn of Father Bob's passing. Though we are many miles apart in homes, we are always connected by our "Hart" ties in Springfield, TN.##imported-begin##Ollie Ruth Hart Head##imported-end##

September 27 at 3:54 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

He was one of my favorite people. He will be missed. Our thoughts and prayers go to his loving family. God bless you all.##imported-begin##The Carson Family##imported-end##

September 27 at 2:02 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

God Blessed us with you and your wonderful gifts, it is because of you I am confident that I am going to see you again in glory! May God Bless and comfort your entire family. The Lord be with you and You with Him, Thank You Father Bob, All our Love!!!##imported-begin##John & Chris Wilke and Family##imported-end##

September 27 at 1:25 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Our hearts are aching, Fr. Bob will be dearly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Hart family.##imported-begin##Jason and Becky Ostoin and family##imported-end##

September 27 at 12:46 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this time of great sorrow.##imported-begin##Cheryl and Lawrence Wiggins##imported-end##

September 27 at 8:57 AM



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**Anonymous** posted:

Father Bob, June Thomas has you singing to her now. How we all love and miss you, but Jesus loved you more. Your family is in our thoughts and prayers.##imported-begin##Al and Marianne Sabec and Family##imported-end##

September 27 at 8:44 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

It has been a privilege to know Father Bob, Our deepest sympathy to the family.##imported-begin##Harry & Cindy Skok##imported-end##

September 27 at 8:36 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Father Bob is loved in my family and will always be with us. He took us in and showed us the path when we needed it most. God is certainly in great company. Our condolences to the Hart family and thank you for sharing him with us all. God Bless You.##imported-begin##Jamie Russell##imported-end##

September 27 at 8:11 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Fr. Bob sang "I will never forget you my People" when he left St. Mary's of the Woods and we as a family will never forget him. We go back to the days at Sacred Heart Elementary and remember him so well. Rest in Peace dear friend.##imported-begin##Al & Doris Cwiakala##imported-end##

September 27 at 8:04 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

My thoughts and prayers are with you all at this loss of a great pastor and friend. I will forever remember the laughter and tears we shared over the past 20+ years. May God open his arms to all those who grieve and grant eternal rest to a wonderful man. Sharon (Martinez) Klinge##imported-begin##Sharon (Martinez) Klinge##imported-end##

September 27 at 7:35 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** posted:

We are saddened, but are very glad that we know father bob all these years. He will be missed dearly.##imported-begin##werner andre & carol andre##imported-end##

September 27 at 5:07 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Eternal rest, Father. God grant you rest where the just repose. Ad multos annos! Prayers from a fellow patient in California -##imported-begin##Rev. D. Carl Heinemeyer##imported-end##

September 27 at 3:26 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Dick & Jenny. I'm very sorry for your loss, and my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this time. I will always remember my Thursday nights at the Knights of Columbus with Dick and Father Bob, and all the laughs that we all shared.##imported-begin##Josh Skiles##imported-end##

September 26 at 10:57 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Our deepest sympathies to Fr. Bob's family! As a parent of children who were baptized by Fr. Bob, I know I speak for MANY who will terribly miss Fr. Bob's wonderful singing at baptisms! There were never dry eyes during that most beautiful song...I can hear it now if I close my eyes! That is just one of the many things that will be missed. And again, our condolences to the family!##imported-begin##Hugh and Karla White and family##imported-end##

September 26 at 7:25 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

You will be greatly missed. Our prayers are with your family. Thank you for your dedication and teaching of our faith.##imported-begin##Nick & Holly Willer & Family##imported-end##

September 26 at 6:18 PM



## Tribute Wall

## Reverend Father Robert Anthony Hart VF

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**Anonymous** posted:

He will be sadly missed. He made a difference in my life. My condolences to his family.##imported-begin##Darleen Clark##imported-end##

September 26 at 2:34 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

We the McClain family will always remember Fr. Bob he was always great with my three kids my daughter and two sons .They remember Fr. when he was our pastor at OLG. They were all shocked of his passing. God be with all his family. With Love the McClains.##imported-begin##Vernon ,Maria McClain & family##imported-end##

September 26 at 2:30 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Michigan lost it's biggest fan...but heaven gained one. What an inspiration Fr. Bob has been to my family. May God hold him in the palm of his hand and may Fr. Bob be with us each and every day leading us all on the blessed path to our Lord.##imported-begin##Barb Sruba##imported-end##

September 26 at 1:37 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

With great gratitude to God for the Gift of Fr. Bob's priestly ministry we praise our Heavenly Father for the anointed hands that blessed us, absolved our sins, nourished us with the Bread of Life, united two of our four children in Holy Matrimony and Baptized three of our nine children with the Waters of Life... We cherish the memories of pilgrimages and parties we shared through our 27 years of friendship. You are ever a part of our lives and all the good you have shared will live on in our hearts. Dick & Barb Perri and family##imported-begin##Dick and Barb Perri and family##imported-end##

September 26 at 12:36 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

My condolences to the entire Hart family. Fr. Bob was a wonderful part of my life growing up in Grand Rapids and St. James. He was a wonderful influence on all those who came in contact with him. I will always remember him. May the Lord's peace be with you at this time.##imported-begin##Ruthann Johnson##imported-end##

September 26 at 11:20 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** posted:

You will be missed.##imported-begin##Ken, Jeanne, Sara and David Wilson##imported-end##

September 26 at 9:57 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

To Fr. Bob's Family and Prince of Peace,May God's love and peace be with all ofyou. You are in my thoughts and prayers,and my love and a hug are going to all of you. Though its hard to say so long,we have another "SAINT" in heaven who will always be in our hearts. Love and Peace, Melodie##imported-begin##Melodie Spencer##imported-end##

September 26 at 9:32 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

On behalf of the 825 Knights of Columbus members of Michigan District #34, I know I can speak for us all when I say, we will miss our Brother Knight. God has seen fit to call him home and his absence will be felt by us all. He and his family are in our thoughts and prayers.##imported-begin##Thomas F. Ketchum District Deputy Knights of Columbus##imported-end##

September 26 at 8:24 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

My love and my prayers are with your family. Fr. Bob will be very much missed in our family.##imported-begin##Amy Alm##imported-end##

September 26 at 7:50 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

We would like to extend out deepest sympathy to the Hart Family. Fr. Bob was a wonderful pastor who touched the hearts of many. He will be missed by the entire community. You are all in our thoughts and prayer. May God Blessyou.Don and Mary Scofield##imported-begin##Don and Mary Ann Scofield##imported-end##

September 26 at 5:52 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** posted:

"Padre", a true and loving person, a person that taught me how to be loved and to love. Thank you for being such a shining part of my life when I needed it the most. The encouragement you gave I will always remember. The Holy Land adventures with you are trips that I shall remember for a long time. Thank you Padre, I shall miss you. Randy Martens##imported-begin##Randy Martens##imported-end##

September 26 at 5:35 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

May God grant eternal peace to my dear friend, Fr. Bob and a peace to all of his family and friends. He will be remembered forever by many. My prayers and condolences are with you all.##imported-begin##Kim Brush##imported-end##

September 26 at 5:16 AM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Reverend Father Robert Anthony  
by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



Scan to Visit