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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 14, 2020

**Father Thomas Cummings, SJ,
Lifelong Educator,
Dies in St. Louis**

Father Thomas W. Cummings, SJ, died August 9, 2020, in St. Louis. He was 81 years old, a Jesuit for 64 years and a priest for 51 years.

A lifelong educator, Fr. Cummings touched the lives of thousands of students at St. Louis University High School, Rockhurst High School in Kansas City, Mo., and Regis University.

His life will be celebrated in a Memorial Mass on Thursday, Aug. 20 at 7:15 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier College Church in St. Louis. Due to coronavirus restrictions, seating is strictly limited. Those wishing to attend must make a reservation at <https://bit.ly/FrCummings>. A livestream will be available on the St. Francis Xavier YouTube Channel. There will be no visitation and no burial, as he donated his body to science.

Tom Cummings was born in St. Louis Oct. 3, 1938, to L. Herbert and Juanita Tyler Cummings. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his twin brother, Terry. He is survived by his brother Richard, his (twin) sisters Linda Duffy Ingram and Barbara (Kerry) Kreikemeier, his sister-in-law Diane Cummings, 18 nephews and nieces, and 48 great-nephews and nieces. His large and close family was a source of great pride, joy, fun and love throughout his life.

After graduating from St. Louis University High School in 1956, he entered the Society of Jesus in Florissant, Mo., and pronounced first vows on Aug. 15, 1958. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 4, 1969, at St. Francis Xavier College Church and pronounced his final vows on Feb. 3, 1978, at Saint Louis University High School.

His first classroom assignment was at Rockhurst High School, where he taught from 1963 to 1966. He would return to Rockhurst two more times: from 1970 to 1976 as an English teacher and from 1985 to 1993, when he served as president.

He was appointed president of St. Louis University High School in 1977, the youngest president in the school's 200-year history, and he remained in that role until 1985, when he was assigned to Rockhurst.

In 1994, Fr. Cummings moved to Denver to work in campus ministry and teaching at Regis University. He remained until 2003. For most of this time he was also the superior of the Xavier Jesuit Center. In 2003, he returned to St. Louis to become superior of the SLU High Jesuit Community and to teach theology. With the exception of one year's sabbatical at Xavier in Denver (2008-09), Fr. Cummings remained at SLU High until 2013, when health issues dictated his move to the Jesuit retirement community at Jesuit Hall in St. Louis.

Fr. Cummings's love for language and gift for storytelling made him a compelling teacher and a riveting speaker. Under his leadership, St. Louis University High undertook a long period of renovation and beautification of the campus, culminating in a new athletic stadium. Similarly, he helped revitalize Rockhurst High. But however high-energy and successful he was as a leader and fundraiser, his priesthood meant more to him than anything else; he brought God's radiant smile to countless families in moments of both celebration and grief.

Fr. Cummings earned multiple degrees from Saint Louis University: a Bachelor of Arts and a Licentiate in philosophy, a master's degree in English Literature, and both a master's degree in theology and a Licentiate in Sacred Theology.

We remember with gratitude all that God has done through Fr. Cummings's life of service to God and God's people.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Herb and Juanita Cummings Scholarship fund c/o St. Louis University High School.

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