



## Fr. John Phillips

November 25, 1955 - October 20, 2019

Father John Phillips, pastor of Holy Faith Parish in Gainesville, and a diocesan leader, died suddenly Sunday morning, Oct. 20. He was 63. The Holy Faith community is mourning his death. He was not only a good shepherd, but he was a great brother, priest, and friend. Father John has blessed those he served with generosity, unfailing loyalty, and a keen sense of humor.

The death of Fr. John Phillips has left us with a terrible loss that will be impossible to fill. His life, however, has left our hearts imprinted with an unforgettable example of the love of Jesus. He was not only a good shepherd; he was a great Father, brother, priest, and friend.

Born in Birmingham, Ala. on Nov. 25, 1955 and was a devoted son to Patricia "Patti" McGill Phillips and John Morrison Phillips, who both preceded him in death. He is survived by (brother) Brian Phillips, (sister in law) Suzan Phillips and children, (sister) Sheri Britton, and (brother in law) James Britton and children.

Many of his closest friends have known him since he was a student at the University of Florida, graduating in 1978 with a bachelor's of science degree.

To the staff members who had the honor to work for him, he was the best employer you could find. He was a Pastor first, always putting Christ at the center of every decision. He was the perfect depiction of the servant leader. To his fellow priests he was a cherished brother who could always be counted on for support.

Father John Phillips blessed his parishioners in countless ways. He devotedly took care of the facilities, the resources, and the people who served with him. Under his ministry, the campus grew in beauty, and his successful building of the Parish Life Center has become a great source of pride and joy for the community.

Father John's ministry was reminiscent of the Parish Patron, Saint Francis. Beauty, nature, animals, music, art, books and, most of all, the poor were his treasure. He was steadfast in protecting victims of abuse and always kept his heart open for those who were most marginalized. He led the parish to commit financial support to our Sister Parish in Guatemala as well as the Comboni Sisters. Father John took the Holy Scriptures call to serve the poor seriously and challenged all of us to do the same.

When he prayerfully searched for a mission statement for Holy Faith, he decided that

because the parish was in the center of Gainesville, it should function as the cities heart. He thus named Holy Faith, the Parish of Compassion.

A funeral Mass will be held Saturday, October 26, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. at Holy Faith Catholic Church, 747 NW 43rd Street, Gainesville. Bishop Estévez will concelebrate the Mass, and Father John Gillespie will give the homily. The family will receive friends Friday, October 25, 2019 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a Vigil Service beginning at 7:00 p.m. with Bishop Felipe Estévez presiding. The rite of committal will be held Saturday afternoon at 3:30, at San Lorenzo Catholic Cemetery in St. Augustine. Father John Gillespie is the celebrant. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made in Fr. John's memory to Holy Faith Catholic Church, 747 NW 43rd Street, Gainesville, FL 32607.

# Cemetery

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## San Lorenzo Cemetery

1635 US 1 South  
St. Augustine, FL,

# Events

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**OCT** **Visitation** 06:00PM - 08:00PM

**25**

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Holy Faith Catholic Church  
747 NW 43 Street, Gainesville, FL, US

**OCT** **Vigil** 07:00PM

**25**

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Holy Faith Catholic Church  
747 NW 43 Street, Gainesville, FL, US

**OCT** **Mass of Christian Burial** 11:00AM

**26**

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Holy Faith Catholic Church  
747 NW 43 Street, Gainesville, FL, US

# Comments

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“ Father John will never be forgotten by those who knew him, his preaching always lifted up the Lord Jesus Christ, and he now is in that Holy Presence.  
Ernest and Cynthia Seddon.

**cynthia seddon** - November 10, 2019 at 01:20 PM

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“ I am so sorry to hear this, Fr. John was a kind, gentle, soul unless he was defending the faith and then he became a lion of God. Fr. John, alone at the time, also stood up for Fr. Gillespie of St. Augustine's and I'll always love Fr. John for his courage in doing that.

You will be sadly missed but what a wonderful way to go home, working on his homily then gone to God. See ya bye and bye Fr. John.

