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## Father Michael Kelly

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Father Michael Kelly

Father Michael Craig Kelly, 53, Pastor of St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church, Purcellville, died on Wednesday, Dec 31, 2009.

He was struck by a falling tree during heavy winds while clearing another tree that was a danger to other motorists on Harmony Church Road in Purcellville.

Father Kelly was born Dec. 15, 1955, in Newport Beach, Calif., the eldest son of a career marine officer, Ret. Lt. Col. John F.J. Kelly and Jeanette Stinchfield Kelly.

As was his way, Father Kelly took a circuitous route to the priesthood. A former Navy Boatswains Mate, 2d Class, and recipient of the prestigious Iron Mike Award from jump school at Fort Benning, Ga., Father Kelly also was a weapons and security consultant for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps prior to entering St. Charles Seminary in Overbrook, Pa.

Ordained in 1995, Father Kelly's assignments in the Arlington Diocese included St. James in Falls Church, St. Ambrose in Annandale and Sacred Heart in Winchester. He was appointed pastor of St. Francis de Sales in June 2008.

A graduate of Mary Washington College with a BA in history, Father Kelly maintained his love of history as a Civil War re-enactor with the storied Irish Brigade. His love for flying led to the development of scaled military aircraft attached to bicycles, which he would ride in local parades. He eventually got a patent on the device.

Father Kelly will be best remembered by his family, friends and community as your "typical Irish priest," whose smile and sense of humor were infectious,. His devotion to God was unlimited as he ministered to people from all denominations and walks of life.

An excerpt from one of his "Father's Corner" article eloquently sums up Father Kelly: "Alas, the Lord has a sense of humor, and so I am in your midst. I ask for your prayers that the Holy Spirit will guide me in my decisions, that St. Francis De Sales will increase my devotion to our Lord, and that all of us may become the saints we were meant to be."

Father Kelly is survived by his father, John Kelly; his second mother, Margaret; three brothers, Matthew



Kelly, a councilman from Fredericksburg, Marine Colonel Daniel Kelly, currently stationed at Quantico, and David Bunch, president and CEO of FedChoice Federal Credit Union, Lanham, Md. In addition, Father Kelly was a devoted uncle to eight nieces and nephews.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Tuesday at St. Francis De Sales Church, with Bishop Loverde as the Main Celebrant. The interment will follow in Fairfax Memorial Cemetery, off Braddock Road.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Wounded Warrior Project in the name of Father Michael Craig Kelly at [woundedwarriorproject.org](http://woundedwarriorproject.org).

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