



## James William Warnke

December 13, 1947 - January 12, 2026

Jim Warnke was a man of wisdom, strength and resilience. He was born in Plattsburg, New York on December 13, 1947. He was raised in Elmsford, NY by his maternal grandmother, Ruth Turnesa. His visual impairment caused by his incubation at birth was not diagnosed until he was 9 years old. He was given special education for the visually impaired in Yonkers and able to return and graduate in 1965 from Elmsford's Hamilton High School. He joined the Holy Cross Seminary for his freshman year of college, but left to study at Fordham College graduating in 1969 with a BA in History and Theology. It was at Fordham College that he met Marie Jones and they married at the University Church on December 28, 1969. After graduation, he taught religion at Aquinas Girls High School in the Bronx. He earned an MA in religious education from Manhattan College February 1, 1974. He taught religion at Mater Christi Boys High School in Queens. He earned a MSW from Fordham University on May 28, 1978. With his clinical social work degree, he worked at Mental Health Center in Ridgefield Park and helped open the Edison House Mental Health program for teens in Ridgefield. In 1982, he began his private practice in family therapy in Teaneck and helped create with the Reverend Dr. Cathy Deats, a program with the NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired training professional called Adjustment to Vision Loss.

Jim also trained and was an instructor in the martial arts earning a 2nd degree black belt in Shodokan karate and a 6th degree black belt in Ryu Te Oyata Shin Shu Ho under Taika Seiyu Oyata.

In his 30's, Jim developed a painful form of glaucoma and osteoarthritis. He learned to use hypnosis to control the pain and then completed the New York Society Milton Erickson Psychotherapy and Hypnosis advanced training program in 1986, and became an instructor and served as president of NYSEPH, attending master classes for many year. with Dr. Jeff Zeig.

Jim was member of Teaneck Community Relations Advisory Board, Cub Scout Master for Pack 92 in 1982, and Chair of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired from 2014 to 2018.

Jim, while raised a Roman Catholic, was received into the Episcopal Church and was ordained a priest on December 14, 1996. He was associate priest at St. Mark's Teaneck. St. Paul's Englewood, Holy Communion Norwood and Christ and St. John the Divine Church in Hackensack. The focus of his ministry was as a retreat leader and spiritual director, presenting many workshops within the Newark Diocese.

Jim is survived by his wife, Marie, his daughter Amy, his son, Dave, his daughter-in-law Amy Moore and granddaughters Beatrice and Lucia, his sisters Diane Warnke, Pat Wolak and Naja Tamargo, brother William Wagoner. And his wife Lori.

He also holds as chosen family his godson Jeff and Stacy Pettorino and their children Kelly and husband Stephen, and Erin, as well as Dave, Lynda and Catherine Dickey, Thomas Leahy, and Candy, Riana Erickson her husband John, Rob Staffin, and the entire Nadelman family.

Many benefited from Jim's ability to be with, listen to, guide people as a therapist, priest and friend.

Jim had many life challenges with his blindness and numerous health issues ,but faced them with hope and courage and was an inspiration to so many of us. He was an incredible man who lived only to do good, despite his irreverent sense of humor.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to St. Mark's Church Teaneck, Community Scholarship Fund of Teaneck or any charity of your choice.



# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JAN 24. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
118 Chadwick Rd.  
Teaneck, NJ

*Fr. Jim's funeral will take place Saturday, January 24th at 11:00, with interment immediately following in our memorial garden. A repast will follow. Additional off street parking will be available courtesy of Holy Name Hospital. Signs and greeters will guide you. St. Mark's is located at 118 Chadwick Road (corner of Grange Road) in Teaneck.*

# Tribute Wall



“ *Volk Leber Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of James William Warnke*



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**Volk Leber Funeral Home** - January 18 at 10:36 AM

EA

*Jim was the epitome of a gentleman, an exemplar of scholarship, and a model of good citizenship. It was on people like Jim that wonderful communities like Teaneck were built. He quietly and steadily left his mark and we are all beneficiaries.  
Jeannette and Eli Amdur*

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**Eli Amdur** - January 29 at 01:17 PM

VF

“ *Loving God,*

*May I thank you for sharing and guiding Fr. Jim as my Spiritual Director. Fr. Jim is the Beacon of light in my formation of one with Christ.*

*Fr. Jim, welcome home.  
Thanks be to God.*

*Sincerely,  
Vanessa Foster*



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**vanessa Foster** - January 23 at 10:58 PM

MO

“ Yes! Jim was an amazing man, a dear friend, an inspiring retreat leader. We attended a spiritually based meeting together and it was by Jim's invitation I served on the Commission on Ministry. We both are supporting a dear man in his current journey. Jim has meant a lot to me in my journey (priest of 23 plus years)  
Jim, I will miss you but feel your hand on my shoulder and telling me something irreverent to make me laugh as well as reflect upon seriously,  
Now God has brought you to God's home: and forever no more suffering.  
You can see clearly now...  
God bless you for your life with us  
Margaret

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**Margaret Otterburn** - January 16 at 08:33 PM

PO

“ We extend our heartfelt condolences to Marie, her children, the entire Warnke family and the St. Mark's community. Jim was always upbeat, pragmatic and had a sense of great wit and wisdom. Although site impaired, he saw more than most without disability. He was caring, brave and loved his family, friends and home town. May Jim's memory be a blessing for all he touched and may he rest in peace.  
Paul & Ricki Ostrow  
Teaneck



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**Paul Ostrow** - January 16 at 07:00 AM