



## Fr. Raymond Louis Valerio

August 19, 1931 - October 31, 2019

Fr. Raymond Louis Valerio, age 88, of Iron Mountain, Michigan, passed away on Thursday, October 31, 2019, at Freeman Nursing & Rehabilitation in Kingsford.

He was born August 19, 1931, in Iron Mountain, son of the late Peter P. and Flora (Giansante) Valerio.

Fr. Ray was baptized at Immaculate Conception Church where he also celebrated his First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

He began to develop a love for the church at a very early age, becoming an altar server at age 10. The Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit and the dedicated priests fueled Fr. Ray's interest in pursuing priesthood. In the fall of 1947, he entered St. Lawrence Seminary, Mount Calvary, Wisconsin. Upon his graduation in 1949, he transferred to the Salvation Seminary, St. Nazianz, Wisconsin, for his college courses. After completing all his college courses, he entered St. Paul Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, for courses in scholastic philosophy and then in 1955 he entered St. John's Provincial Seminary in Plymouth, Wisconsin, for theological studies. In all, he earned a Bachelor of Liberal Arts, a Master of Divinity at St. John's Seminary and eventually a Master of Sacred Theology and Master's in Psychology. This background helped him in celebrating the liturgy, providing pastoral counseling, and

educating parishioners about the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. He declined an offer to pursue a Doctorate in Psychology because it involved a 2- to 3-year leave of absence.

Fr. Ray was ordained on June 6, 1959, by Bishop Thomas Noa for the Diocese of Marquette. His first Mass was celebrated on June 7, 1959, at his home parish, Immaculate Conception Church. He was first assigned to St. Agnes parish in Iron River 1959-1960. Then he was transferred to St. Joseph —St. Patrick church in Hancock 1960-1965. His next assignment was at St. Sebastian church in Bessemer from 1965-1967. His first pastoral assignment was Holy Rosary parish in Grand Marais and St. Therese in Germfask 1967-1971. This assignment covered many miles from Grand Marais on Lake Superior to Seney, Germfask, down to Blaney Park. While assigned in Grand Marais, MI, a Mennonite minister asked Fr. Ray if he had time to work in his sawmill. Fr. agreed to work five mornings a week operating a blade saw and continued with his pastoral duties in the afternoons.

Next, he was assigned to Sacred Heart Church in Ewen, St. Anthony's in Trout Creek, and St. Francis in Sidnaw 1971-1972. Fr. Ray's next assignment was St. Rose in Channing, St. Margaret in Sagola, and eventually St. Joseph in Northland 1972-1984. Later, he was assigned to St. Mary's in Hermansville, St. Mary's in Faithhorn, and eventually St. Bruno's in Nadeau 1984-1990. He then accepted a new assignment at St. Edward's in Alpha, and St. Mary's in Amasa 1990-1995. Following this assignment, he became pastor of St. Ignatius in Houghton and St. Mary's in Atlantic Mine 1995-1997.

From 1986-1995, Fr. Ray was appointed Employee Assistance Counselor at the VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain.

Fr. Ray belonged to A.C.E (Americans for Constitution Enforcement) – a group whose purpose is to defend the Constitution and acknowledge the

importance of living in a free America. He, along with the ACE group, helped organize several local 4th of July parades. Throughout his ministry Father served on the Grand Marais Chamber of Commerce, Chaplain for Phi Kappa Theta Fraternity at Michigan Tech University, and after retirement was appointed Chaplain of the Serra Club in Iron Mountain. Fr. Ray loved to visit Saint Lawrence Seminary, walk the grounds, and visit with the faculty and seminarians.

Throughout his life, he enjoyed reading, learning and studying. Known as an intellect, Fr. Ray was often seen at the library or Midtown Mall reading a current publication on spirituality, theology, or psychology. At the mall, he visited with several people each week. Many of his friends and former parishioners, would seek him out at the mall for wholesome conversations. Whether at the conclusion of Mass, shopping at the grocery store, or going for a walk, Fr. Ray always took time to listen to the needs of others. His genuine concern for the health and welfare of others was a principal part of his everyday life. Many of his former parishioners continued to stay in touch with him throughout his retirement years. During his retirement, Fr. Ray enjoyed going to the movies and because his interest and studies in psychology never left him, he found the personalities of the actors interesting and intriguing.

Fr. Ray enjoyed growing fruits, vegetables, and perfecting the art of canning. He often recalled the time he and his grandfather picked several quarts of wild strawberries on top of Millie hill. Cooking Italian foods, soups, and baking (especially pineapple upside down cake), were some of his favorite times spent in his kitchen.

Fr. Ray also enjoyed a great deal of time traveling with his sister, Louise, nieces, and nephews. Their trips took them from the East Coast to the West Coast down to Florida and up through Canada. Their varied European trips

hold some of their most cherished memories.

Fr. Ray looked forward to shopping for flowers every spring to add to his flourishing perennial garden. Throughout the years, many of his perennials have been divided and shared with a good number of people throughout Dickinson County and the U.P. Fr. Ray had a great appreciation for beautiful art and often collected stunning prints from galleries and art shows. On rare occasions, Fr. enjoyed the peacefulness and solitude of lake fishing.

He is survived by his sister, Louise Iverson; nephews, Jeff (Lynn) Iverson and Steven Iverson; niece, Denise (Tony) Edlebeck; great-nephews, Brian (Kelly) Edlebeck, Matt Iverson, and Chris (Christine) Iverson; great-nieces, Allyssa Iverson and Sara (Kyle) Gunville; and several great-great-nephews and nieces.

Pallbearers will be Jeff Iverson, Tony Edlebeck, Matt Iverson, Chris Iverson, Brian Edlebeck, and Kyle Gunville.

Visitation will be held from 4:00 to 7:00 pm on Monday, November 11, 2019 at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Iron Mountain. The Knights of Columbus will stand vigil throughout the visitation. Rosary will be at 7:00 PM immediately following visitation. The Funeral Mass will be at 11:00 am on Tuesday, November 12 at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Cross Catholic Outreach. Donations can be given directly to the family at visitation or through the mail at Cross Catholic Outreach, Donation Processing Center, PO Box 97168 Washington, DC 20077.

Condolences may be expressed to the family of Fr. Raymond Valerio online at [www.ernashfuneralhomes.com](http://www.ernashfuneralhomes.com).

The family has entrusted the Erickson-Rochon & Nash Funeral Home of Iron Mountain with the arrangements.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV 11. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church  
500 Blaine St.  
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

## Rosary

NOV 11. 7:00 PM (CT)

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church  
500 Blaine St.  
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

## Funeral Mass

NOV 12. 11:00 AM (CT)

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church  
500 Blaine St.  
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

# Tribute Wall

CG

“ So sorry to hear about Father Ray. He was dedicated to our veterans, and was so very helpful to anyone who would stop by to talk with him. He will be missed.

*Cynthia Gordon, Retired VAMC*

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**Cynthia Gordon** - November 08, 2019 at 05:05 PM

CB

“ I am so sorry to hear of Father Ray's passing. I have known him for 30+ years and always enjoyed his sermons. He could often be found downtown among the people he served. He had a big heart for those hurting and was always faithful to his calling. We are suffering his loss as he is enjoying his reward. God's blessings on his family.

*Sincerely,  
Christine Burns*

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**Christine Burns** - November 03, 2019 at 02:35 PM

RM

“ Ellen and I shared many great conversations at Kresge's with Father Ray. May he rest in peace. ellen and ray mc manus.

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**ray mcmanus** - November 03, 2019 at 02:05 PM