



## Father Lawrence G. Wrenn

June 26, 1928 - December 14, 2024

Fr. Lawrence G. Wrenn of Sarasota, Florida, a devoted Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Hartford, passed away on December 14, 2024, in Sarasota after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. He was born on June 26, 1928, in New Haven, Connecticut, to Mariea Enright and James J. Wrenn, Jr.

Fr. Wrenn's journey to the priesthood began at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, Connecticut (1945-1947), and continued at St. Bernard Seminary in Rochester, New York (1947-1953). He was ordained on May 14, 1953, by the Most Rev. Henry O'Brien, Bishop of Hartford. His deep intellectual curiosity and commitment to his vocation led him to pursue advanced studies in canon law at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, where he earned a Licentiate in 1960 and a Doctorate in 1976.

Although he assisted in several parishes throughout his ministry, Fr. Wrenn dedicated himself to the service of the Church through his work in canon law and tribunal ministry. He served the Archdiocese of Hartford as Judicial Vicar of the Metropolitan Tribunal (1965-1983), Judicial Vicar for the Provincial Court of Appeals (1983-1995), and as a Judge until his retirement in 2003. Beyond his diocesan duties, he contributed significantly to the broader Church as a Lecturer for the Tribunal Institute of Catholic University of America (1968-1972), a consultant for the United States Committee on Canonical Affairs (1978-1981), and a consultor for the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic

Interpretation of Legislative Texts (1984-2011).

Fr. Wrenn's contributions to canon law were widely recognized and celebrated. The Canon Law Society of America honored him with numerous accolades, including the prestigious "Role of Law Award" in 1976 and Honorary Membership in 1994. In 1999, a Festschrift was commissioned in his honor and published in 2002 as *The Art of the Good and Equitable*. Additionally, he received the Johannes Quasten Medal from the School of Religious Studies at Catholic University of America in 2000 and was named the James H. Provost Lecturer for the School of Canon Law in 2007.

A prolific writer, Fr. Wrenn authored numerous texts on procedural and marriage law as well as practical reference guides for those working on tribunal cases or studying canon law. His contributions included articles for various publications and several sections in *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary* (1985) and *The New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law* (2000). In retirement, he continued to share his knowledge by publishing Kindle books—two collections of homilies and three compilations of technical papers designed to assist students and practitioners alike. Known for his clear and concise writing style, Fr. Wrenn had a unique ability to make complex legal concepts accessible while maintaining a pastoral approach that emphasized compassion over penalization.

Even in retirement, Fr. Wrenn remained active in ministry and scholarship. He served as a Judge for the Diocese of Venice from 2004 to 2007 and especially enjoyed sharing his love of scripture through occasional homilies at St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Sarasota from 2004 to 2013. Outside of his ecclesiastical pursuits, he enjoyed golfing with friends at Stoneybrook Golf & Country Club.

Fr. Wrenn will be remembered by those who knew him for his playful humor,

gentle demeanor, unwavering positivity, and profound humility—a true paradigm of joy and grace. He is survived by his brother, Prof. James J. Wrenn III of Providence, Rhode Island; his niece Annemarie Bessmer of Providence; and three nephews: James J. Wrenn IV (Minako) of Okinawa, Japan, and Shaker Heights, Ohio; Michael Wrenn (Kathleen O'Regan) of New York City; and Christopher Wrenn of Watertown, Massachusetts.

A funeral Mass will be held at St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Sarasota on Saturday, January 11, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., followed by burial. Streaming will be available on the parish website.

A Memorial Mass will be celebrated on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, by the Most Rev. Christopher J. Coyne, Archbishop of Hartford at 11:00 am at St. Thomas Chapel, The Pastoral Center, 467 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT 06002

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Archdiocese of Hartford, St. Thomas More Church, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), or a charity of your choice.

May Fr. Lawrence G. Wrenn's legacy continue to inspire compassion and faith within all who were touched by his life and work.

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

JAN 11. 9:30 AM (ET)

St. Thomas More Catholic Church  
2506 Gulf Gate Dr  
Sarasota, FL 34231-5731  
(941) 923-1691

## Memorial Mass

JAN 21. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Thomas Chapel, The Pastoral Center  
467 Bloomfield Avenue  
Bloomfield, CT 06002

# Tribute Wall



“ A 'classy,' humble, jovial priest of God, whose intelligence and knowledge of Canon Law, inspired and facilitated the lives of so many other canonists. His service to Christ and His Church was exemplary. May God reward this loyal servant.

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**Msgr. Otto L. García, Brooklyn, N.Y.** - January 11, 2025 at 02:17 PM



*Msgr García, could you contact me at your earliest convenience? I'm a journalist who would like to speak with you.*

*nate@blackcatholicmessenger.org  
(202) 642-6782*

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February 08, 2025 at 07:18 PM



“ He was a referral for all Canonists, all over the world. May he rest in peace

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**Mauro Visigalli** - January 06, 2025 at 06:47 AM