



Charles "Chuck" Joseph Pilon

June 19, 1935 - October 16, 2019

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Age 84 of Roseville, MN

Charles J. Pilon passed away peacefully on Oct. 16, 2019 after a courageous battle with Dementia and subsequently, Alzheimer's. He was surrounded by his beloved family in his final days, including his bride of 48 years, Ana Pilon (Velázquez); his daughter Mariaelena Welch (Stewart); and his twins, Chris Pilon (Erica), and Cathy Cruz-Muñeton (Julio).

Charles, or Chuck as he was known, was born in 1935 in North Minneapolis. He was a "Johnnie" three times over, attending St. John's Prep school in Collegeville where he was the captain of the baseball team before enrolling at St. John's University and then St. John's Seminary. Chuck was ordained a Catholic priest in 1962, taking the name Leon. He returned to St. John's Prep as a teacher and eventually assigned to an inner city Catholic parish named St. Anselm's in the South Bronx of New York.

It was in this work at St. Anselm's and in serving families that "Father Leon" realized that fathers and husbands were as holy as those who took religious vows. This awakening revitalized his dream of being a devoted husband and father, just like his own dad. In 1970, when it became clear the monumental changes of Vatican II would not allow priests to marry and have families, he sought and was granted from Rome, a special dispensation from his vows so he could leave the priesthood.

During this time he also met and fell in love with Ana, a native New Yorker and Puerto Rican volunteer in the Sunday School. She admired Chuck as a wonderfully gifted priest, but was oblivious to his affections. When Chuck shared with Ana that he was leaving the priesthood and was interested in a life with her, she was astonished. But in time, this Señorita grew to love him. They were married in 1971 and welcomed three children quickly thereafter. Chuck continued serving his faith after leaving the priesthood. First, as the Executive Director for the YMCA in Brooklyn, NY. Eventually, Chuck longed for home and begged Ana to return to his native Minnesota in 1980 to raise their family in Roseville, despite the freezing winters that she never really adapted to and still curses to this day. There he became the Executive Director for the Midway YMCA in St. Paul, MN. After the YMCA, Chuck became a realtor and mortgage broker before returning to the Catholic Church to work on the staff at St. Bernard in St. Paul and St. Joseph in New Hope. Chuck retired in 2000 to live out his days with Ana. He enjoyed his time with her on their varied travels, typically wearing one of his hats, Blueblocker sunglasses, and a fanny pack. He was often found outside putzing around the yard, perpetually transplanting perennials, reading about the Civil War or some other obsession, feverently accomplishing his many tasks captured on Post-it note lists, taking trips to and from Hardware Hank multiple times a day, or on solitary walks in nature with trees to which he had given names, and was sometimes known to hug.

He was a talented writer and author of a novel, *Waiting for Mozart*, appropriately about a Catholic priest and Church, and of other scholarly papers on Scripture and Nature, always with a plethora of expertly used commas and semicolons. He could also be found at the movies with Ana nearly every Saturday afternoon, with the world's best homemade popcorn that he smuggled into the theater before sleeping through most of the picture. Finally, Chuck was an active member and volunteer at St. Odilia's Parish in Shoreview where he passionately worked to raise funds for the Endowment Committee.

While dementia robbed his best self from us during his final years, Chuck will always be remembered as a man of his faith; and as a loving, and devoted husband and father. He cherished Ana, his children, and his grandchildren. He loved summertime camping with the family when the children were young and immensely enjoyed their school activities, varsity sports, or impromptu playground games. Amazed by the birth of all seven grandchildren, he found in each a unique package of spirit and life. He was an eternally positive and happy person who had an uncanny and corny ability to make people laugh, eagerly pursuing anyone that would stop to talk to him, including complete strangers. He especially loved to pontificate about the mysteries and grandiosity of The Universe, the liturgy of the Catholic Church, and the significance of Vatican II (to the few that would listen).

Besides Ana and their children, Chuck is survived by his younger sister, Sue Damyanovich (Gary); sister-in-law Lynn Pilon; seven grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews who love and cherish him. Preceded in death by his parents, Gene and Margaret Pilon (Juettner); his younger sister, Mary Dillum (Ted); and younger brother, Joe Pilon.

Chuck will be missed dearly by all those that loved him. We take solace in knowing that he is smiling in the heavens and amongst the interstellar dust he loved to talk about, looking for another way to share a laugh, or play a game of cribbage, and wait for Ana and the first of many Vikings Super Bowls.

