



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Biography - Bishop Robert J. Rose

Bishop Rose is the son of Urban Rose and Maida Glerum Rose. His father was the youngest of eight in a Catholic family from Conklin, Michigan. His mother was a member of a Dutch Reformed family of eight from Grand Haven.

Robert was born in Grand Rapids on February 28, 1930, as the Great Depression was just beginning. He was the youngest of three children, a girl and two boys. The family joined St. Francis Xavier Parish shortly after his birth. His father was a telegraph operator, and the family was doing quite well until he died in 1937 of heart trouble. Robert's mother and his sister, June, went to work to support the family. His brother, James, joined the army shortly after Pearl Harbor.

Robert completed eight years of elementary school at St. Francis Xavier School. He began preparations for the priesthood at St. Joseph's Seminary, where he completed high school and junior college. He completed his college program with two years at the Seminaire de Philosophie in Montreal, Canada. He completed four years of theology at the Pontifical Urban College in Rome (the Church's missionary seminary). During his fourth year in Rome, on Dec. 21, 1955, he was ordained to the priesthood in the college chapel with 35 classmates by Cardinal Clemente Micara, the Holy Father's Vicar General.

Upon his return to the U.S. in 1956, Father Rose was assigned to the faculty of St. Joseph's Seminary, where he served for thirteen years teaching religion, Latin, Greek (classical and New Testament), French and music (chant). From 1969 to 1971, he served as the first director of Christopher House, a seminary residence near Aquinas College. In 1971 he was appointed rector of St. John's Provincial Seminary in Plymouth, a position he held for six years. In 1977 he returned to the Diocese of Grand Rapids, and was appointed pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Muskegon Heights where he served until 1981.

In October 1981, Father Rose was named the second bishop of the Diocese of Gaylord, and was ordained and installed on December 6. In July, 1989, following the retirement of Bishop Joseph Breitenbeck, he was appointed the ninth bishop of the Diocese of Grand Rapids, and returned to Grand Rapids to be installed on August 30. After 22 years of episcopal ministry, Bishop Rose retired in October 2003, and went to live with fellow priests at St. Camillus Woods in Byron Township. He remains connected to the diocese and clergy members by attending clergy events and special liturgies, and through many personal friendships.