

## Reverend Monsignor Joseph R. Roth

17 January 1937 — 15 May 2011

(Brother Patrick Kieran 1956)

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### Reverend Monsignor Joseph R. Roth

Reverend Monsignor Joseph R. Roth, Pastor of St. Andrew Catholic Church in Myrtle Beach, passed away Sunday, May 15, 2011. Monsignor Roth was born to Rudolph and Margaret Roth in Jackson Heights, NY, January 17, 1937. He attended Cathedral College of the Immaculate Conception and Marist Preparatory in Esopus, New York.

Monsignor Roth joined the Marist Brothers and graduated from Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York, in 1961. He taught in Marist schools and became assistant principal at the Marist High School in Kobe, Japan, from 1963 to 1973. While there, Monsignor Roth founded and was Scoutmaster of the International Boy Scouts of America Troop 59.

After serving in Japan, Monsignor Roth followed his calling to become a priest. He attended Pope John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Massachusetts. He was ordained a deacon in 1978 at St. John Neumann Church in Columbia, SC, and ordained as a priest at Sacred Heart Church, Bayside, NY, by Bishop Ernest L. Unterkoefler in 1979. He was named a Prelate of Honor and received the title monsignor in 1991, and was appointed Protonotary Apostolic Supernumerary by Pope John Paul II in 2004.

After his ordination, Monsignor Roth worked in the Diocese of Charleston in various positions including pastor on Sullivan's Island, in Aiken, in Charleston, and in Myrtle Beach. He was also Director of the Office of the Diaconate for the Diocese. He was appointed co-vicar general by Bishop Robert J. Baker

In addition to his pastoral work, Monsignor Roth had great affection and admiration for the members of the Fire and Police Departments. He attended the South Carolina Fire Academy in Columbia and was a state-certified structural firefighter as well as a certified instructor at the South Carolina Fire Academy. In 1984, he became the Chaplain of the South Carolina State Firemen's Association, the first Catholic priest to have that honor, and a position he held for over 25 years.

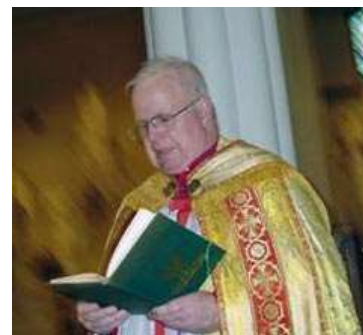
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Article on Monsignor Joseph Roth which appeared in South Carolina Diocesan Newspaper

### **Msgr. Roth inducted into firefighters hall of fame**

By Christina Lee Knauss  
The Catholic Miscellany

COLUMBIA, SC - For 23 years, Msgr. Joseph R. Roth has served as the chaplain for the South Carolina Firefighters Association, ministering to members and their families around the state. In gratitude for his work, he was inducted, along with three other members, to the association's Hall of Fame at a banquet held at the Metropolitan Convention Center on April 10.



The association is a statewide organization that provides services, benefits and information for firefighters and their families. The group's regular activities include seminars and training opportunities and coordinating the Firefighters Relief Fund.

Msgr. Roth is the first Catholic priest to serve as chaplain for the group, which has had only three in its 102 year history.

When I was asked to be up there, I thought they wanted an extra prayer, Msgr. Roth said in a phone interview with The

Miscellany. I was shocked when they gave me the award. Never in my wildest dreams did I think about something like this. It was a total surprise.

Jim Bowie, executive of the association, praised Msgr. Roth's dedication to the spiritual well-being of its members. He's just very well respected in our association, Bowie said. He's one of the kindest, gentlest men you'd ever want to meet.

Bowie noted that the association has 80 to 90 members pass away each year, and Msgr. Roth personally writes letters to each of the families. The group currently has about 16,000 members, consisting of both active and retired firefighters.

He said Msgr. Roth also is working to form a team that would travel and work with the families and co-workers of South Carolina firefighters who die in the line of duty.

Candidates for the Hall of Fame are nominated by individual members and then evaluated by the state association's Member Benefits Committee.



Msgr. Roth said he first got involved with firefighting in 1983 when he served as a priest on Sullivans Island. When he learned there was a shortage of volunteer firefighters, he offered to join because he was on the island during the day while others often were at work. He took courses at the South Carolina Fire Academy to become certified as a state firefighter and then a fire officer.

Over the years, Msgr. Roth served as chaplain for fire departments in Sullivans Island, Isle of Palms, Aiken, Myrtle Beach and the city of Charleston. He also serves as chaplain emeritus for the South Carolina State Fire Chiefs Association and the State Fire Instructors Association.