Special thanks and much love to the dedicated staff at Cherrywood Pointe Memory Care in Roseville and to Fairview Hospice, both for helping Ana take meticulous care of Chuck at the end of his life. We are extremely grateful.

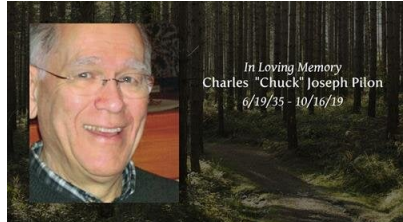
Visitation Monday Nov 4th from 4-8 PM at Holcomb-Henry-Boom-Purcell Funeral Home 515 Hwy 96 W at Mackubin, Shoreview. Mass of Christian Burial 11 AM Tuesday, Nov. 5th (visitation 10-11 AM) at St. Odilia Catholic Church 3495 N. Victoria, Shoreview.

Memorials preferred to St. Odilia Church Endowment Fund or Alzheimer's Association.

Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Tribute Video in memory of Charles "Chuck" Joseph Pilon



Washburn-McReavy - December 14, 2023 at 01:31 PM



“ Great teacher. Great Athlete. Good Friend. Treated me with respect and encouraged me when few others did. I only recently learned of his passing, which is the reason it took so long to respond. To his family, I can only say that your husband and Dad was one of the most decent souls I ever knew. You were fortunate to have him.

Greg Oxley - June 09, 2022 at 12:00 AM



“ Brother Prep, restored now to the fullness of life may you rest in arms of our loving God.

Frank Bauer - August 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ To the Pilon Family...

I knew Chuck well as a Prep School member, SJU, and a member of St. John's Abbey. I was ordained as a Benedictine and sent to St. Benedict's Parish NYC. I also married (in 1974) and still live in the house we bought over 45 years ago in the Bronx. (I will be 80 next April, 2021) and now live with my (Madeline's) children. I am at 1712 Yates Avenue, Bronx, NY, 10461. I will pray for you daily. Sincerely, Daniel Simmons (aka Nathan).

Daniel J. Simmons - August 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM

PR

“ Ana and family, I just saw this and am remembering what a great man Chuck was. I was among the people he talked with about Catholicism and Vatican II and he was an endless inspiration for seeing God in the world. Thank you for being the center of his world.

Paula Ruddy - November 10, 2019 at 12:00 AM

MA

“ Myself Angela and family are sorry for your loss, bmy prayers are for all your family and Chuck as we well as we ,remember him as very much loved member of our family.

Mr.&Mrs.Gilbert Amengual - November 09, 2019 at 12:00 AM

BR

“ How I remember the Pilon family!! We Hofmann family played and prayed together with them. Sue (little sister!!) and I were class mates at St. Joe's in North Mpls. I remember attending Chucks first Mass as a priest. And then in 1969/70, I was a buyer for a dept. store in Billings MT and going to NY on a buying trip. I called Fr. Leon's parish so as to set up a time we could get together. It was then I found he was no longer a priest. His life had taken a turn, still under the guidance of our Lord. He is now at peace. You will be missed. Prayers to the family.

Bob & Sherry (Hofmann) Rusunen - November 03, 2019 at 12:00 AM

BH

“ rest in peace

Brent Hofmann - November 03, 2019 at 12:00 AM

WA

“ Anna. Sorry to hear of Chuck's passing. Prayers to you for peace and strength.

Winnie anderson - November 01, 2019 at 12:00 AM

P(

“ Dear Ana, Please accept my thoughts, sympathy and prayers and share with the family.

sincerely, Paul (Perp)

Paul A. Pearson (Perp)) - October 22, 2019 at 12:00 AM

TH

“ *What a beautiful story describing a wonderful marvelous journey this man's life led him.*

Thank you for sharing. Although, I didn't know Chuck as some of the other care staff at Cherrywood Roseville location did. I was witness to seeing the dedication a spouse, very caring wife Ana showed to her husband. Kindness is contagious ! Peace to you and your family.

Theresa H

Theresa Hoernemann - October 22, 2019 at 12:00 AM

JW

“ *We are both very sorry to learn of Chuck's demise. Please accept our condolences*



JOE AND BARBARA WELCH - October 20, 2019 at 12:00 AM

VB

“ *Chuck...now you are one with the trees you loved. Every leaf shall be' your legacy. Ciao*

Veda Bagley - October 18, 2019 at 12:00 AM