

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment;

When tragedy strikes persons involved sometimes have a difficult time to re-organize their thoughts. The mind is numbed by the experience and can only focus on the "here and now". The future is temporarily pushed to one side. I think that this happened to many people with the untimely death of Father Eric Freed. New Year's Day of Two Thousand Fourteen will remain in the memory of countless people for years to come. The day witnessed the loss of an outstanding human being who practiced what he preached. With that in mind, what can we do to honor the passing of such a man? From the outpouring of memories from Father Eric's congregation, his friends and students, I would say that the greatest honor that we can bestow on him would be to remember all the good things that he stood for and, as individuals, put them into practice and make them a part of our daily life. From my standpoint, as a member of St. Bernard's Parish, I had great respect for Father Eric. Not attending mass on a regular basis, I was not close to him. We have exchanged pleasantries after mass, when ~~entering~~ or leaving the church. When I did attend a mass where he was celebrant I always felt that I was in the presence of a special person. His bearing, his sense of humor and the manner in which he delivered his sermons were very comforting to me. I mentioned earlier that he "practiced what he preached", a phrase that has been around for years. Maybe I should have said that he "practiced what he believed" because he did not "preach". When it came time for the Homily (or sermon), Father would not walk to the pulpit to preach but would assume a position close to the congregation, only elevated enough for him to see his audience and not look down on them. From that point he spoke to the audience in more of a conversational tone. This type of approach not only put the congregation at ease, it also helped focus their attention on his words. It is common for parents to bring a child to church and sometime during the mass the child will start to cry or fuss loudly which can be embarrassing to the parents. I have heard Father Eric assure the parents that there would not be a mass without the children. He always seemed to know what to say at the appropriate time, no matter the situation. I think that a great many of us wish now that we had better known Father Eric Freed when he was among us. Remember, it is not too late to incorporate Father's teachings in our daily lives as a constant reminder of his exemplary life. I want to thank local law enforcement for the handling of this crime and the news media's coverage of the event.

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