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# Transitions

## Obituaries



### Brother Robert Daszkiewicz, FSC

1938-2010

Eulogy for Brother Robert J. Daszkiewicz, FSC

(given by Brother John McMahon at Christian Brothers Center, Narragansett, RI, January 23, 2010)

Article: "Living in the Face of Mortality" by Ron Rolheiser 1/03/10 - edited for the eulogy

The reality is: We all live in the face of mortality, of our own death. Let's stop and first remember the life of our Brother Robert Daszkiewicz. The twinkle in Bob's eye, the simple tricks played on everyone, the rubber bug in our soup, the supposed spot on our shirt that he got us to look at, and then the flip of his finger under our chin. "I got you, he would say!" ... delighting in his trickery. There is a story about Bob and another Brother going out to a fine restaurant for dinner. Bob asked the other Brother to wear his black suit. On arriving at the restaurant, Bob asked the Brother to put on a large ring. On entering, he discovered that the reservation had been made in the name of a Bishop, himself. They were both treated with special ecclesial pomp. I'll refrain from saying who the other Brother was. I recall our days in the scholasticate, the Brothers' college. Bob was in charge of the annual blood drive and thrived on being called "the vampire". He also played the violin, rather well I might add. He and an older Brother played duets together, except for one St Patrick's Day when his partner had a heart attack onstage and left Bob to do a solo. Some other examples of Bob's life are with his family and told by them in some chats we've had since his death. Evidently, he was like the "older brother" or even grandfather figure to his niece and nephews. He enjoyed fishing and introduced them to the art, like it or not. Bob also introduced them to restaurants, home cooking and exotic foods, like it or not. Bouillabaisse, for kids? Come on Uncle Bob! And speaking of life, let's not forget that Bob was once in charge of Bright Day Travel Agency. He never stayed in anyone place too long, and these places were in many parts of Europe and the Middle East. His most recent trip to his beloved Bethlehem University in Palestine was only last summer. Bob needed to make one last trip to see the people and a culture he had come to love. Recently, there was also a call from Belgium from Vincent, a former student and now a research doctor ... and then there's the presence of some of you here today whose life Bob touched years ago ... the presence of his loving family ... and then 'the shoe dropped! Bob had a hard time accepting the reality of his diagnosis. He kept at life, doing what he felt he had to do to keep going. We wondered why he couldn't accept the reality of his mortality. Will

Please pray for the happy repose of the soul of  
**Br. Robert Daszkiewicz, FSC**

**Born** Robert John Daszkiewicz on February 23, 1938

**Entered** the Barrytown, NY Novitiate in June 1956

**Received** the Religious Habit and Name, Brother Basil Robert on September 8, 1956

**Pronounced** Perpetual Vows at Manhattan College, NY, on August 9, 1964.

Brother Robert died at South County Hospital in Narragansett, RI on January 20, 2010

### FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Friday, January 22, 2010

**Viewing from 3:00 - 5:00 pm and 7:00 - 9:00 pm**  
Christian Brothers Center  
Stevenson Hall  
635 Ocean Road  
Narragansett, RI 02882-1314

Saturday, January 23, 2010

**Mass of Christian Burial at 10:00 am**  
Christian Brothers Center Chapel

### SUFFRAGES FOR OUR DECEASED BROTHER ROBERT

**District:** 50 masses

**Christian Brothers Center community:** 30 masses

**Each community in the District:** 1 mass

Brother Robert passed away peacefully at South County Hospital, Narragansett, RI, after a brief stay at South Kingstown Nursing Center, West Kingston, RI. May he rest in peace.

Tour of Duty

1961-1962

we, when it is our turn, do any different? A blessing for Bob was that he seemingly had no pain ... bone cancer and no pain .... a miracle of sorts, but he was fragile and confused a lot since early fall ... on the move with his walker. In physical therapy, they hinted that if he got stronger, maybe he could go back to community. We knew differently, but it gave him some hope. But then again, we never thought his death would be so soon.

His loving family was there. I saw the affection and love you have for Bob and for one another. Diane and John you raised them well ... Kathy, Michael, Keith and Steve ... a blessing to you and to Bob, to each other and all those you meet. So much good! And yet, in the face of life, we live in the face of our mortality. I want to share a real life story that seems connected and contains a teaching by Fr Ron Rolheiser.

