Father Joseph Mroczkowski, son of John and Bernice (Cieslinski) Mroczkowski, was born in Erie, Pennsylvania on July 19, 1919. He had three brothers and a sister. One of his brothers, Father Leonard, was also called to the priesthood. Father Joseph attended Saint Charles College, Catonsville, Maryland, and St. Mary Seminary, Baltimore, Maryland.

The Most Rev. John K. Mussio, first Bishop of the Diocese of Stuebenville, ordained Father Mroczkowski to the priesthood for the Diocese of Stuebenville on December 16, 1945. From 1945 to 1953, Father Mroczkowski served parishes in Martins Ferry and Barton, Ohio. He was also director of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) and Catholic Womens’ Club (CWC). In 1953, Father Mroczkowski transferred to the Diocese of Lincoln. He was assigned to the following parishes: St. Mary, Alexandria and St. Joseph, Gilead (1953-1956); St. Ann, Campbell (1956-1963); Sacred Heart, Roseland and its missions (1963-1968); St. Wenceslaus, Wahoo (1968-1976); St. John the Apostle, Lincoln (1976-1990) and St. Patrick, Manley and its mission St. Mary, Elmwood (1990-1995). Father Mroczkowski also served as a member of the Diocesan Building Commission and a Chaplain for the Knights of Columbus.

Father Mroczkowski retired from active ministry in 1995. Father Michael Christensen, who spoke at Father Mroczkowski’s funeral Mass, recalled that one of the highlights of Father Mroczkowski’s priestly life was concelebrating Mass with Blessed John Paul II in the private papal chapel in Rome in 1996. He loved the gift of his priestly vocation and proved to be a true friend of his fellow priests. Father Mroczkowski was called from this earthly dwelling to his eternal home on October 11, 2012, the opening day of the Year of Faith. Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz celebrated the funeral Mass on October 18. Father Mroczkowski was buried in Erie, Pennsylvania. 306a

Philip J. Rauth was born on April 24, 1933 in York, Nebraska. He studied Philosophy and Theology at Saint Thomas Seminary in Denver, Colorado, and also earned a Masters Degree in Educational Administration and Counseling from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

Father Rauth was ordained on May 19, 1959 at Saint Joseph Church in York by Bishop James V. Casey for the Diocese of Lincoln. He began his priestly ministry as Assistant Pastor of St. Teresa Church in Lincoln (1959-1963). During the years of 1963-1965, he was Assistant Pastor of Sacred Heart, Roseland, Assumption Church, Juniata, and served on the faculty of St. Cecilia High School in Hastings.

Taking a year off to attend Graduate Studies in Education at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., Father Rauth returned in 1966 as Principal of Neumann High School in Wahoo. In 1969, he became pastor of St. James Church in Mead while also taking the position of Guidance Counselor at Neumann High School, Wahoo until 1980.

The remainder of Father Rauth’s active ministry found him as pastor in Campbell and Blue Hill (1980-1983); St. Mary, Nebraska City, as well as, Chaplain of Emmanuel Court No. 1122 of the Daughters of the Americas (1983-1993); Peru, while continuing as pastor of St. Mary, Nebraska City (1992-2006); Auburn, while continuing as pastor in Peru (1993-2006).

Father Rauth retired from active ministry in 2006, residing in his private home in Omaha. He died at Bergan Mercy Hospital in Omaha on June 12, 2023. A rosary was prayed for him on Friday, June 16, 2023 at Butcher-Maser and Love Funeral Home in Lincoln. The Funeral Mass was held on Saturday, June 17, 2023 at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ in Lincoln, followed by the burial in Calvary Cemetery in Lincoln.
John Keefe was born in David City, NE on September 2, 1941. His family moved to Lincoln where he graduated from Pius High School before earning a Bachelor’s degree from Creighton University in Omaha, and later receiving his Philosophy and Theology Degrees from St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, CO. Father Keefe was ordained on June 1, 1968 by Bishop Glennon P. Flavin for the Diocese of Lincoln.

His active ministry began as assistant pastor of St. John’s, Plattsmouth (1968-1970) and then the Cathedral of the Risen Christ, Lincoln (1970-1973). In July of 1970, Father Keefe was also assigned to be Moderator of the Pre-Cana Program. His final appointment as assistant pastor was to Blessed Sacrament, Lincoln (1973-1977). From June until September of 1977, he was pastor of Immaculate Conception, Rulo, and St. Mary’s, Arago. In September of 1977, the opportunity arose for him to serve the Lincoln Diocesan mission in Barquisimeto, Venezuela, South America, where he remained until 1984.

Upon Father Keefe’s return to the diocese, he was pastor of St. John’s, Prague, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Plasi, and teacher of Religion at Bishop Neumann High School, Wahoo (1984-1990). Following this, he became pastor of St. Patrick’s, Lincoln (1990-1994), and Director of Hispanic Ministry (1990-1991).

In 1994, Father Keefe returned to the mission of Barquisimeto, Venezuela until 1997. Once again back in the Lincoln Diocese, he was assigned as pastor of St. Mary’s, Aurora and St. Joseph’s, Giltner (1997-2001). He was appointed Director of the Apostolate to the Spanish Speaking in the Lincoln Diocese (2001-2002). In 2002, he became pastor of Cristo Rey, Lincoln, while also retaining Directorship of the Hispanic Ministry until 2011.

Father Keefe’s last assignment was as senior priest in residence at St. James / Sacred Heart, Crete, and confessor for the School Sisters of Christ the King. He retired and moved into Kealy Hall in 2013. Father Keefe died at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln on October 11, 2023. The Rosary was prayed for him at Burtherus-Maser and Love Funeral Home in Lincoln on November 2, 2023. The funeral Mass at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ and burial in Calvary Cemetery, both in Lincoln, were on November 3, 2023.