PAX
ON THE FIFTH DAY OF JUNE, 2019.
OUR CONFEREE.
FATHER WILLIAM SULLIVAN, O.S.B.

longtime educator and administrator at Saint Anselm College, and leader within Saint Anselm Abbey, died early Wednesday, June 5, 2019, at Mount Carmel Nursing Home, Manchester, NH. He suffered a serious stroke in 2014 and had been a resident at Mount Carmel for several years.

The son of the late Dorothy (Griffin) and William J. Sullivan, he was born Nov. 11, 1944, in Holyoke, MA. Following his graduation from the former Sacred Heart High School, Holyoke, in 1962, Father William attended Saint Anselm College and two years later entered the Benedictine monastic community at Saint Anselm Abbey. He pronounced simple vows in 1965 and solemn vows on July 2, 1968, before the late Abbot Gerald F. McCarthy, O.S.B.

Father William earned his A.B. degree magna cum laude in philosophy from Saint Anselm College in 1966, pursued theological studies at Saint Anselm Abbey Seminary, later studied history at Boston College, and earned a M.Div. degree from Drew University in 1970. In August of that year, he was ordained a deacon. After completing course requirements, research and a doctoral dissertation, Father William earned his Ph.D. degree in history in 1977 from The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

Father William was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in the Order of Saint Benedict by the Most Rev. Ernest J. Primeau, S.T.D., late bishop of Manchester, on March 20, 1971, at Saint Anselm Abbey Church.

Father William gave dedicated service to Saint Anselm Abbey and Saint Anselm College over many years. He served on the faculty, teaching courses in American history, with particular interest in the Civil War period and Irish immigration, as well as in the long-term two-year humanities program, Portraits of Human Greatness. At various times, he served as acting chair and chair of the Departments of History and Theology. He was assistant professor in the Department of History until his retirement. He was the director of the Bean Foundation Lecture Series and served on the scholarship and student aid, student health, curriculum and promotions committees.

Father William was dean of students, dean of freshmen and assistant dean of academics at Saint Anselm College. For a number of years, he was a member of the college’s monastic governing board, and later, its board of trustees.

Within the abbey, Father William was archivist, secretary of the chapter, novice master and sub-prior. In 1982, the Most Rev. Joseph J. Gerry, O.S.B., retired bishop of Portland, ME, at the time abbot of Saint Anselm Abbey, named Father William as Prior of Saint Anselm Abbey. He was prior until 1985, when he was assigned to Woodside Priory School in Portola Valley, Calif., where he served as prior of the King Saint Stephen Priory until 1998. He also served as President, Headmaster, and as a history teacher in the school. After his return from the West Coast in 1998, Father William returned to the office of prior of Saint Anselm and continued to teach in the Department of History at Saint Anselm College. He served as Prior until 2005. He retired from teaching in 2014 following a stroke, which left him unable to speak in anything but short answers.

In addition to his brothers in the Benedictine monastic communities at Saint Anselm and Woodside, he leaves his brother, Michael and his wife Anne-Marie, of Hopkinton, MA; his sister, Mary (Sullivan) Sullivan and her husband, Neil, of Holyoke, MA; five nieces and nephews; and several great nieces and nephews.

Father William’s body will be received by the monastic community Tuesday, June 11, during daytime prayer in the choir area at the Saint Anselm Abbey Church. Calling hours will be from 12:30 to 8 p.m. in the choir area of the Abbey church. A Liturgy of Christian Burial will be celebrated Wednesday, June 12 at 11 a.m., in the Abbey Church with the Rt. Rev. Mark A. Cooper, O.S.B., abbot of Saint Anselm Abbey, as celebrant and homilist. Burial will follow in Saint Leander’s Cemetery, the monastic cemetery on the grounds of the abbey.

We at Saint Anselm request of our fellow Benedictines the customary suffrages for Father William, and we promise faithful remembrance of the deceased of all our alumni, friends, and confreres.