

Reverend John P. Nickas

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Pastor of Catholic parishes in Newark and Montclair, leader in outreach to the homeless and youth, 68 Reverend John P. Nickas, 68, passed away in Turkey on Oct. 9, 2008. Visiting is Sunday, Oct. 19, 2008, from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Caggiano Memorial, 62 Grove St., Montclair. There will be a vigil prayer service at 6 p.m. on Sunday at the end of the visitation time.

Visiting is Monday, Oct. 20, at 9:30 a.m. at St. Aloysius Church in Caldwell followed by a Funeral Mass celebrated by Archbishop John J. Myers at 10:30 a.m. Interment will be at Maryrest Cemetery, Mahwah. Father Nickas was most recently , in 2005, made pastor emeritus of St. Peter Claver Church in Montclair, where he served as pastor from 1996 to 2004, and founded the Healing Mass and belonged to the Health Ministry, Peace Action and Homecall, which provides housing for the poor. He also continued his work as coordinator of the AIDS Ministry for the County of Essex for the Archdiocese of Newark. He was residing in the Msgr. James Kelley Residence in Caldwell since 2004. Father Nickas became pastor of St Rocco's Church in Newark on Sept. 16, 1977. As a pastor of the church, he began many community outreach programs. He worked with homeless men and families, founding two shelters in 1981 in the City of Newark to help fill the needs of the homeless. He was the director of the homes in 1986. He was the founder of St Rocco's children center (1981) and founder and executive director of The Learning Experience Alternative High

School in Newark. In 1972, he founded St Joseph's Day Care Center, in Newark, and, in 1973, he founded St Ann's Community Day Care Center. During his tenure as pastor, St. Rocco's Church was designated a national historic landmark. Father Nickas was a founding member, board of trustees of Coalition 6, Newark, a group of six Catholic churches that addressed the problems of the community. He served on the boards of the YM-YWCA, Newark,; the Community Nursing Association, East Orange; Urban Housing Corporation, Newark and Project Live, Newark. He was president of the board of trustees of St Ann's Community Day Care Center, Newark. Father Nickas served as a member of the Coalition for the Homeless, Newark; the Essex County Council for the Homeless, Mental Health Task Force; the Collaboration Group, Newark, and the Central Ward Coalition of Youth. Born in Newark, Father Nickas was raised in Maplewood and was a graduate of Our Lady of Sorrows School in South Orange, Seton Hall Prep and, in 1962, Seton Hall University. He then studied for the priesthood at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Mahwah. He was ordained to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Newark on May 28, 1966, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart. He earned a master of divinity degree on pastoral ministry at Immaculate Conception Seminary in 1975 and studied for a doctorate at Drew University. Father Nickas also did graduate work at Seton Hall University, Kean College, Rutgers University, the University of Notre Dame and the University of Arizona. His first pastoral assignment was to the Blessed Sacrament Church in Franklin Lakes, where he spent a year from 1966-1967, and then was assigned to St. Patrick's Pro-Cathedral, Newark, until 1969. He then became assistant pastor of St. Rocco's Church. In September of 1970, he was in residence at St. Ann's Church, Newark, where he served in various capacities until he became pastor of St. Rocco's Church. He was predeceased by his parents, John and Helen Nickas; a brother, Harry Nickas, and a sister, Virginia Kuhn. He is survived by his sister, Anne Marie McGovern, and 11 nieces and nephews. Donations, in lieu of

flowers, to Msgr James Kelley Residence, 247 Bloomfield Ave. Caldwell, N.J., 07006, in his memory, would be appreciated.

To Plant Memorial Trees in memory, please visit our [Sympathy Store](#).

Published in The Star-Ledger from Oct. 18 to Oct. 19, 2008.