**Vicki Mason** - November 04, 2019 at 04:22 PM

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“ Susan Acosta lit a candle in memory of Fr. John Phillips



**Susan Acosta** - October 25, 2019 at 06:24 PM

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“ I will always remember Father John as a pious, wise priest with whom my parents had an enduring friendship over several decades. He came to the hospital almost every day when my dad was ill, and he celebrated the funeral masses for both my parents after they died--my mom recently passed away last May and Father John was wonderful during that time. What a blessing he was to so many people and he was steady, never wavering in his understanding of faith and his willingness to see God's hand in everything. He was always attached to the Vine. Farewell Father John! Enjoy the blessings of heaven forever.  
Theresa Hebel Greaves

**Theresa Greaves** - October 25, 2019 at 01:47 PM



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“ Sue And John Pesto sent a virtual gift in memory of Fr. John Phillips



Sue and John Pesto - October 24, 2019 at 01:37 AM

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“ Sue And John Pesto lit a candle in memory of Fr. John Phillips



Sue and John Pesto - October 24, 2019 at 01:36 AM

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“ Mary Pesto lit a candle in memory of Fr. John Phillips



Mary Pesto - October 24, 2019 at 01:35 AM

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“ Mary Pesto sent a virtual gift in memory of Fr. John Phillips



Mary Pesto - October 24, 2019 at 12:22 AM



“ Mary Pesto lit a candle in memory of Fr. John Phillips



**Mary Pesto** - October 24, 2019 at 12:18 AM

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“ I have know John only since 2001 when I came to the diocese from the Franciscan Order. I was supposed to be assigned to Saint Augustine Parish where John was then assigned. He asked not to be transferred at that time, and so my assignment was delayed until Bishop John Snyder, himself recently deceased in October of this year, transferred John the following year as Pastor to Holy Faith. So, one could say that 'I took his place'. Perhaps true, but I did not fill his shoes. He turned out to become an excellent Pastor, Dean of the local Gainesville corner of the Diocese, and an excellent Chair of the Diocesan Liturgy Committee. I always found him an excellent resource, devoid of ideology and always willing to be of help. He was reflective, not reactive, and it may likely be difficult to fill that particular pair of shoes.

Last but not least, I found John willing to discuss non-defensively discuss most any topic, a rare enough trait in a tribal world.

Let us prayerfully pray John into the arms of the Master Teacher, the Lord, who invites all into his Father's Kingdom.

Fr. Guy F. Noonan,  
Priest of the Diocesan Church of Saint Augustine

**Rev. Guy Noonan** - October 24, 2019 at 12:03 AM

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“ We are out of town but are deeply saddened by the sudden, unexpected passing of our beloved Pastor, Fr. John. We are also sorry we will not be able to attend his funeral. Fr. John was a true blessing to our parish and he will be deeply missed. To his family, our condolences on your loss. It is a huge loss for you, our parish and the community. God rest his soul.  
Ulrich and Kristin Foerster

**Kristin Foerster** - October 23, 2019 at 05:55 PM

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“ Fr. John,

Thank you for sharing your beautiful soul in all the compassion you so kindly Shared.

We folks in the handicapped section, want to send you our love and blessings for continued growth as you embrace Jesus and all those in his loving care. Your last bulletin message, was to Pray! Thankfully we send prayers of gratitude for you.

Mary Lavan - October 23, 2019 at 01:37 PM

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“ I met John Phillips in 1981 when he was washing glassware in the Vegetable Crops Dept in Fiefield Hall at UF. He was working on his undergrad degree, had not yet converted, I think, and was a most friendly but quiet young fellow. Sal Lacasio and Kurt Hanna worked in the Dept. with us. It was so heartening to see him mature as a priest at St. A's. His homilies became better each month and of course he had J.D.G. to model outstanding homilies. He was my face-to-face confessor and that's rare for me. The heart of the our pastor no longer beats on earth but he's shopping with St. Theresa, having ice cream in heaven and smiling that great smile I'll always cherish. T. Cunilio Choir Member at Holy Faith.

Tom Cunilio - October 23, 2019 at 11:13 AM