



Father John L. Graden O.S.F.S.

August 14, 1946 - January 20, 2021

For an updated recording of the Funeral Mass for Father John Garden please [CLICK HERE](https://vimeo.com/508618446) (https://vimeo.com/508618446) and you will be directed to a recording of the service.

Father John L. Graden, an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales since 1966, and a Roman Catholic priest since 1976, died on January 20, 2021, in Buffalo, NY. He was 74 years old.

In addition to his many confreres in the Oblates, he is survived by his siblings, Jeanne, Joseph (Mary Pat) and Mary Jo (Hilary); many nieces, nephews and cousins.

John was pre-deceased by his grandparents, Joseph and Lilly Haddad and John F. and Pearl Graden, his parents John L., and Dorothy Graden and his half-sister Ethel Arobogast.

St. Francis de Sales had claim on Father John for a long time. In Toledo he attended St. Francis de Sales Parish, St. Francis de Sales Grade School (1952) and St. Francis de Sales High School (1964) after which he joined the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales. John attended Niagara University (BS in biology, 1969), the University of St. Michael's College in Toronto (Masters of Divinity, 1975), and Seattle University (Masters in Religious Education, 1977).

His work and ministry included teaching high school at Bishop Duffy HS in Niagara Falls, NY, Toledo Central Catholic HS in Toledo, OH, and St. Francis de Sales HS in Toledo, OH. He was the Vocation Director for the Oblates and a member of the Formation Team.

In 1988 John formed WORD Consultants (Toledo) as a teaching firm in which he and others would provide adults education and training, as well as parish missions and retreats. He also worked for many years for UNBOUND preaching for Catholic missions around the world.

In 2002 John became the Director of the De Sales Center at Stella Niagara, NY, now known as Embraced by God at De Sales Resources and Ministries. People have said how they will miss his preaching and presiding at Eucharist, his crooked smile and hearty laugh.

At various stages of his life John dealt with many health issues and learned from Francis de Sales to see even sickness as a prayer of communing with Christ Jesus.

Funeral services will be held on Thursday, January 28 at Gesu Parish in Toledo, OH. Viewing will begin at 10:00 a.m., in the church, followed by a mass of the resurrection at 11:00 a.m., then interment at Resurrection Cemetery in Toledo, OH. The Funeral Mass will be Livestreamed for those who do not wish to attend in person. If you wish to view the Mass via Livestream please scroll to the bottom of the the obituary to click on the link to attend.

There will be a memorial mass at St. Peter's Parish in Lewiston, NY at a later date.

At John's request, contributions in his memory may be made to the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, P.O Box 2868, Toledo, OH 43606, Embraced by God, 4421 Lower River Rd., Stella Niagara, NY 14144, or any good works of your choice.

Condolences may be sent to John's brother: Joe Graden, 2440 Whitechapel Dr., Toledo, OH 43614.

Due to COVID restrictions there will be no social gathering following the funeral. A celebration of John's life will take place this summer at the home of John's family. Date, time and location to be determined.

Due to current conditions caused by the ongoing pandemic, we are offering a Live Stream of the Funeral Mass for Father John L. Graden beginning at 10:45am on Thursday, January 28, 2021 for those who wish to attend the Mass virtually.

Please view and sign our online "guest registry" at CoyleFuneralhome.com

Cemetery Details

Resurrection Cemetery

5725 Hill Avenue
Toledo, OH 43615

Previous Events

Viewing

JAN 28. 10:00 AM.
church

Funeral Service

JAN 28.
Gesu Parish

Graveside

JAN 28 (ET)
Resurrection Cemetery
5725 Hill Avenue
Toledo, OH 43615

Tribute Wall



“ *Coyle Funeral and Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Father John L. Graden O.S.F.S.*



Coyle Funeral and Cremation Services - January 29, 2021 at 11:30 AM

JD

“ *Fr. Graden will be deeply missed at Unbound, but we celebrate his victorious life in Jesus Christ, and how he shared some of that with us here at Unbound through his preaching on our behalf!*

*- John Dougherty
www.unbound.org*



John Dougherty - January 28, 2021 at 11:11 AM

SC

“ My deepest condolences to John's family. I was saddened to learn of his passing, but will forever have the fondest memories of John as teacher (at SFHS), mentor, and friend. His example of living the faith is like no other--he was deeply devoted, caring, and humble, not to mention being the Homilist Extraordinaire in my book. So many people are better for having encountered him, myself and wife included (he married us 36 years ago). Go in peace, John L. Graden, osfs!