MEMORIES & CONDOLENCES

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April 29, 2015

You are miss by me

danny boy jones

September 24, 2013

Father thanks for being there for my family you will always be missed

Edgardo LaLindez

February 5, 2010

Father John it took me this long to express my feelings, Happy Birthday (Jan 30)- You were such a big part of my life and my family for 40+ years. I have so many great memories of you and your many visits, I was your "groupie of one". You will always be in my heart and I know that you will always be my Angel. You saw me through so much and I know that you will always be there for me. Your viewing was on my Birthday I was there in spirit, my physical presence could not bear your loss. I Love You, "Come Lord Jesus Come".

Mirian Jimenez

September 21, 2009

It will soon be a year; it still hurts so very much.

September 18, 2009

Father Nic , just learned of your passing. Still remember the days we served together at Broadway House, Thank you for the memories and I will cherish the cup you gave me

Pastor Ali

August 16, 2009

I just found out about Father Nickas' passing. I was counseled by him as a conscientious objector in Newark in 1969-70, and always appreciated his intelligence and progressive nature. cliff Meneken

cliff meneken

February 14, 2009

Mary Bernadette Bachman

February 13, 2009

Rev Nick , you are a Beautiful person

It was one of my greatest treasures to serve under your guidance as one of many altar boys at St Patrick's in Newark . We later hooked up back at St Rocco's , and Peter Clavers Church in Montclair . You and I would always make each other laugh over a meal of fellowship . Thank GOD for the

friendship that you and I have enjoyed for over 40 years !!!

I am deeply saddened of your fleshly death , but I know you are making OUR FATHER GOD and LORD JESUS laugh with all your jokes , as you have made me and so many others !!

I knew you since I was 10 years old and you were 27 , when you came to our Church at St Patrick's . I will always remember the ride home from Madison Square Garden you gave some of the alter boys home from seeing Ringling Bros and Barnum Baileys circus In New York !!! Being raised by a single parent , and no car in the home your blue convertible mustang was the talk of the neighborhood !!! I can't wait until we meet again in the Heavens above !!! GOD BLESS YOU my Brother John , I will never forget you !!!!

John Bartruff

November 7, 2008

loved always and forever ~Nicholle~

Nicholle McAndrew

November 7, 2008

While we are mourning the loss of our friend, others are rejoicing to meet him behind the veil. To Jack's sister Anne, I pray the love of God enfolds you during your difficult times and he helps you heal with the passage of time.

Lourdes Salazar

November 5, 2008

Father, Father, Father... what a crazy, loving, insanely funny, caring man. My family and I have nothing but great memories of him, he's helped my family in so many ways but mostly by just being himself and being there. He will truly be missed but NEVER forgotten. love u lots Father Nickas!!!

Alexis Dennis

November 5, 2008

Hey Father:

Senator Barack Obama is the 44th President Elect of the United States of America !

Please help to keep him safe and run our country in a way that will make God smile.

Father Nickas, pray for us.

Father Nickas, pray for us.

Father Nickas, pray for us.

Marisol

October 31, 2008

It's been so long since I have seen Father Nickas, but He was one of those people that you would NEVER forget. As his memory crosses my mind right now, I can't help but smile. On a lighter note, I have to point out our best memory, Alexis can relate. I believe it was Easter Sunday many years ago after mass and we were enjoying the food and fun. All of us were rolling down the small hill in front of the church, and out of nowhere, Father Nickas came rolling down too! Big belly and all! But on a serious note, he was the sweetest more caring man I've known. He was so selfless

and was always thinking of others. I know that his teachings and his doings have passed on to many others and his legacy will live on.

I love you Father, and I will forever miss you.

Kimberly Exantus

October 31, 2008

As I read each ones reflection I am aware of how good and faithful a friend John was. He loved what he did and did it well. The poet Ranier Maria Rilke speaks to God and I can hear John also saying: I don't want to think of a place for you. Speak to me from everywhere... When I go toward you it is with my whole life. Well done good friend.

Pat and Regina Crowley

October 23, 2008

I will miss my classmate Jack, a bright light if ever there was one in the Newark archdiocese.

He was one of the best

I myself , just having surgery, will not be able to be there to send my friend home. But I carry him in prayer and always deeply in my heart.

