

Longtime Rogers pastor, diocesan director retired in 2015 from active ministry

written by Arkansas Catholic Staff |

Msgr. Richard S. Oswald, the longtime pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Church in Rogers who once oversaw Little Rock Scripture Study, died Nov. 25 at Arkansas Hospice. He was 84.

The son of the late Oscar J. and Hilda M. Oswald graduated from Catholic High School in Little Rock and began his priestly formation at St. John Home Mission Seminary in Little Rock. On May 29, 1965, Bishop Albert L. Fletcher ordained him to the priesthood for the Diocese of Little Rock.

Noting his ordination after Vatican II, he told Arkansas Catholic on his 50th priestly anniversary in 2015, "We were ready to go, go, go, get those council decrees out. It was exciting for me and something I enjoyed very much."

For his first assignment, Msgr. Oswald returned to his alma mater to teach high school math and chemistry. He served as associate pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Little Rock. His first pastorate was at St. Mary in McGehee, Holy Child in Dumas and the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Dermott in 1985. In 1987, he became pastor of St. Anne in North Little Rock. From 1988-2006, Msgr. Oswald served as pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Church in Rogers during a time of rapid growth. While in Rogers, he was also the dean of the Northwest Deanery.

In 2006, he served as pastor of Immaculate Conception in Fort Smith until health issues required him to step back from parish administration. He continued to serve as an associate pastor at Christ the King in Little Rock, St. Joseph in Conway, St. Edward in Little Rock and St. Rose of Lima in Carlisle.

On the diocesan level, he was the director of Family Life, Scripture Studies, Evangelization and Parish Renewal. From 2011-2015, he was the diocesan liturgy director and assistant vocation director. He became a senior priest in 2015, living at the House of Formation on the grounds of his childhood parish, Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Little Rock, and later at St. John Manor in Little Rock.

He is survived by three brothers, Father John O. Oswald of Little Rock; Fred M. Oswald and wife, Sarah Spencer of Little Rock; Mark A. Oswald and his wife, Ruth Williams of Santa Fe, N.M.; one sister, Johanna C. Oswald of Little Rock; two sisters-in-law, Judy Langham Oswald of Little Rock and Kim Johnson Oswald of Austin, Texas; nine nieces and nephews; and four great-nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Kenneth J. Oswald and George E. Oswald.

The vigil service was held Dec. 2 at the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Little Rock, and the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Dec. 3, also at the Cathedral. Msgr. Oswald's ashes will be interred at a later date at Calvary Cemetery in Little Rock.

Pastoral changes in parishes in April announced

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Bernard Hospital in Jonesboro, pastor of St. Norbert Church in Marked Tree and St. Anthony Church in Weiner, with residence in St. Mary Church in Paragould. He is relieved of his responsibilities as pastor of St. Mary Church in Paragould and Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Walnut Ridge.

Rev. Stephen Mallanga, AJ, a priest with the Apostles of Jesus, appointed administrator of St. Mary Church in Paragould and Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Walnut Ridge.

Rev. Felix Chirapurathel, OPraem, relieved of his responsibilities as pastor of St. Norbert Church in Marked Tree. He remains pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Blytheville, and St. Matthew Church in Osceola.

Rev. Lourduswamy Dhanraj Narla, relieved of his responsibilities as pastor of St. Anthony Church in Weiner. He remains pastor of St. Mary Church in Batesville, and St. Cecilia Church in Newport.

Rev. John K. Antony appointed administrator and chaplain of Trinity Junior High in Fort Smith. He remains pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Fort Smith.

Rev. Andrew Hart, relieved of his responsibilities as administrator and chaplain of Trinity Junior High in Fort Smith. He remains associate pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Fort Smith.

Rev. Joseph Archibong appointed to celebrate African Mass at St. Augustine Church in North Little Rock. He remains associate pastor of Christ the King Church in Little Rock.

Msgr. Richard Oswald, relieved of his responsibilities as associate pastor of St. Edward Church in Little Rock, diocesan director of liturgy and assistant vocations director to become senior priest with residence at the House of Formation in Little Rock.

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