Stephen Cain, SFHS '78

Stephen Cain - January 28, 2021 at 07:30 AM

SW

“ Father John inspired all of us at Unbound. His service brought practical hope and inspiration to 29,360 Unbound sponsors and at least that many sponsored families. He inspired me personally to be my best for the poor. He taught me about the patron saint of his order, St. Frances de Sales: "Be who you are, and be that well." Thank you, Fr. John.

Scott Wasserman

Scott Wasserman - January 27, 2021 at 01:16 PM



“ *Saddened to hear of Fr. John's passing. His mother and my Mom were friends, and I came to know him in my junior and senior years at St. Francis de Sales High School. Fr. John was a kind and genuine guy with a quick sense of humor and humility that could disarm any ego and make you feel cared for valued. He helped me through some rough spots by insisting that I keep my Faith and understand that Life sometimes presents challenges as opportunities to learn and grow. We kept in touch from time to time years after and it was always a welcome and familiar connection when we did. I'm sure he touched and made a positive impact with many lives throughout his time here, I'm grateful that I was amongst them. God's peace and grace to you Fr. John and your family and loved ones. You made a difference.*

Jeff DeHan, SFHS 78'

Jeff DeHan - January 26, 2021 at 08:03 AM

JG

Dear Jeff... So glad for you and John. He was amazing. Your mom was a good friend to ours and she loved your mom. Thank you for posting this memory of John. God bless and keep you and yours. Covid got him. Please be safe.

Jeanne Graden

Jeanne Graden - January 26, 2021 at 08:33 AM

PM

“ We did not know Fr John personally, but after we lived our Cursillo Weekend in 1977 that brought us to a deeper relationship with Jesus, we tried to get to as many Catholic faith conferences that we could., We attended 2 of his and are so thankful for his love of Jesus Christ.. Both conferences we attended we bought one of his CDs and listen to them quite often to help us slow down and just be present to Jesus. What great gifts they are to us..
We certainly admire what he did in his ministry and especially to the people in the pews.
In his obituary he is still teaching us to remember.... in our sufferings we can see that as a prayer of communing with Jesus Christ.
Thanks Fr. John
You family members and dear friends have our deepest sympathy of your hurt inside your minds and hearts during this time.
We are all thankful for the rest he has now and being in peace.
May we all continue to evangelize like Fr. John Graden did.
Quietly butsincerely....
Gus and Pat Miller

Pat and Gus Miller - January 25, 2021 at 11:26 PM

JG

Thank you. Covid pushed his already compromised body over the edge. Please be safe.
Grateful he is resting now too.
Sincerely,
Jeanne Graden

Jeanne Graden - January 26, 2021 at 08:37 AM

FK

“ *Condolances to the family of John...
John came to the parish where I was a pastor, to do a mission in
2002...
and he spoke to the wounds in my life...
and he touched my heart...
and my heart has forever remembered...
May the angels hurry him home now to the heart of God.
frTim Kummerer
I would very much like to attend John's funeral virtually...but our
parish staff has a planned day of retreat...I hope there is some link
where I can watch and pray at the end of the day...*

frTim Kummerer - January 25, 2021 at 09:45 PM

JG

*Dear Father Kummerer
The service will be videoed and posted on You Tube. Don't know how
that will work. Thank you for telling us about your wonderful experience
with our brother.
Sincerely,
Jeanne Graden*

Jeanne Graden - January 26, 2021 at 08:41 AM



“ *Beautiful Heart Bouquet was purchased for the
family of Father John L. Graden O.S.F.S..*



January 25, 2021 at 05:57 PM



“ I am greatly saddened by this news. Fr. John and I share a very special relationship. He sponsored my education (through CFCA) and I knew him for almost 20 years. He is such an amazing person and will miss him a lot. A true friend and a great companion.



