

## DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG

Office of the Chancellor

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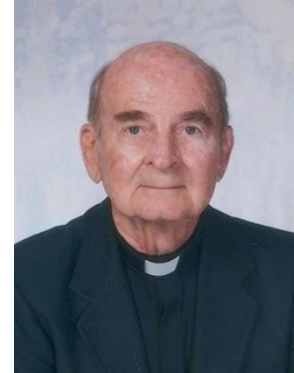
### MEMORANDUM

TO: Pastors and Parish Staff Members  
in the Diocese of St. Petersburg

FROM: Deacon Rick Wells, J.C.L., Chancellor *RW*

RE: Monsignor George William Cummings  
June 21, 1918 – August 8, 2020

DATE: August 10, 2020



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The Chancellor's Office has been informed of the death of **Monsignor George W. Cummings, 102**, a retired priest of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, and Pastor Emeritus of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Citrus Springs, early Saturday morning, August 8, 2020, at the Sturgill Hospice House, Brooksville.

Monsignor Cummings was born to George, Sr. and Genevieve (Markert) Cummings, in Bridgeport, Connecticut, shortly before the end of World War I. As a child, he attended schools in St. Petersburg, including St. Paul Catholic School, shortly after its inception. He was ordained for the Diocese of St. Augustine on November 27, 1943, during the height of World War II. His early experiences include teaching Latin and Religion at St. James School, in Orlando (1943-1944), working as secretary to Archbishop Joseph P. Hurley (1946-1949), serving as pastor of Blessed Trinity Parish, Ocala and helping to establish Archbishop Curley High School, in Miami, where he served as principal from 1952-1956. In addition to his degree in Theology, the young Father Cummings earned a Master of Science degree in Biology from the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., in 1946.

During his days as an educator, it became evident that Monsignor Cummings had a fondness for developing young followers of Christ. In 1947, he founded Our Lady of Good Counsel Camp, in Floral City, where he served as director for over 37 years. He was also appointed as youth director for the Diocese of St. Augustine in 1956, a position which he held until 1964. At the same time, he witnessed the rapid growth of the Venice area, where he served for twenty years as pastor of a recently established Epiphany Parish (now Epiphany Cathedral), where he oversaw construction of a new church and school. The original church building is still being used today as the parish hall.

After the Diocese of St. Augustine was divided in 1968, Monsignor Cummings became incardinated into the newly established Diocese of St. Petersburg. In 1976, Bishop Charles McLaughlin entrusted Monsignor Cummings with the leadership of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Citrus Springs, where he saw significant growth of the new parish during his fifteen years as pastor until his retirement in 1991. Since that time, he maintained his residence in Citrus County, providing wise counsel to many younger priests and giving generously of his time and resources for the ongoing ministry to our youth at Good Counsel Camp. When he

was no longer able to care for himself, he moved to Brentwood Retirement Community, in Lecanto, where he was frequently visited by loyal friends and family members.

During his 76 years of priestly ministry, Monsignor Cummings served under seven popes and seven bishops and witnessed the exponential growth of the Catholic Church in Florida from one diocese to its current seven. At the request of Archbishop Hurley, he was given the ecclesiastical honor of Domestic Prelate (now Honorary Prelate) by Pope John XXIII in 1959.

On his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2018, a celebration was held for Monsignor Cummings at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, where he was joined by Bishop Gregory Parkes and 150 of his closest friends and brother priests from Citrus County and beyond.

Monsignor Cummings is survived by five nephews, one niece, many grand-nephews and grand-nieces, in addition to a multitude of friends, former counselors and campers at Our Lady of Good Counsel Camp and fellow priests. He was preceded in death by his parents, as well as his brother, Robert Cummings and two sisters, Joan Farrell and Gloria Crahan.

All funeral services will be held at the **Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle, 5815 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N., St. Petersburg**, and will be as follows:

Visitation: **Wednesday, August 12, 2020, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.**  
**Evening Prayer will be offered at 7:00 p.m.**

Funeral Mass: **Thursday, August 13, 2020, 10:00 a.m.**  
Most Reverend Robert N. Lynch will be the Main Celebrant, with Very Reverend James B. Johnson as Homilist.

Priests wishing to concelebrate are asked to bring an alb. The Cathedral will provide stoles and chasubles.

For those unable to attend, the Funeral Mass will be livestreamed on the Cathedral website: <https://stjudesp.org/>.

Burial will immediately follow at Calvary Catholic Cemetery, 5233 118th Avenue N., Clearwater.

A Memorial Mass will be held at St. Scholastica Catholic Church, Lecanto, at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in memory of Monsignor Cummings to: Our Lady of Good Counsel Camp, c/o St. Scholastica Catholic Church, 4301 Homosassa Trail, Lecanto, FL 34461.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to the family of Msgr. George W. Cummings, c/o Diocese of St. Petersburg, Office of the Chancellor, P.O. Box 40200, St. Petersburg, FL 33743-0200.

***“Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you.  
Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7).***