

Half Staff – Deacon William Francis Xavier Kane Sr.

May 10, 2020



Rockport – William Francis Xavier Kane, of Rockport, died peacefully on May 10, 2020, after being diagnosed with Covid-19.

For nearly 30 years, Bill nurtured the spiritual lives of people on Cape Ann, as a cherished and respected deacon at Holy Family Parish. And he devoted himself to the spiritual needs of inmates, often traveling long distances to minister in some of the state’s most hardened prisons, as the director of prison ministry for the Archdiocese of Boston (1998-2009).

Guided by the acts of mercy, Bill focused his ministry on providing support and comfort to those most in need. After his youngest child died in a car accident in 1998, Bill channeled his grief into this work with a greater sense of empathy and humility. At age 54, he studied Spanish to better communicate with the many Spanish-speaking inmates he met in the network

of 27 jails and prisons in and around Boston through his prison ministry. When asked what drew him to this work, he would cite a line by the Irish poet and political prisoner Bobby Sands: “There is no place more lonely than the prison cell.”

In 2000, Bill went to the Dominican Republic to improve his Spanish, a visit that would soon develop into his life’s work. In 2001, he founded the Holy Family Parish Mission to provide medical care to the Dominican town of Cevicos. He believed that mission work can help us see poverty as something we all experience some form of, and that helping the economic poor can deepen our capacity for compassion and love for one another. Bill frequently drew on his prison ministry and mission work in his homilies, and in 2017 he published a book about his work in Cevicos called *I Am Who You Are*. Today the Mission is thriving. It has served hundreds in Cevicos through its medical mission, and provides support to the town’s small business owners and college tuition for young people. In recognition of Bill’s lifetime of service to others, in 2016 he received the John C. DeDeyn Jr. Achievement Award from Niagara University, his alma mater.

Bill was born in 1944 in New Hyde Park, NY. The first in his family of six children to attend college, he paid for it by negotiating a personal loan with a local bank at age 18. He received his B.A. in political science and government in 1966 from Niagara, where he had the good fortune to meet the love of his life, his future wife, Regina Stack. After graduating, Bill served in the Vietnam War as a U.S. Army Intelligence Officer, assigned to work in small communities with a South Vietnamese battalion. Critically injured in the war, he was hospitalized for a year afterwards in Japan and the U.S. He was awarded a Purple Heart and a Soldier’s Medal for Heroism. In 1968 he married Regina, and in 1970 he became a Special Agent for the FBI, a job that took him and his family to Maryland, Kentucky, and Michigan. During his 10 years at the FBI he continued his education, taking night classes at the University of Detroit to earn a Master’s degree in Administration and Organizational Psychology. In 1990,

he completed four years of seminary studies at St. John's Seminary in Brighton, MA and that year was ordained a Permanent Deacon for the Archdiocese of Boston.

Bill was predeceased by his son, Matthew Kane. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Regina Stack Kane and their three children: William F.X. Kane Jr. and his wife Marianne Kane of Marblehead, MA; Eileen Kane and her husband Alex Barnett of Waterford, Conn.; and Margaret Kane and her former husband Marc Sears of Essex; and nine grandchildren: Owen, Natalie, Peter, Marc, David, Beatrice, Willa, Tessa, and Mary. His family loved him very much and will miss him forever: for his charisma, wit, compassion, and great ability to love.

Covid-related restrictions mean that no traditional funeral Mass can be held. The family will have a private burial, and host a ceremony to celebrate Bill Kane's life at a later date. Instead of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in his name to the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Holy Family Parish, 74 Pleasant Street, Gloucester, MA 01930; and the Cevicos Mission at Holy Family Parish <https://www.holyfamilycevicos.com/donate>. Arrangements by Greely Funeral Home, 212 Washington Street, Gloucester. For online guestbook please visit www.greelyfuneralhome.com.