If this is read by the family and if it is possible I would love to have a memorial card of John.

Please send it to Fr. Dominic Fuccile, 7 Lance Drive, Brick, NJ 08723

Thank you very much

Dominic Fuccile

October 23, 2008

Father was one of the funniest people I ever met in my life. He was so down to earth and oh so loving. I am very happy that I had the opportunity to be in his presense, hear his jokes and listen to his advise. There was nothiing that he would not do for ANYONE he knew, no matter how long he knew them. I will always love Father Nickas and I will never ever forget him!!!

Bianca Ennis

October 23, 2008

Father--You mean so much to us. You have kept us alive through the most difficult times. Now it's your turn to rest in peace in the comfort of Jesus' arms

Michael and Inez Dickens

October 23, 2008

Father Nickas brought many communties together when he was at Saint Rocco's in NJ he cared for them all no matter what the situation was. In his eyes we were all God's children. And he helped us feel that way. He presents will be misses but what he done for all will always be our hearts.

Verdell Moses-Boyd (West Virigina)

Verdell Moses-Boyd

October 22, 2008

Father Nickas you will be sorely missed. Your kind and gentle spirit has ministered to me many times. The word says that God blesses those who comfort others during troubled times. You are truly blessed by God. I know our Lord greeted you with, "Well done thy good and faithful servant." Praise be to God!

Donna Jackson

October 22, 2008

I found Fr. Nickas such a compelling person because he was a "shepherd" to so many of us of such diverse backgrounds. His humor, sometimes irreverent, often self-deprecating, always kind and inclusive, reached to include young and old, poor and better-off, and all the colors and ethnic backgrounds of his parishioners and those in the surrounding world (with a special fondness for the worlds of St. Peter Claver). His caring warmth penetrated even the coldest and depressed among us, pulling us in with an exciting new idea or project. He now invites us to similarly "pay forward" in his memory. I reach and grasp for his spiritual energy to accomplish this.

Hank Frundt

October 22, 2008

You prayed "Come, Lord Jesus, Come" and He replied "Come follow Me and I will give you rest!"

Enjoy your rest oh good and faithful servant.

ANNE CULLINANE

October 22, 2008

My family will miss father Nickas. We left NJ too soon to really know him. I do know he was a person that would give his time and anything he had to help everyone he could. The time that I shared with him in my time in NJ. and when I visited, was a wonderful bless for me. I have a flute that I will always keep for ever. I visited my one and only best friend Marisol and he came to her home. I played a little funny snake charmer tune and he gave me the flute I will alway cherish it forever.

Maria Latore

October 22, 2008

Father Nickas brought my family back to Church. We never left God and he saw that immediately and adopted us as his own. Few men make the mark on so many men, women and children as John Nickas has. He will be sorely missed and I feel a deep hole for his absence. He was my occasional lunch or dinner partner and we laughed from beginning to end. But he was more than my friend. He was my spiritual example, my confessor over a cup of coffee (and a huge dessert!), my sounding board and he never missed the chance to pay a gal a compliment on her new hairstyle, dress, weight loss, whatever to brighten her day. You cannot create this type of man, he was unique, a real Renaissance man, and nothing will ever replace him. I will love and miss him everyday. Mary Jean Potenzzone

MaryJean Potenzzone

October 22, 2008

Please accept my condolences too. Rev. Nickas was an amazing figure and his death, is a tremendous loss to the Church.

D.P. Quinn

October 22, 2008

We thank God for your gifts top all of us. I pray for thwe comfort of the entire family.

James harris

October 22, 2008

A true guiding light in this world and in my life has gone out. His love for us all, especially those of us who knew and loved him, will be a guide for us to live our lives more fully and in the appreciation for God's gifts. Father's deep love for all people, his desire to help, his unfailing spiritual guidance will always be remembered. So long, until we meet again.

