



## FROM THE DESK OF FATHER JONATHAN

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**MAY 7, 2017**

Last week I was able to accompany a dear friend and mentor in his last moments here on earth. Msgr John Ahern, 88, died peacefully, and with a smile, in a residence for retired priests here in the Bronx.

Msgr John Ahern died as he lived. In his youth, John was a strikingly good-looking man, tall and athletic with a keen intellect and warm personality. Early in his priesthood John was asked to take on administrative responsibilities in the Archdiocese, but he quickly made it known that God was calling him to work and live with the poor. For many, many years John lived off the "Bowery" in Lower Manhattan and ran a shelter for homeless men called the Holy Name Center.

I had the honor of living in that Center with Msgr Ahern for two years. I witnessed his complete dedication to the men whom he served. Even when they didn't know how to appreciate what he was giving them, he calmly and lovingly served them.

One lesson he taught me was that ministry is not about trying to be a hero, but rather a servant. Even today I can almost hear him say these words: "Love the guys because of who they are, and respect where they are. Don't go in wanting to reform them or fix them."

I have found that this lesson is applicable for almost every relationship and every ministry.

Msgr Ahern was buried in a plot of land with some of the homeless men he served.

I will miss you, John Ahern. Please pray for us from your new, heavenly home, surrounded by men who are no longer homeless, because you lead them to our Father's House.

**God Bless, Father Jonathan**

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