

## Obituary for Fr. James R. Blaney, OMI

Fr. James R. Blaney, OMI, died on December 4, 2013 in Sitka, Alaska after a brief illness. He was 76 years old and at the time of his death was serving as the pastor of St. Gregory Nazianzen Catholic Church in Sitka.

Fr. Blaney, a member of the missionary religious order of priests, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, was born on July 30, 1937 in South Boston, Massachusetts. The son of John Blaney and Anna O'Sullivan Blaney, he grew up on the grounds of the maximum security state prison in Charlestown, MA where his father was the Deputy Warden.

On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1965, he and his twin brother, Joe, were ordained together as priests at St. Bridget's Church in South Boston by then Cardinal Cushing of Boston. He celebrated his first Mass on May 23, 1965. He then was assigned by the Oblates to work in parishes and hospital and prison ministry in the Midwest and in the South.



Fr. James R. Blaney, OMI

In 1988, Fr. Blaney was assigned to the Diocese of Juneau where he first served as the pastor of St. John's-by-the-Sea parish in Klawock on Prince of Wales Island. During his tenure in Klawock, Fr. Blaney worked closely with Sr. Laetitia Lariviere, IHM. While serving there he oversaw the construction of a new parish church which incorporated into its designs elements of Alaska Native art and spirituality. While pastor in Klawock he was adopted into L'eeneidí, the Raven/Dog Salmon house of his adoptive mother, the late Clara Peratrovich. She gave him two Tlingit names, which translate as "Eagle at Dawn" and "White Top." He is survived by his adoptive father, Alva Peratrovich, and adoptive sister, Chickie James and adoptive brother Marvin George, of Klawock and Roberta George of Ketchikan.

After 12 years serving in Prince of Wales, his next assignment in 2000 was to serve as pastor of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Haines and St. Therese Catholic Church in Skagway. In 2004 his assignment changed again and he became the resident pastor of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Hoonah and served as the priest for the parish of Yakutat and the missions of Gustavus, Pelican, Kake, Tenakee, Elfin Cove and Excursion Inlet working closely with Sr. Judy Gomila and Sr. Zita Simon OP.

In 2006 he was assigned as pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church in Petersburg and St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Wrangell. When Fr. Pat Casey--fellow priest in the Oblates of Mary Immaculate--came to serve in the diocese as pastor of St. Catherine's, Petersburg in 2007, Fr. Blaney continued to serve as pastor of the parish in Wrangell. He returned to Haines to pastor Sacred Heart Parish again and it was from Haines that he was transferred in 2011 for his final assignment as a pastor in Sitka.

He is survived by his sisters Mary Johnson (Gary, Port Orchard, WA), Margaret Quirk (Joseph, Brockton, MA); his brothers Paul Blaney (Karen, Pembroke, MA) and John F. Blaney (Jane, Bayside, NY), as well as loving nieces and nephews from coast to coast. Fr. Jim was preceded in death by his father John A. Blaney, mother Anna Blaney, his twin brother, Fr. Joseph E. Blaney, OMI, and his sister Claire A. Blaney.

The Most Reverend Edward Burns, Bishop of Juneau, will preside in Sitka at the Funeral Mass at 12:00 Noon at Centennial Hall, Sitka on Tuesday, December 10 and at the Vigil proceeding it the evening before at 6:00pm, December 9<sup>th</sup> at St. Gregory's Catholic Church.

Following the Mass of Christian Burial in Tewkesbury, Massachusetts, Fr. Blaney will be buried next to his twin brother, Fr. Joe.

In lieu of flowers, the Blaney family requests that contributions be made to St. Gregory's Catholic Parish in Sitka.