

In loving Memory of My Dear Brother, Msgr. Walter, aka, Wally,

A Sweet Spirit, a Gentle Soul ....

There are so many characteristics that made Msgr. special, that have left a lasting impression, an imprint on my heart and the hearts of many. His genuine love of people, his compassion, empathy, and caring, were evident in the way he lived. He was about acceptance, forgiveness, and embracing all. Msgr. took every opportunity to extend kindness, always putting others first, wanting to help whenever and in whatever way possible. During his illness, a hospital chaplain shared that he would often tell the nurses to take care of others first. He had a heart of gold, and was genuinely interested in people. Msgr.'s generous nature was a defining characteristic of who he was – it was clear that he derived much more joy in giving than in receiving. It was his nature and his comfort level to be the caregiver of others, perhaps too often putting his own needs and self care to the side. Msgr. saw and brought out the best in people, inspiring (and maybe tiring) many with his relentless work ethic, openness to new ideas, and determination to get it done. He was thoughtful and humble. The pride and love he felt for family, not just biologic, but his parish families over the years was evident. Msgr. cultivated love, and it returned to him. He was inspired and motivated by his St. Matthew Parish Family, often expressing his appreciation for the goodness of the people, and how that goodness reinforced him to keep going and doing.

Msgr. found pleasure and comfort in the simple things in life. My brother loved his McD's coffee, a good cigar, a pizza at the end of the day. He craved sweets, and loved fast food. He was an independent spirit, and loved driving and listening to talk radio or a game, as a way to de-stress and have some quiet time. He loved to shop, loved to travel, and was always open to a new adventure. While he referred to himself as "old" over the past few years, he was very young at heart, and connected with people of all ages. He was good natured, with a quick smile and laugh. He loved music, loved to sing, and was blessed with a good voice. He had an appreciation for the beauty of nature, flowers, and plants, as well as for ambience and a pleasing aesthetic. What pride and joy he took in the church and altar decorations at all times of the year, but especially holiday times. Msgr. was a lover of light, as a symbol of warmth and hope, often placing mini fairy lights on arrangements. He was a dedicated son, never forgetting those who went before him, visiting the cemeteries often, and taking pride in planting or placing flowers. He cultivated a vegetable garden for years, and loved to plant flowers. He was a loyal Mets fan, and had his Mets blanket with him throughout his illness. He rarely complained, rarely talked about himself or shared how he was truly feeling, so when he acknowledged pain over the past year, one knew it had to be significant. Msgr.'s goal was to recover, to return to the parish, to be

with the people he loved. We know now that God had a different plan in mind. There is a new angel in heaven, likely already touting The St. Matthew bulletin as the “best news in town.”

I take comfort in knowing that Msgr. is no longer suffering, that he is free of pain, whole, reunited with loved ones, and reaping the eternal rewards of heaven and heavenly peace. He will pray for all of us, I am certain of that.

*Author, Flavia Weedn, wrote: “Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while and leave footprints on our heart, and we are never, ever the same.”*

There is no doubt in my mind that my brother has left footprints on many hearts, including mine. I am grateful and feel blessed to have had such a wonderful and caring brother. Msgr.’s spirit will live on through the countless memories, and the countless hearts that were touched by his life. He will not be forgotten.

Rest in peace, dear brother, until we meet again. You are missed and loved,

Joan