Bill Huebner

October 22, 2008

Fr. Nick was my best friend. I love him still. No one can say it better than Fr. Anselm when he eulogized our beloved Fr. Nick. He encompassed John's essence when he said he was great because of the little things that he never missed, and when he spoke of his humility. In every situation now, I hear Fr. Anselm's words and I make every effort to respond as if Fr. Nick is standing beside me. He is one priest that clearly understood his role in his vocation. It was as if he lived the oath he took literally. I can only thank GOD for placing Fr. Nick on my path, and allowing me to know him, love him and be loved by him. What a gift! What a blessing!

Tina

Justina Schumacher

October 21, 2008

“Preach the Gospel at all times...
When absolutely necessary use words.”

Fr. Nickas, I have seen the Gospel in action through your eloquent legacy. You are the main reason why I came back to the RC Church after I had kept away from her for well over 20 years. During that time I had been struggling with the process of harmonizing Bible teaching and Church teaching.

You were Christ-like with me, enough to meet me right where I was, rather than having tried to be solemnly dogmatic. Your understanding and compassion accentuated by any condescendence, obvious or subtle, were the contributing factors which did foster my reexamining my spiritual life.

Partly because of you, I am again a fruitful member of the RC Church. I am grateful to you, Fr. Nickas. Our sincere condolences to your family and numerous friends. You have preceded us home; until we join you...over there... Farewell! You will be sincerely missed here.

Roger Cantave

October 21, 2008

Father John, Thankyou for your un-selfish goodness and your Christ kindness in our lives. Your example was a constant sermon of love and friendship. It was and now IS. I'll see you there. Save me a spot!

Mary Bernadette Bachman

October 21, 2008

You are truly missed and never forget that I will always remember and love you!

JOCELYNE TOUSSAINT

October 21, 2008

To Father Nickas, you are a special person and thanks for all your prayers. We lost some one special and I believe we will meet again, I know where you are now , and please help us. I know you will, men like you don t come around often. Thank you and god bless .

Steven Tringali

October 21, 2008

Father Nickas made me feel like I could be myself & be treated like a friend/family member & not just a parishioner. He became family the moment I had the pleasure of meeting him through my sister Marisol and he will always be family, guiding us in his passing as he has always guided us in his living years. 68 is too soon but Father knows best. :O)

Linda Castelo

October 21, 2008

Father Nickas was a man that I can never forget. He always seemed to know what to say or to do. He could give a million dollars to someone and walk away without a "thank you". I'm one of the lucky people in this world to have met Father Nickas. There's no one in the world that could come close to him. I can never forget the humor and beautiful personality of

Father Nickas. There's not many words in this world that you can use to explain him. I can explain him as the priest that understood God better than anyone else. Father Nickas was the best thing that could ever happen to a person.

Lauren Dennis

October 21, 2008

Father Nickas was a true follower of Christ. He helped the needy whenever they asked no matter the situation. He simply ignored rules that he knew violated the true meaning of Christian charity. We all feel diminished by his death - thankful to have known him but so lonely without him.

Jeanne Nolasco

October 21, 2008

I feel truly blessed to have had Father Nickas in my life. The best way I can think of to keep his memory alive is to try to live with a heart filled with love for everyone and to fearlessly strive for peace and justice. For me it will be a long learning curve and I'll be praying to him for help. Thank goodness he shared himself with so many of us that we can help each other, and also that Father did not expect any of us to be perfect.

Nancy Taiani

October 20, 2008

I am so glad to have had a Father Nickas in my life. There is no one quite like him. There was no telling with Father Nickas...things were always on

the spot. I miss you but I feel you haven't left me or my family. I will still miss talking to you and hearing one of your infamous jokes. With love always, Gabi

Gabrielle Dennis

October 20, 2008

Heavenly Father, Thank you for blessing us with your Son Father John Nickas. He has touched many of our lives so deeply and I am grateful for that.

This wonderful man possessed such pure, gentle, and loving soul. His grace and peace touched each person he has met. My prayer goes out to his family in this difficult time and many of his close friends who had held him in their hearts as he enter the gates of heaven. Thank you Lord for the gift.

