

Archdiocese of Detroit

On the Death of Fr. John West...

“I am terribly saddened by the passing of Father John West. Father West was a true friend who partnered with me on interfaith issues for a number of years, and his friendship with the Jewish Community Council was fruitful and constructive. Father West served as a devoted and tireless advocate for greater interaction between the Catholic and Jewish communities in metropolitan Detroit and he worked to ensure that any differences between us were transformed into learning experiences that furthered our relationship. Both personally and professionally, Father West had a great impact on me and I will miss his positive attitude, devotion to interfaith work, and friendship.”

David Gad-Harf
Executive Director
Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit

“We’re clearly saddened by the unexpected passing of Fr. John West, who served the Church for 25 years in the priesthood. He was an extremely talented and gifted man who utilized his many abilities within the community of Church, the ecumenical community, and the civic community. His death is a great loss for all of us and we are grateful for his years of generous service, as we commend him to the Lord.”

Bishop Walter Hurley
Auxiliary Bishop
Archdiocese of Detroit

“Fr. John West was always gracious and generous to us in the Communications Department. For every one media interview he did at our behest, he was involved with a dozen or more projects ‘behind the scenes’— advising us on theological issues, facilitating ‘back channel’ dialogues, proofreading our printed materials. We’ve lost a tremendous resource and a great friend.”

Ned McGrath
Director of Communications
Archdiocese of Detroit

“Father John West was a gem of a human being, a leader of leaders and a dear friend. During the past few years I have been honored to get to know Father West, to share many meals with him, and to welcome him to a Sabbath dinner at our home. He consistently expressed curiosity and respect towards his fellow religious seekers. He represented his church with wisdom, depth and a generosity of spirit. Father West and I shared many interests – in bioethics, interfaith relations, politics, and religious education. For the past few months we have been working closely on an upcoming trip to Italy and Israel which is leaving in 2 weeks. I anticipated exploring the Vatican with Father West and I will think of him and pray for his precious soul when we visit that place which he knew and loved so well. May God bless his soul.”

Rabbi Daniel Nevins, Adat Shalom Synagogue
Farmington Area Interfaith Association

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“I offer my sincerest condolences to the Catholic community on the death of Fr. John West. I have lost a very dear friend and the interfaith community has lost a hero, a champion of interfaith dialogue. I will always remember Fr. West as someone who promoted peace, love and brotherhood among the followers of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.”

Imam Sayed Hassan Qazwini
Islamic Center of America

“Fr. John West was a great preacher, a natural teacher and a dedicated priest. Over the years, he was a leader in Catechetics and in Adult Formation. I always admired his ability to communicate the meaning of the Scriptures and Catholic teachings in ways that helped people to live their Catholic Faith more fully. I will miss him as a friend and a collaborator.”

Bishop John Quinn
Auxiliary Bishop
Archdiocese of Detroit

“The interfaith community has lost a true friend and partner in Father John West. As ecumenical and interfaith advisor to Cardinal Maida, he advised the Interfaith Partners on the development of the Children of Abraham musical drama, as well as in other direct and indirect ways. He served on the Board of Directors of Interfaith Partners and was a teacher, a spiritual guide and a friend to Jews, Muslims and Christians of all denominations. He will be deeply missed.

“I will remember Fr. West as one who was faithful to God’s call to improve interreligious understanding and relationships. May we honor his life and work, by being faithful to what God is calling us.”

Steve Spreitzer
Interfaith and Walk as One Coordinator
NCCJ (The National Conference for Community and Justice)

“Fr. West touched every single aspect of Church life in the Archdiocese of Detroit through his many assignments. He was a consummate teacher who bore witness to what he preached in the way that he lived – with charity, humility and generosity.

“He was always available, ready and willing to tackle any challenge. He represented the Church in a very humble, but effective manner in the world of interfaith dialogue. He will be greatly, greatly missed.”

Msgr. John Zenz
Moderator of the Curia
Archdiocese of Detroit

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