



Fr. Chester P. Smith, S.V.D.
Born: May 3, 1959 in Chicago, IL
Died: April 8, 2020, in Indianapolis, IN

Fr. Chester P. Smith was ordained a priest of the Society of Divine Word (SVD) Chicago Province, on Saturday, April 16, 1988.

Fr. Chester grew up on the South Side of Chicago. Fr. Chester attended Corpus Christi and Our Lady of the Gardens Schools. At the encouragement of their mother

Mae Ruth and parish priest, Fr. Edward Delaney, S.V.D they attended Divine Word High School Seminary in East Troy, WI. and the Divine Word College in Epworth, IA.

Fr. Chester often spoke of the encouragement he received from Fr. Delaney S.V.D. to become a priest 'because your people need you.' Fr. Delaney's comments are the foundation of his ministry encouraging black men and women to be leaders in both their communities, parishes, and churches.

In 1989 Fr. Chester founded the Ambassadors of the Word, a ministry focusing on youth rites of passage programs and cross culture experiences. In 1993 he became a founding member of the Bowman Francis Team. It's mission was focused on African American families and faith development. Fr. Chester also served as President of the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus.

Fr. Chester was the co-author of two books, "Boyhood to Manhood" (1993), a rite of passage manual for African American boys and a manual for the African American Family Kwanzaa celebration, and "My Family, Our Family" (1995).

Fr. Chester ministry of liberation lead him to travel throughout the United States, Europe, Canada, and the Caribbean. "It just seems that people are so hungry for the Word and they want the truth about life, especially from a spiritual point of view," he said. During his travels, Fr. Chester did missions, revivals, workshops, retreats, and motivational speaking. In his leisure, Fr. Chester had a passion for social causes and enjoyed fishing, reading, music (especially jazz and gospel), participating as well as watching sports especially his favorite Chicago teams, DA BEARS, Cubs, White Sox, Black Hawks and DA BULLS. He loved reaching out to family, friends, and especially his God-children.

Fr. Chester was preceded in death by his father Charles A. Smith (2008) and his mother Mae Ruth Forte Smith (2016). He is survived by his brother Fr. Charles Smith, his brother Kermit Smith and his sister Marcheta Smith.

Memorial Services are pending.

Condolences can be sent to:

Smith Family
5140 South Hyde Park Blvd
Apt 7A
Chicago, IL 60615-6021

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Bowman Francis
Ministry

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