



TERTIUS ORDO REGULARIS SANCTI FRANCISCI
SECRETARIUS GENERALIS

January 27, 2026

Prot. N° 015/2026

Subject: Death notice of Father Ambrose Kenneth Phillips, T.O.R.
Province of the Immaculate Conception, USA



FR. AMBROSE KENNETH PHILLIPS, TOR

Reverend Father Ambrose Kenneth Phillips, T.O.R., of the Third Order Regular Franciscans, Province of the Immaculate Conception, USA, passed away on Friday, January 2, 2026, in Altoona, PA. He was born on October 3, 1945, in Barnesboro, PA, to Michael and Mary Elizabeth (Panaro) Phillips and was baptized with the name Kenneth. He entered the Franciscan Preparatory Seminary in Hollidaysburg, PA, in 1963 and professed his Solemn Vows on June 29, 1969. He was ordained to the priesthood on September 25, 1971, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

Father Ambrose devoted his life to serving both the Church and the Franciscan community through a variety of ministries. In the Diocese of Saint Cloud, MN, he served as Chaplain and Director of Pastoral Care at St. Otto's Home and St. Gabriel's Hospital, and as an instructor at St. Francis High School, all on the campus of the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls. He also taught at James Barry Robinson High School in Norfolk, VA, within the Diocese of Richmond. In 1979, he earned accreditation as a Mental Health Chaplain and ministered at St. Elizabeth Hospital and Georgetown University Hospital in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. In 1985 he was hired by the St. Luke Institute, Silver Spring, MD as a psychotherapist. In October 2025 he was recognized by St. Luke's for 40 years of dedicated and distinguished service. Fr. Ambrose also served his Franciscan Community as Director of



Formation and, more recently, as a member of the Provincial Council. In October 2025 he was diagnosed with an aggressive form of stomach cancer that caused him to retire from his position at St. Luke's and return to St. Bernardine Monastery, Hollidaysburg where he was residing at the time of his death.

Fr. Ambrose enjoyed gardening and had a deep appreciation for the beauty found in nature. One of his favorite places to spend time was the National Arboretum in Washington, DC. He especially enjoyed it when the azaleas were in bloom each spring. He also enjoyed the theater and opera and it was not uncommon for him to burst into a favorite aria while seated at the kitchen table! In the course of his four decades at St. Luke's he assisted many priests and religious to recover their health and regain a sense of self worth. He was a kind and gentle man who greeted others with a broad smile and warm embrace.

Father Ambrose was preceded in death by his parents and his older brother, Michael. He is survived by his sister, Marilyn (Louis) Tyler; his sister-in-law, Mary Ann Phillips, and her children; as well as numerous cousins, friends, and his Franciscan community.

Visitation, concluding with a Vigil Service, was held on Tuesday, January 6, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM at the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Altoona, PA. The Funeral Mass was celebrated on Wednesday, January 7, at 10:30 AM at the same church, with the Very Reverend Father Frank Scornaienchi, T.O.R., Minister Provincial, serving as the principal celebrant. Interment followed in the Community Cemetery at St. Bernardine Monastery, Hollidaysburg. A luncheon was held afterward at the Monastery.

May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace.

Please offer the suffrages for the repose of his soul according to articles 61-67 of the *General Statutes*.

Fraternally,

Fr. Shubin Kurian, TOR
Secretary General