*A number of years ago, one of my cousins died in an industrial accident. He had been helping load some railway cars at a grain terminal when a cable pulling the cars away snapped, sprung back and literally cut him in half. He died en route to the hospital.*

*Tragic and sad as his death was, his family and loved ones had some consolation. His last days had been good; his touches had been warm. He had, as far as anyone knew, parted on peaceful terms with everyone and had died doing his job. He was standing where he was supposed to be standing. Ultimately that is all we can try to assure ourselves. We can try to be standing where we are supposed to be standing.*

*All of us, without exception, irrespective of age and health, are vulnerable, contingent, mortal, one heartbeat away from leaving this planet, one stroke away from losing control of our lives, one accident away from knowing how illusory is the sense of our own strength, and one broken cable away from dying in an ambulance. We can be careful with our lives, live prudently, try to ensure our own safety and the safety of our loved ones, but ultimately we are inadequate. We cannot ensure our own continued heartbeat. So what can we do?*

*We can live prudent lives, care for our health, and if we have faith, we can pray for God's protection and providence. These are good, no doubt. But we can do something else too, something more important. We can try always to be standing where we are supposed to be standing. We can try to keep our touches warm, in case they are our last ones. In essence we can be faithful, true to those whom we love and true to what we believe in. We can be at our post, in commitment, love, duty and enjoyment.*

*John Powell once wrote that there are only two potential tragedies in life, and that dying is not one of them. These are the two potential tragedies: To live and to not love and to love and to never express that affection and appreciation. How true. More than ever before, I have become aware of how fragile is life. More superficially this challenged me to look at my own health.*

*More deeply however it has challenged me to look at my wider health. Am I standing where I'm supposed to be standing? Am I being faithful enough to who I am and what I believe in so as to be comfortable that, if today is my last day, I am doing what I'm supposed to be doing? Have my touches been warm?*

*I try everyday to be faithful - to pray, to be warm to people, to do my job as best I can, knowing that, if I do that, I am standing where I am supposed to be, and that I can enjoy this wonderful life, without guilt or fear, ready, standing in honesty, should the cable snap.*

For Bob the cable snapped too early, but he was standing where he was supposed to be, trying to be faithful and to do his best at living and loving. We all need to learn this lesson. Be at peace our Brother!

**1961-1962**  
*Teacher*  
Manchester, NH  
Bishop Bradley H S

**1962-1963**  
*Teacher*  
Brooklyn, NY  
St. Augustine H S

**1963-1967**  
*Teacher*  
Astoria, NY  
Mater Christi H S

**1967-1968**  
*Exchange Student*  
Estaimpuis, BELGIUM  
De La Salle College

**1968-1969**  
*Teacher*  
Astoria, NY  
Mater Christi H S

**1969-1969**  
Director, H S Study Program  
Paris, FRANCE  
French Ministry of Ed

**1970-1972**  
*Asst. Director*  
Narragansett, RI  
Christian Brothers Center

**1973-1974**  
*Principal*  
Manchester, NH  
Trinity H S

**1974-1975**  
*Editor, FSC Bulletin*  
Rome, ITALY  
FSC Generalate

**1975-1979**  
*Asst. Principal*  
Uncasville, CT  
St. Bernard H S

**1979-1983**  
*Academic Vice-President*  
Bethlehem, PALESTINE  
Bethlehem University

**1983-1985**  
*Chair, French Department*  
Newport, RI  
Salve Regina College

**1985-1987**  
*Dir. Teaching Improvement*  
Bethlehem, PALESTINE  
Bethlehem University

**1987-1990**  
*Dir. Teaching Improvement*  
Newport, RI  
Salve Regina College

**1990-1994**  
*Administration*  
Newport, RI  
Salve Regina College

**1994-1995**

*Travel Consultant*  
Moraga, CA  
Bright Day Travel

**1995-2001**

*Dir. Tourism, travel agency*  
Bethlehem, PALESTINE  
Bethlehem University

**2001-2004**

*Associate Secretary General*  
Rome, ITALY  
FSC Generalate

**2004-2005**

*sabbatical*  
Narragansett, RI  
Christian Brothers Center

**2005-2008**

*Principal*  
Uncasville, CT  
St. Bernard H S

**2008-2009**

*retired*  
Providence, RI  
Miguel House

**2009-2010**

*retired*  
Narragansett, RI  
Christian Brothers Center

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

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