

# OUR LADY OF GRACE

CATHOLIC CHURCH

8679 RIVERVIEW  
DEARBORN HEIGHTS, MICHIGAN  
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Today we come together to celebrate the life of Fr. Ron. Being the person that Fr. Ron was, he would be asking us "What's all the fuss about?" He was a quiet and humble man. He treasured the moments with his family and friends. Each one of you, whether you knew him a few or a lot of years, has stories to tell about your encounter with this loving and compassionate man. He was a part of Our Lady of Grace Church for over 16 years. Your stories have become happy memories and you should hold onto them always. We could fill a book with our stories but books have an end and our stories do not for they have become part of our lives. Everything that Fr. Ron was and is left us better people. He was a people's priest. He loved us unconditionally and I believe that the love he took with him to heaven is the same love he left behind with us. Never did I see him angry with anyone except himself during a bad golf game. He was very competitive as his golfing buddies would confirm. He loved sports especially the Red Wings even during their lean years. He played goalie and football during his high school years. He loved music and played the accordion. He was a good listener, but his mind was so sharp that he would often finish your sentence. It's hard to tell a story or a joke to someone who already knew the punchline; however, he would listen even when you knew that he had heard the story before. He loved being with and working with people. During our church festivals, he could be seen working long hours, wherever and whenever he was needed. He loved his mother and father so much and I believe this is why he had such a deep love and devotion for Mother Mary and the Rosary. He loved being a priest. Even on his death-bed, he cried out that he needed to get ready for the 10:30 Mass. His love for the Mass, especially celebrating the Eucharist was never equaled by anyone. His preparation for his homilies were under his words of "If you cannot say anything that would uplift the people in bringing them hope and joy, then be quiet." His words were always an inspiration. In asking him questions or an approach to my homilies, he would guide me in the right direction. With Fr. Ron, our problems and concerns became his. Many of us has a story about calling him even in the early morning hours when a loved one was rushed to the hospital, dying or needed anointing at home and he would come. He was always there for us.

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Today's readings are for us. For Fr. Ron, there is no more pain or suffering and how he did suffer. He has gone to his resurrection for he has been found worthy to stand before the throne of God. Fr. Ron calls us now to trust as he did in the Lord. Only by trusting, can we find truth, grace, hope and mercy. We may not understand why this happened to Fr. Ron and that's O.K. As Revelation reveals to us, God is always with us. He will wipe away our tears for there will be no more pain, mourning or death. Love, hope, peace and understanding will be given to us. We must trust for He is our Father and we are His children.

We live in a world full of darkness and despair. A man like Fr. Ron who loved and cared more for others than he did himself would seem to be foolish. To the world, belief in God is foolish. The world would indeed mock you, insult you, persecute you even put you to death because of your trust and love of God. Hope has no meaning and death is just a closure to life. Pain and suffering are just words. To the world, there are only questions, never answers.

Jesus, with His death and resurrection, not only gives answers to the questions of life but gives us meaning and purpose. Each one of us has a soul, a spirit that cries out "I believe" and every attempt to suppress or deny that cry will fail. Truth always prevails. Like Fr. Ron, we believe even in our pain and suffering that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We proclaim when we celebrate the Mass. We proclaim it every time we become beatitudes for others. When we show mercy and forgiveness to those who have injured us. When we give love and compassion unconditionally. Jesus said "In as much you did it for one of my brothers or sisters, you did it to me."

We say good-bye to Fr. Ron with a lot of sadness, just as the disciples felt on that day at Calvary, but I hope and pray that we leave with a renewed spirit of hope and love. As Jesus rose from the dead, we too have that promise of rising from the dead and standing before the Lord to hear those beautiful words, "Well done, rejoice, for your reward in heaven is great."

To Fr. Ron, thank you for being a part of my life. Your story will never fade.