

More tributes to Monsignor Thomas A. Kleissler

These are only some of the tributes to Father Tom that RENEW has received since his passing.

I was eleven years old when I attended Father Tom's ordination at Sacred Heart Cathedral. Many years later, I would return to the Cathedral to "voice" the small pipe organ in the lady Chapel, and also make some tonal changes to the cathedral's main organ. Tom was our family priest. In that function, he buried both my parents, married and baptized numerous relatives. He will be greatly missed.

— **James Konzelman**

Such a wonderful, gentle priest filled with love and kindness. So glad I got to know him.

— **Joan Everson**

Forever grateful to Msgr. Kleissler for uniting my husband and me in marriage and for being such a cherished friend to my family in Avon and to my late grandmother. Praying he is resting in peace in heaven.

— **Kelly Fitzpatrick**

We all lost a hero, a friend. a saint among us. I have so many memories of life and ministry with Tom in the late '60s and through the '70s in parish, diocesan, national ministry. Writing the Parish Council Guidelines for Newark became my master's project for Fordham. I have so many wonderful memories. I always think of him when I use a crock pot, because he gave me one as a Christmas gift one year because he said he felt guilty over my long hours and then the long commute back to Waldwick. Those were some of the dearest memories of my life.

—**Jeanne Schrempf**

I am sorry for your loss, both personal and professional. I know of his wonderful work. He was a blessing. May he rest in his eternal reward.

—**Brian Lemoi**, *executive director, Evangelization, Formation, Youth, and Family Life,*
Diocese of St. Petersburg.

We are so sorry to hear of the passing of Fr. Tom. Our deepest condolences to you at this very difficult time. He was a very special priest, and it was indeed a great pleasure to have met him in Boston as RENEW began such amazing work in this archdiocese. May he rest in God's peace. Well done, good and faithful servant.

— **Deacon Richard and Ann Cussen**

Please accept my condolences. RENEW changed my life.

— **Jean Cook**

We were fortunate to know him as a priest, a friend, and a dedicated servant of God. He was a curate at Our Lady of Mercy in Park Ridge soon after we moved here in 1956. The relationship "blossomed" into a blessing greater than words can convey. The legacy of faith he shared with so many is testimony to the devotion with which he founded RENEW and inspired its worldwide acceptance and emulation. His renown was made clear to us several years ago when we met a mother and daughter in Spain who were visiting there from the Philippines. They knew him too! They were so happy to talk with us about him from the context of his having been a priest within our home parish. His spiritual influence will last forever.

— **George and Anne Mayer**

Father Tom, finest and most faithful priest I've ever known. As his devoted servant, he has prepared a room for you. Love you.

— **C. William Reilly**

Thank you to all the staff at RENEW for keeping Uncle Tom's vision alive. With love from the Prentice Family

— **Diane, Bill, Emily, Tracy, Sean, and Caralea**

I have never met someone that I am more sure is a saint than my cousin, Father Tom. May we all live by his example and find joy in serving the Lord and one another!

— **Thomas Brodell**

Friends, this is in memory one of the giants of the Newark Church. His legacy lives on.

— **Joseph R. Thomas**

Sister Terry, I just watched the homily and your reflection at Tom's funeral at Park Ridge. I believe this is the church where RENEW's 40th-anniversary Mass took place.... I'm so happy that I was there and had a few moments with Father Tom. He was so generous and said he remembered us in Sioux City and remembered me as I led the process in Des Moines. I have tears in my eyes as I remember all the wonderful times in the post-Vatican II Church. RENEW was such a gift to live out the ideals of Vatican II.

— **Sister Mary Lechtenberg**

Tom will always be in my heart, will always be an inspiration, and I know that he was so much more to so many! I will miss him always but know he is at peace and with God.

— **Mary Beth Kleissler Anderson**

My heart remembers Father Tom to this day! It was SO wonderful working with him at RENEW and being always inspired by his pastoral and loving presence! I shall continue to remember and treasure his place and influence in my life! God blessed his work and continues to bless RENEW!

— **Jerome Herauf**, *co-author of the RENEW faith-sharing book, Healing Our Church.*

Father Tom reached out to New Zealand with RENEW in 1983 and had our bishops take up RENEW. I was to be the national director, assisted by Father Gerry Whiteford, sm. RENEW had a real impact on the Church in New Zealand from 1985 to 1987, and it was a blessing for me and so many. We will remember him in these days.

— **Father Paul G. Shannahan**, sm, Christchurch New Zealand.

I first met Tom in 1987 in Plainfield, New Jersey, as a trainee from Colombo, Sri Lanka. He and his team with (Sister Donna Ciangio, O.P.) impressed us, and we came back with full of zeal. Both of them visited us later, but we could not continue as the country went into an insurrection. I later met Tom during one of my academic visits to New York. But the fondest was my last visit which Donna arranged in Feb. 2020. I had such joyful moments with him. He was full of Joy and apostolic zeal. He never indicated to me his internal difficulties and pains. A man of courage and fortitude, he won friends all over the world. We here mourned his death, but his spirit is alive even at his death. Tom, friend and brother priest, you ran it to the full across the globe ... not through conversion but reverting Christians back to the roots of faith and commitment to the man of Nazareth. Rule of love and not rule of law, because you believed in love than can rule of law and saw love and love alone. Go well, Tom. You did it your way but *par excellence* indeed. Bye for now. Adios, Amigo!

— **Shanthikumar Hettiarachchi**

Truly, Father Tom had a profound influence on my life and instilled in me a love and devotion to the formation of small communities. My deepest sympathy to the Archdiocese of Newark and RENEW.

— **Sister Nancy Fischer**