*"Being a chaplain keeps me busy, and as a Catholic I'm sort of alone out there because we just don't have a large Catholic clergy presence in the fire community, he said. There are a lot of firefighters who are Catholic".*

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Reverend Monsignor Joseph R. Roth, Pastor of St. Andrew Catholic Church in Myrtle Beach, passed away Sunday, May 15, 2011. Monsignor Roth was born to Rudolph and Margaret Roth in Jackson Heights, N.Y., January 17, 1937. He graduated from Cathedral College of the Immaculate Conception and Marist Preparatory College in New York.

After college Monsignor Roth joined the Marist Brothers and was assistant principal at the order's high school in Kobe, Japan, from 1963 to 1973. While there, Monsignor Roth founded and was Scoutmaster of the International Boy Scouts of America Troop 59. He received many Scouting honors including Order of the Arrow, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Roman Catholic St. George Award and a Scouter's Key.



After serving in Japan, Monsignor Roth followed his calling to become a priest. He attended Pope John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Massachusetts. He was ordained a deacon in 1978 at St. John Neumann Church in Columbia, and ordained as a priest at Sacred Heart Church, Bayside, N.Y., by Bishop Ernest L. Unterkoefler in 1979. He was named a Prelate of Honor and received the title monsignor in 1991, and was appointed Protonotary Apostolic Supernumerary by Pope John Paul II in 2004.

After his ordination, Monsignor Roth worked in the Diocese of Charleston in various positions including pastor of Christ the Divine Teacher, The Citadel, Stella Maris Catholic Church on Sullivan's Island, St. Mary Help of Christians in Aiken and St. Andrew Catholic in Myrtle Beach. He was also Director of the Office of the Diaconate for the Diocese. He left St. Andrew's in September 2000 when he was appointed co-vicar general with Msgr. Martin T. Laughlin by Bishop Robert J. Baker. In 2001, he was appointed pastor of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Charleston. He served in both capacities until he returned to St. Andrew's as pastor in 2008.

In addition to his pastoral work, Monsignor Roth had great affection and admiration for the members of the Fire and Police Departments. He attended the South Carolina Fire Academy in Columbia and was a state-certified structural firefighter as well as a certified instructor at the South Carolina Fire Academy. In 1984, he became the Chaplain of the South Carolina State Firemen's Association, the first Catholic priest to have that honor, and a position he held for over 25 years. He received the Life Saving Medal and a proclamation of recognition for lifesaving from the Myrtle Beach Fire Department. He also served as Chaplain for the Fire and Police Departments in Aiken, Myrtle Beach, Sullivan's Island, Isle of Palms, Mount Pleasant, James Island, Charleston and North Charleston. In 2006, he was the first Catholic priest to be named to the South Carolina State Firefighters Hall of Fame. In 2010, Monsignor was named the Chaplain for Carolina Life Care and was awarded a flight suit to be worn on Life Care missions.

Monsignor Roth was predeceased by his parents, Margaret and Rudolph; and two brothers, Rudolph and Vincent. He is survived by his nephews, Vincent Roth, Jr. and Patrick Roth; and two nieces, Susan Boone and Margaret Roth; plus several grand-nephews and nieces.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated 11 a.m. Thursday, May 19, 2011 at St. Andrew Catholic Church, 503-37th Ave. N., Myrtle Beach, SC 29577. The Most Reverend Robert E. Guglielmone, Bishop of the Diocese of Charleston, is the celebrant. Final Prayers and Committal Service will be held 4:30 p.m. Thursday, May 19, 2011, at Holy Cross Cemetery, 604 Fort Johnson Road, (James Island) Charleston, SC 29412.

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CHARLESTON, S.C. (WCIV) -- It was a sad weekend for many firefighters across the Palmetto State. Long time South Carolina State Firefighter Association chaplain, Reverend Monsignor Joseph R. Roth passed away Saturday night. Roth was a former firefighter, and was very involved in the firefighting community.

Grant Mishoe is a former North Charleston Firefighter, current S.C. Firefighter Association member, and Editor-

in-Chief of SConfire.com. He told ABC News 4, "Father Roth was a gentle soul as well as a great man. It is a sad day for all South Carolina firefighters."

Monsignor Roth was at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist on Broad Street in Downtown Charleston from June of 2001 to January of 2008. Monday, the Bishop of Charleston Most Reverend Robert Guglielmone released this statement about Roth's passing:

"Monsignor Roth was a faithful priest and ever quick with a smile and a laugh. I am grieved at his passing. His willingness to serve the Church in whatever need presented itself was a gift to the Church."

Reverend Roth's funeral will be in Myrtle Beach later this week.

From: WCIV ABC News4 in Charleston

Prepared 22 September 2011; updated 24 September 2011  
Initial obituary developed by J. David Kammer 23 September 2011  
Last two obituary sections added 5 December 2011