



Knights of Columbus
Bishop Francis J. Green
Council # 11855



In Memory of our Beloved Brother

Father Donald J. Fiedler

Born - 01 Jul 1932 Called Home - 18 Dec 2019

Father Fiedler became a Knight of Columbus on 01 Aug 1959. He was a member of our council and a parochial vicar at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church from 1988 to the mid 90s. He retired here in Tucson and our council helped him move in August 2019 from his apartment to a nursing home due to failing health.

Notes on the Life of Father Donald Joseph Fiedler by SSPP parishioner Marilyn Martin

Father Donald Fiedler was born on a farm near the tiny town of Chase, Kansas, to parents who were tenant farmers. His parents were faithful Catholics and did a lot to serve the local church. His mother kept the altar decorated with flowers from her garden and serving the priest dinner on many occasions. His father served as the school's janitor, with young Donald helping him in the summers. Father had five siblings, four boys and a girl. The girl became a teaching nun, a brother joined the Army and was killed in World War II, and Father Don became a priest.

When Father Don was a boy, the family moved into town, to a one-room house. The chicken coop from the farm was moved to town and added to the back of the house, where it became the bedroom for the boys. Later, when Father Don was in seminary, his bishop came to visit. Father Don loved to tell the tale of the bishop's arrival. He came up to the house in a large shiny black car with a driver. When he first emerged

from the car, he said, “My, what a humble dwelling!”

Father attended Mundelein Seminary. Once he finished, he did a lot of traveling in Europe by Eurorail. He said he’d been in every country in Europe but one (which he couldn’t remember), and after growing up in such a small town, he learned a lot about the greater world. Always friendly, he engaged people in conversation wherever he went. Wanting them not to be intimidated by his being a priest, he usually didn’t wear his collar anywhere but at church and was able to see what people were really like.

In 1969–70, the bishop of his home diocese, the Diocese of Dodge City, sent Father to the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., to study liturgy. His fellow priests (out of jealousy, Father thought), didn’t think the bishop should have done that. Catholic University was considered rather radical, and they thought that when Father finished his studies he’d either drop out of the priesthood or become a radical. He had hoped that when he went back to Kansas he could set up a series of workshops on liturgy, but the bishop rejected that idea. Instead he sent Father to the small town of Ulysses (in Grant County), in the southwest corner of the diocese and the state, where he didn’t have much to do. But many Hispanics were moving to the area, and they would come to his church seeking help in becoming documented. So Father Don set up an immigration office attached to his parish and gave the undocumented help with becoming legal and other types of help as well. This eventually became a statewide office. Many of the locals were upset with Father for helping these people; they wanted them to go back home where they’d come from. So in starting this ministry Father confirmed the fears of his fellow priests that after being at Catholic University he’d become a radical. Or, as some would say, a more devout Catholic.

Father came to Tucson in December of 1988. He was assigned to SS. Peter and Paul Parish, and there, in addition to his duties as a parish vicar, he continued to serve people who were sometimes looked down on. One of his ministries was starting a group for people who were divorced or separated.

The knights thank Marilyn Martin for providing the above information about Father Fiedler.

While we are saddened by our loss, we take solace in the knowledge that Father Fiedler is now with our Lord.

May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the Mercy of God, rest in peace.