



Rev. Ignatius E. Smith, OFM

November 8, 1930 - August 14, 2025

Loudonville, NY-Fr. Ignatius Smith, OFM, 94, passed away on Aug. 14, 2025, at Teresian House in Albany, NY. During his 74 years as a friar, Fr. Ignatius was an avid gardener, an international missionary for 10 years and served in the U.S. Navy chaplain corps for 23 years.

There will be a Viewing and Prayer Service at the Friary Chapel at Siena University in Loudonville, NY on Monday, August 18 from 2:00 – 4:00 pm. Fr. Ignatius' Body will be transferred to Butler, NJ to St. Anthony of Padua Church, 63 Bartholdi Avenue, Butler, NJ where on Tuesday, August 19, 2025 there will be a Viewing at 11:00 am followed by the Mass of the Resurrection at 12:00 noon. Burial will be at Mount Calvary Cemetery, Butler, NJ.

Fr. Ignatius was born on Nov. 8, 1930, and grew up near the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in northeast Washington, D.C. He was one of three children of Francis, a lawyer, and Mary L. Smith (née Russell), who became a homemaker after growing up on a farm. Ignatius attended St. Cecilia Grammar School and St. John's High School, both located in Washington. During his senior year of high school, two college students who were friars encouraged him to pursue becoming a Franciscan, and he subsequently enrolled at St. Joseph's Seraphic Seminary in Callicoon, New York, that September. According to a 2013 article in the Anderson (S.C.) Independent, he credited these friars with influencing his decision to become

a Franciscan priest.

He was received into the Order of Friars Minor on Aug. 12, 1950, in Paterson, New Jersey, and professed first vows there one year later. He made his solemn profession at Christ the King Seminary in Allegany, New York, on Aug. 13, 1954, and was ordained on Sept. 8, 1956, in Washington, D.C.

After a year of pastoral ministry at St. Anthony Shrine in Boston, he embarked on a decade-long mission to Goiás, Brazil. In a parish that spanned more than 1,000 miles, Fr. Ignatius traveled by mule during the six-month dry season to minister in a land with no electricity. While there, he became fluent in Portuguese.

After returning to the United States in 1968, he spent one year updating his theological education following the Second Vatican Council before serving for 23 years as a Navy Chaplain Corps captain, offering the sacraments and providing counseling on bases and ships.

He was assigned to the U.S.S. Sanctuary, a hospital vessel and the first ship to carry female sailors, and U.S.S. Nimitz, on which he met President Gerald Ford. He served in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and the Naval Medical Center in Portsmouth, Virginia. He also served at Virginia's Naval Amphibious Base and was Senior Chaplain at Naval Station Norfolk, the world's biggest naval base. He also served at Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia, Twentynine Palms in California's Mojave Desert, and as harbor captain at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. His final assignment was in Okinawa, Japan, with the Marine Corps.

After he retired from the military in 1992, Fr. Ignatius wrote in an online essay published by the Franciscan Friars of Holy Name Province that he embraced the challenge of Navy life and chaplaincy. "I was there, in this very secular environment, to help put God in his rightful place in their young lives. The Franciscan habit, when worn, was greatly respected and helped the formation

of these young sailors and marines.”

From 1992 to 1993, Fr. Ignatius was parochial vicar at St. Anne Parish in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, then served in the same role at St. Camillus Parish in Silver Spring, Maryland, for three years. Between 1995 and 2012, he served as pastor of Holy Cross Parish in Callicoon, New York, where he revived the Catholic Youth Organization, hosted community events and engaged his congregation with memorable, story-focused sermons.

He briefly retired for three months before requesting a new assignment, relocating to Anderson, South Carolina, where he was pastor and interim administrator of St. Joseph Catholic Church. At age 82, he led a parish of 650 families and served as a pastoral counselor.

“Every place I’ve gone, the people have been great,” Fr. Ignatius told the Independent in 2013. “I try to bring people closer to God, to help them realize their spiritual potential.”

He ministered at St. Francis Chapel in Albany, New York, from 2015 to 2019 and lived at St. Bernadine of Siena Friary in Loudonville, New York, until 2022, when he moved to the Teresian House in Albany.

Fr. Ignatius was determined to serve for as long as he could, saying “I’d rather wear out than rust away.” He was treasured for his self-deprecating humor, which often emerged in his homilies.

Fr. Ignatius is survived by his friar brothers of the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe, nephews and nieces: Colonel Christopher G. Wright, USMCR Retired; Michael A. Smith; Dr. Mary E. Wright; Kathleen S. Smith and Todd E. Smith and many grandnephews and grandnieces.

Mass of Christian Burial for Fr. Ignatius Smith, OFM, Tuesday, August 19 at
12:00 Noon St. Anthony's Church, Butler, NJ.

Live Streamed by Morrison Funeral Home, Butler, NJ
www.themorrisonfuneralhome.com

The Link for the Mass will be available 1 hour before the Mass begins.

Cemetery Details

Mt. Calvary Cemetery

106 Bartholdi Ave.
Butler, NY 07405

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 18. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Siena University St. Bernadine of Siena Friary
515 Loudon Road
Loudonville, NY 12211
(518) 416-5868

Visitation

AUG 19. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Anthony of Padua Church
65 Bartholdi Ave
Butler, NJ 07405

Funeral Mass

AUG **19**. 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Anthony of Padua Church
65 Bartholdi Ave
Butler, NJ 07405

Live Streamed by Morrison Funeral Home, Butler, NJ www.themorrisonfuneralhome.com The Link for the Mass will be available 1 hour before the Mass begins.

Tribute Wall

CS

“*“Father Smith” was a truly special human being. When my father was stationed at the naval base in Virginia, my mother, Barbara Demkowicz was very sick and he made sure that we were always loved and cared for. It had been almost 25 years since we had seen each other, and by God's grace my wife found him in February of 2001, and we were able to see each other once again. As time went by, we eventually lost touch again. I'm saddened to hear of his passing, but know that we will see each other again in God's kingdom. R.I.P.*”

Chad Swenson - April 28 at 01:42 PM

JO

“*Joseph lit a candle in memory of Rev. Ignatius E. Smith, OFM*”



Joseph - September 10, 2025 at 02:50 AM

MF

“*Fr. Iggy was a great friend & pastor to my parents - they lived their last 25 years together most happily in Callicoon & were very active at Holy Cross - Fr. Iggy looked out for them & was a great help to Mom the last 4 months of Dad's life - my family & I will always be grateful to this great priest - He never spared himself - Rest in Peace Father.*”

Mary Flaherty - August 18, 2025 at 05:03 PM

FA

“ I’m a Catholic priest in Anchorage Alaska. While visiting the Sisters of the preservation in Waterviel, NY I would visit with Father Ignatius for a friendly visit and/or go to confession. I always was lifted up spiritually after our visits. I will offer Mass for father here in Anchorage Alaska.
May he rest in God’s Peace,
Father Dan Hebert
Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau

Father Dan Hebert, Anchorage-Juneau, AK - August 16, 2025 at 02:41 PM

LM

*I so enjoyed his masses at St.Francis chapel
Such a kind man*

Lirrairie muth - August 17, 2025 at 10:13 AM