



Rev. David J. Gaffny

December 12, 1930 - September 27, 2025

Rev. David J. Gaffny, 94, of Mentor, OH, formerly of Nashville, TN, passed away peacefully on September 27, 2025, after a life devoted to faith, family and service. He was born December 12, 1930, in Winthrop, MA, to the late John and Mary Gaffny.

David was ordained a priest of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (the Maryknolls) on June 8, 1957, at Maryknoll Seminary Chapel in Maryknoll, NY. After spending 12 years as a missionary in Chile, he sought and received a dispensation from his priestly vows. He met and fell in love with Leonor, who would become his beloved wife. Together, David and Leonor dedicated themselves to parish life, serving as catechists and leading marriage preparation retreats in Spanish. For the next 30 years, he worked for several social service and government agencies, ending his career working for the U.S. Department of Education in Cleveland, Ohio. After retiring professionally in 2000, they moved to Nashville, TN. David remained active in his faith community, teaching adult formation classes at St. Joseph in Madison.

Following Leonor's passing in 2001, David discerned a return to the priesthood and his faculties were restored in 2005 in the Diocese of Nashville. He was appointed associate pastor at St. Joseph Church, later becoming administrator of St. Francis of Assisi Church in Dover while residing at

Immaculate Conception Church. In August 2009, he became pastor of Immaculate Conception Church and continued to serve both communities faithfully. Under his leadership, St. Francis Church completed construction of its current church building, dedicated in 2009. When he “retired” from Immaculate Conception Church, he continued as the administrator at St. Francis Church until January 2021, at the age of 90, when he then moved to Ohio.

David had many interests and prayed the rosary regularly. He was an avid reader who could recall many historical facts and had knowledge of a variety of topics. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus in Tennessee. While in Ohio, he enjoyed being a part of the Men’s Meditation Group at St. Bede the Venerable Church in Mentor. In his later years, he enjoyed visiting Lake Erie as it would rush back memories from his childhood in Winthrop, “the little town surrounded by the sea”.

Survivors include his children, Mike (Nancy) Macaya and Pam (Bruno) DiFranco; grandchildren, Priscilla Grimmatt, Chris Michael Martin, Angel (David) Concannon, Lindsay (Daniel) Tróchez, Miguel Macaya, Antonio DiFranco and Angelina DiFranco; great-grandchildren, Leeya Grimmatt, Mika (Nicol) Martin, Erica Concannon and Hailey Concannon; great-great-grandson, Bentlee Bridges; sister, Joan McDonald; son-in-law, Ricky Benton; sister-in-law, Maxine Gaffny and many nieces, nephews and other loving family members and friends.

Preceding David in death are his wife, Leonor Gaffny; daughter, Maria Benton; brother, Gregory Gaffny and brother-in-law, Clyde McDonald.

David had a deep love for Jesus, in particular the Holy Eucharist, and his family. He will be remembered for his unwavering faith, compassionate spirit,

and deep commitment to the people he served. His legacy lives on in the countless lives he touched through his ministry and love.

Family and friends will be received from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., Saturday, October 4, 2025, at St. Bede the Venerable Catholic Church, 9114 Lakeshore Blvd., Mentor, Ohio 44060. A memorial Mass in David's honor will be held 11:00 a.m.

Services in Tennessee are as follows, family and friends will be received from 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., Saturday, October 11, 2025, at St. Joseph Catholic Church, 1225 Gallatin Pike S, Madison, TN 37115. A funeral Mass will begin at 11:00 a.m., at the church. Burial to follow in Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens, Goodlettsville, TN.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made in David's honor to Hospice of the Western Reserve, P.O. Box 72101, Cleveland, OH 44192, donate online at www.hospicewr.org/ or to the Maryknoll Society, P.O. Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545.

Arrangements entrusted to the Brunner Sanden Deitrick Funeral and Cremation Center, 8466 Mentor Ave., Mentor, Ohio 44060.

Offer condolences at www.brunners.com

Cemetery Details

Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens

1150 South Dickerson Rd.
Goodlettsville, TN 37072

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 4. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Bede The Venerable Catholic Church
9114 Lakeshore Blvd
Mentor, OH 44060
(440) 257-5544

Memorial Mass

OCT 4. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Bede The Venerable Catholic Church
9114 Lakeshore Blvd
Mentor, OH 44060
(440) 257-5544

Visitation

OCT 11. 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Joseph Catholic Church
1225 Gallatin Pike S.
Madison, TN 37115

Funeral Mass

OCT **11**. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Joseph Catholic Church
1225 Gallatin Pike S.
Madison, TN 37115

Tribute Wall



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Rev. David J. Gaffny.



October 03, 2025 at 10:15 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Rev. David J. Gaffny.

October 03, 2025 at 10:15 AM



“ Father Gaffny has helped me come back to the Catholic faith back in 2014 during Lent and Easter liturgical seasons. I will never forget how much he helped me. I pray he will one day become a Saint. I will light a votive candle for him, his family and those who he helped. In addition, I will also pray the rosary.

Joshua King - October 02, 2025 at 06:06 PM