



Catholic New York — June 19, 2008

Father Keenan



Radio host, author and columnist was 61

By Claudia McDonnell

Father Paul Keenan, veteran radio host on the Catholic Channel on Sirius Satellite Radio and formerly on WABC's "Religion on the Line," and a popular author and columnist, died after collapsing June 10 outside Grand Central Terminal in Manhattan. He was 61.

Father Keenan was director of radio ministry in the archdiocesan Office of Communications. On the Catholic Channel he was the host of "As You Think" and "Musical Weekend With Father Paul Keenan." He wrote a monthly column, "Spiritual Matters," in Catholic New York, and also wrote for the archdiocesan Web site and his own Web site.

Cardinal Egan celebrated the Funeral Mass June 13 at Our Lady of Peace Church in Manhattan, where Father Keenan was in residence. The homilist was Father Kazimierz Kowalski, pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel parish in Manhattan.

Father Kowalski remarked in an interview that Father Keenan's radio program was "Catholic with no apologies," but that Father Keenan was never "aggressive."

"He was a good Catholic priest committed to his faith," Father Kowalski said, "and he was able to engage people of other faiths in order to deepen and expand what he called 'the soulful life,' and to increase their capacity for that."

He also noted that Father Keenan did not hide behind his microphone, despite being "kind of a shy guy."

"Even on his Web site, he had a number if people wanted to call him," Father Kowalski said. "He was very accessible—He could really engage people and draw them out."

That's how he related to his on—air guests. Father Kowalski observed that while some interviewers "exploit people for the sound bite, rather than really listening to them," Father Keenan gave them "the opportunity to get to the depth of what they wanted to say."

"The self—giving that he brought to the particular ministry of radio was profoundly different from what we're usually served up in the media," he said.

Father Keenan was the author of five books, "Beyond Blue Snow," "Heartstorming," "Stages of the Soul," "Elisha's Jars" and "Good News for Bad Days." In his writing he focused on bringing a spiritual perspective into everyday life, being hopeful and joyful, and living with a sense of purpose.

He wrote the column "A Thought for Living" and the blog "Catholic Views" on the archdiocesan Web site, and another column on the Web, "As You Think." His writings appeared on his own Web site, www.fatherpaul.com.

A radio fan since boyhood, he told CNY in an interview that when he was growing up in Kansas City, Mo., he used to go to bed with a transistor under his pillow.

He was co—host of Religion on the Line for 14 years, and was host of "As You Think," an inspirational program on WOR Radio, for 10 years. He also did commentary on WOR Radio for the Christmas Midnight Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral. He anchored the Catholic Channel's broadcast of the Mass celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI at St. Patrick's Cathedral on April 19 and helped to cover the Mass at Yankee Stadium the next day. He had been involved in the Catholic Channel since its beginning in 2006.

Born in Hamilton, Ontario, he moved to the United States with his parents as a boy and grew up in Kansas City, Mo. He graduated from Rockhurst College there with a classical bachelor's degree, then entered the Jesuits in Florissant, Mo. He earned master's degrees in moral and pastoral theology at St. Louis University and in philosophy from Fordham University. He was ordained in Kansas City for the Jesuits in 1977 and was incardinated into the Archdiocese of New York in 1993.

He taught at Rockhurst College and St. Louis University before coming to New York in 1980 to study at Fordham. In Manhattan he assisted at Nativity parish, then was parochial

vicar at St. Mary's, 1988—1991; St. James, 1991—1992; Sacred Heart, 1992—1993; and Holy Innocents, 1993—1994.

He became assistant director of the Office of Communications in 1994 and director of radio ministry in 1998.

Shortly before the launch of his program on the Catholic Channel, Father Keenan told CNY that he loved to offer encouragement to listeners and let them know how Catholic teaching could enrich their lives.

"I've always wanted this program, a national radio showÉalways wanted to be there to help people," he said.

This article was obtained from Catholic New York: <http://cny.org/>