Denis Francis - January 25, 2021 at 04:59 PM

JG

Thank you, Denis.
Love,
Jeanne

Jeanne Graden - January 26, 2021 at 08:43 AM

LV

My wife and I have know John for 37 years and we are deeply saddened that we will no longer see his smiling face. John had more compassion in his little finger than a multitude of people. We are forever touched by his heartwarming smile... great big hugs and easy going ways. Forever Grateful 🙏

Laurel Vitone - January 26, 2021 at 10:46 AM

FS

“ I had an awareness of John since his first mass at St Francis de Sales Parish, where I was a priest and Father John came to give Missions in various parishes where I was a pastor. I even remember one of his lines:
"It's all about me" while twirling around. I know John tried his best to make sure it was all about Jesus, not about himself.
Fr. Ed Schleter

Fr Ed Schleter - January 25, 2021 at 09:33 AM

JG

*Thank you, father.
Sincerely,
Jeanne (sister) and family*

Jeanne Graden - January 26, 2021 at 08:45 AM

MF

“ *We were very saddened to hear at Mass this morning about Father John. We knew him for many years originally meeting him at our parish Saint Thomas Aquinas in Toledo, OH. We so enjoyed his company and found him to be a wonderful human being. Our sympathy to his entire family! Denny and Mary Lou Fairchild*

Mary Lou Fairchild - January 24, 2021 at 06:29 PM

JG

*Thank you. I believe I remember John speaking of you. It was Covid. Please stay safe.
Jeanne Graden. sister to John*

Jeanne Graden - January 26, 2021 at 08:48 AM

PS

Our sincere condolences to the family of Fr. John. In my youth I did not personally know Fr. John when I also attended St. Francis Church and grade school. I also graduated from St. Francis de Sales HS, one year later. Marilyn and I became very good friends with Fr. John at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish and enjoyed his down to earth sermons. Fr. John also organized get-away weekends at Camp de Sales for STA parishioners for several years. Those occasions were very memorable and fun filled. With sincere sorrow, Paul and Marilyn Skotynsky

Paul Skotynsky - January 28, 2021 at 10:45 AM

MM

“ We were greatly saddened to hear of John's death. Although separated by years and miles, John will always have a close place in my heart. Although a St. John's Jesuit grad, I came to know and love John through Jim Cryan, and became an Oblate Associate, living with John, T.L., Roland, Bro. Al, and others for two years in Shugrue House on Superior St. While there, I met Connie who became my wife. John gave her first Communion, Confirmation, and concelebrated our marriage along with Jim Cryan and Bob Haas at St. Thomas Aquinas in Toledo. Fond memories include celebrating Mass at home where John was not only the celebrant but also played guitar and sang during Mass with some help from the family Schnauzer howling. The two of us also left our larger camping group in Colorado for an overnight hike up a mountain, celebrating Mass at the top in heavy winds, and getting caught in several inches of snow and much wind the next day, Aug. 14th, John's birthday! I have been an organist at our local parish for many years, but John (and other great Oblates) had a direct influence on my becoming a commissioned lay minister after two years of classes, and becoming sacristan once I retired a few years ago (our last pastor, Fr. Doug Lucia recently became bishop of Syracuse). We will continue to remember John's personal family and Oblate family in our prayers. Rest in peace and joy, good friend!
With much love,
Connie and Mark Miller

Mark Miller - January 24, 2021 at 05:02 PM

JG

Hi Mark...I remember most of your story about you and John. Schnauzer howling? Thank you for your post. It was Covid. Please be safe.
Jeanne Graden

Jeanne Graden - January 26, 2021 at 08:53 AM

CM

“ I remember when Fr. John was a deacon at our parish, St. Thomas Aquinas, and he gave such great sermons! He would join several of our parishioners every winter for a Get-Away Weekend in the Vineyard Lake area of Michigan. Good memories !!!

