

# Father Richard Lifrak's Death and Funeral Rites

Father Richard passed suddenly at 12:57 PM on Friday, February 12, 2021. He'd foregone lunch with Fathers Manoj Nayak and Jeremy Sabugo because he was scheduled to anoint a parishioner confined to home. As he exited the rectory into the garage, he suddenly fell back and struck his head on the floor. Father Manoj, who was in the kitchen adjoining the garage, heard the fall and entered the hallway to see Richard collapsed and bleeding from a large, traumatic head wound.

Shouting for Father Jeremy to call for Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), Father Manoj gave Richard CPR. He revived him briefly but he lost consciousness again. Neither the EMTs nor the Edinburg Regional Hospital were able to revive him a second time. There was no autopsy, but the hospital concludes that he had died from cardiac arrest. The most common cause of a cardiac arrest is a life-threatening abnormal heart rhythm called ventricular fibrillation (VF). Ventricular fibrillation happens when the electrical activity of the heart becomes so chaotic



that the heart stops pumping and quivers or 'fibrillates' instead. Without defibrillation, the outcome is always fatal. Father Manoj concludes Father Richard died cradled in his arms while awaiting the arrival of the EMTs.

With the help of social media, the news of Father Richard's death spread rapidly through the parish

community. The shock and sadness was palpable through the weekend liturgies. Richard's funeral, in consultation with the Bishop, was planned for Thursday, February 18. By Monday morning, the weather which paralyzed all of Texas arrived, Edinburg was without electricity and hampered the rites related to Richard's passing. His viewing, wake and rosary were celebrated by candlelight and without heat in the parish church on Tuesday. That evening, two beautiful eulogies were shared by parishioners.

Richard's Funeral Mass was celebrated by Brownsville Diocesan Bishop Daniel Flores on Thursday. He was accompanied by auxiliary Bishop Mario Avilés and several diocesan and religious priests. Also in attendance were three Benedictine Sisters from the monastery in Rio Grande City where Richard was in the habit of taking his day off and often available to the Sisters for Mass, confession and consultation. Four religious of the Sacred Hearts were present: Bro. Emmanuelle

del Castillo and Frs. Manoj Nayak, Jeremy Sabugo and Bob Charlton. During the Salve Regina, Father Richard's casket was placed in the hearse and each of the bishops and concelebrating clergy blessed his remains with holy water.

Given COVID-19 limitations, more than 150 parishioners and friends were present for the Mass which was broadcast live via FACEBOOK.

Unfortunately, Richard's brother Eric was unable to travel from California. The City of Edinburg Fire Department was present honoring Father Richard with an impressive array of fire-fighting vehicles, equipment and an exceptionally large American Flag.

More than 20 City Police vehicles escorted Father Richard from the parish church to the McAllen airport from which his remains were shipped to Fairhaven, Massachusetts. A Memorial Mass is scheduled for Wednesday, February 24, at



Saint Joseph Church. He will be interred in the Sacred Hearts Cemetery, Fairhaven, immediately following the Mass.

Father Richard's wake, viewing, rosary and Funeral Mass can be viewed on the Sacred Heart Church FACEBOOK page. A link is provided below.

[\(3\) Facebook](#)

WE, SACRED HEART CHURCH, WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR MANY CALLS, YOUR SUPPORT, AND YOUR PRAYERS



HIS LIFE LIVES ON IN OUR HEARTS  
**FR. RICHARD LIFRAK, SS.CC.**

**A VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

- CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS
- CEBALLOS FUNERAL HOME
- CITY OF EDINBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT
- CITY OF EDINBURG, POLICE DEPARTMENT
- CITY OF MCALLEN, POLICE DEPARTMENT
- CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY
- DIOCESE OF BROWNVILLE – BISHOPS, PRIEST AND RELIGIOUS
- KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
- SACRED HEART CHURCH – PARISHIONERS
- SACRED HEART CHURCH CHOIRS
- SACRED HEART CHURCH – USHERS AND VOLUNTEERS
- SISTERS OF ST BENEDICT RIO GRANDE CITY