Father Nickas we Love you

maggie P-Louis

October 20, 2008

I WAS TRULY BLESSED TO HAVE MET A SAINT WHEN I MET FR.NICKAS.MY SINCERE SYMPATHY TO HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS. LETS PRAY TO HIM FOR ALL OUR NEEDS, I AM SURE THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY HAS TAKEN CARE OF HIM.IN THE HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY. BE AT PEACE. ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO YOU FR, AND MAY PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON YOU, AND MAY YOUR SOUL BE AT PEACE. WHAT A WONDERFUL FRIEND WE HAVE IN CHRIST

JESUS.PRAISE THE NAME OF JESUS ALWAYS...MARLINE CROOKS
FITCHBURG MA
~~MARLINE CROOKS~~

October 20, 2008

John was the most spiritual man I ever had the great luck to meet. He was my first and only spiritual advisor because I completely trusted the place he pulled his advice from. He has stood by my family through trying times. He will ALWAYS be in the hearts of the Dennis family.

Chandler Dennis

October 19, 2008

Father Nickas I will always remember you and love you. You were a bright light that guided many. Continue to guide us from heaven.

COME LORD JESUS COME

Gretha Francois

October 19, 2008

You never forgot me or my children no matter which state we moved to. You encouraged me to complete my sacraments & practice my faith. I will never forget you as you were like a father to me in every way. I know you are in a better place. We will all miss you greatly. Blessings always.

Sandra Estwick-Carrington

October 19, 2008

I was deeply saddened to hear of Jack's death and I extend my condolences to his sister and other family members. From my earliest years at the seminary in Darlington, Jack stood out as an example of a man deeply committed to the poor and underprivileged. He wanted to be in the inner-city, he went to the inner-city and he brought the Gospel message to the inner-city. What an example he was to those who even briefly crossed his path and could only read of his accomplishments in the secular press. Peace be with you, Jack, as you move to another city - the City of God!

Peter Marchesani

October 19, 2008

There have been many times in our lives that Rev. Jack moved us with his words. He had a gift with words and a way of reaching people. We recall his nieces/nephews weddings, his sister 'Aunt Ginny's' funeral and just last year having him come to our Mom's funeral. He was a very special person and priest that will be missed by everyone who's life he touched. Thank you for all you have done in life for so many others.

Tricia & Bear Ingleston

October 18, 2008

Despite that the feeling of loosing you was hard, I do admire that you are now even closer to the ones you love. You lived a great life, changed many lives, and carried out the Word of God in all you that do. You are truly missed and never forget that I will always remember and love you! Thanks for the letter. It meant alot.

Give a kiss to everyone for me especially Grandma!

"Come Lord Jesus Come" ~Father Nickas

My prayers are with your Sister and Family.

Tanya Israel

October 18, 2008

My deepest sympathy to Father's dear sister and beloved nieces and nephews. You shared a great man with the world. He demonstrated the power of God's unconditional love to so many. The world is a better place because he was in it.

Peggy Jurow

October 18, 2008

With deepest sympathy from Guy sr.
Gladys, Guy jr, Cristina and Daniel Knowles. thanks for being there for all of us.

guy knowles

October 18, 2008

The light you brought into this world can never be extinguished.
Your legacy of love shines even brighter now that you are in heaven.

I will keep your family in my constant prayers.

Say hello to Mother for me !

Come
Lord Jesus
Come

-
-

Marisol Dennis

October 18, 2008

I WISH TO EXPRESS SINCERE CONDOLENCES AND DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO JACK'S FAMILY AND TO ALL THOSE HE SERVED SO WELL AS AN OUTSTANDING AND EXTRAORDINARY EXAMPLE OF HOW A TRUE DISCIPLE LIVES THE GOSPEL MESSAGE IN THESE DAYS OF AWAITING THE LORD'S SECOND COMING.

BILL CROWLEY

October 18, 2008

Wuth deepest sympathy from Fr. Richard Nardone, Seton Hall University.

Rev. Richard Nardone

INVITE OTHERS TO ADD MEMORIES

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