Carolyn and Marty Marsh - January 24, 2021 at 03:25 PM

WW

“ I met Fr. Graden as a young man who attended St. Francis de Sales High School. He was an excellent teacher and as my high school years unfolded a good friend. When I was an oblate associate during high school, Fr. Graden was a mentor of mine and despite me not following through on that avocation of becoming a priest, we maintained a friendship I treasure to this day. I picked Fr. Graden to me marry my 1st wife and me and I can tell you that he brought all of his humor, intellect and sensitivity to the event. In short, he is someone I will never forget for being such a good friend, and great teacher all those years ago and still a fond memory in my heart and mind to this day. God bless you my freind and thank you from the bottom of my heart. Bill Whitman OSFS class of 1981

William Whitman - January 24, 2021 at 02:18 PM

PF

“ All we can say after knowing John for so many years is good friend, loving brother, good son, and a GREAT PRIEST. There are no words to express how we feel. The world lost a very good man and heaven gained one. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jeanne and the family. GOD BLESS and Love Sue and Paul Finn

Paul Finn - January 24, 2021 at 08:43 AM

JG

Thank you both. Love you.
Jeanne

Jeanne Graden - January 26, 2021 at 08:55 AM

KA

“ To John’s Family,

I join you in mourning the loss of your brother. Of all the things he shared with me since I met him in the 1990s, two come back to me now. First, he said Francis de Sales was once asked how long each day a person should pray. “About thirty minutes, unless you’re really busy, in which case I’d say an hour.” Also, he said Francis’ moral code was easy to summarize in one sentence: “Do the next loving thing.” I will go forward a better man for having known John, intent on doing the next loving thing as he did so beautifully in his life.

With gratitude for a life well-lived,

Kevin Anderson

Kevin Anderson - January 24, 2021 at 06:18 AM

JG

Thank you. Kevin. He loved you and even gave me your book which I loved.

Jeanne. sister

Jeanne Graden - January 26, 2021 at 08:57 AM

MS

“ *Dear family of John, it is with great sadness I send you prayers and hugs for the loss a very special guy. My husband Joe grew up with John and believed him to be a very special human. We enjoyed taking him to the airport to go back to N.Y. We would laugh all the way. Praise God for John in all our lives. 🙌💜🥹*

Mrs. Joseph W. (Sue) Tuite, Sr - January 23, 2021 at 09:34 AM

JG

*Thank you. Sue.
Jeanne*

Jeanne Graden - January 26, 2021 at 08:58 AM

DW

“*John and I go back many years. In fact, we grew up together. John was the brother to me that I never had. And even though miles separated us through the years, that brotherly love always endured. Our friendship began in the first grade at St. Francis De Sales Grade School. It was in the Old North End. So, when trouble brewed John had my back and I had his! John's family became a second family to me. We shared so many good times together. I know this is a very difficult time for you and I just want to express my deepest sympathy. After grade school John continued his studies at St. Francis De Sales High School while I went on to Central Catholic High School. John was in the band at St. Francis and I was in the band at Central. A lot of friendly competition took place during those formative high school years. So many memories are coming back to me as I write this. So many... I will always cherish those memories. And I am forever grateful for having known John and sharing his life experiences. Peace be with you brother and dear friend!
Till we meet again!
Dan Welch*

Dan Welch - January 22, 2021 at 08:16 PM

JG

I share many of those memories of you, Danny.

Jeanne Graden - January 24, 2021 at 10:19 PM

RL

“ Thank you John for making the Word come alive through your many years of preaching for Isaiah Ministries. Your powerful words and beautiful singing touched many lives though your presentations. May our God who called you by name, called you precious, and now has called you home welcome and embrace you with His Love.

*Deacon Dick and Rose Marie Lombard
Isaiah Ministries*

Rose Marie Lombard - January 22, 2021 at 05:49 PM

BW

Condolences to the family. Your teachings, lectures, sermons & presence lguided us so well on our journey to eternal life

Barbara Van Wirmer - January 24, 2021 at 08:10 PM

RG

To Jeanne and family,

Please know that my wife and I will surely pray that John 's soul will be swiftly carried by legions of angels to to the Almighty.

We worked with John, on one of a number of boys TEC programs we did down in Carey about thirty years ago. A bit later, we asked him to be celebrant of of Mass for our 25th wedding renewal of vows. When he lived at St. Pius X, we would be with him at times, which we treasured. Just two years ago, John did a Parrish Retreat at Christ the King, and although my Pat had died, I felt her close to me as I listened to John's great insights into the Eternal and our relationship with God. I'm confident she is praying for him along with me.

Bob Goulding

Robert C. Goulding - January 28, 2021 at 12:22 PM