



Robert Ignatius Zink

January 12, 1920 - March 17, 2020

Robert Zink was born January 12, 1920 in Louisville, Ky. He passed away March 17, 2020 at age 100. He was predeceased by his wife, Elna, and stepson, Terence Hayes. Robert is survived by his sister Angela Zink, step children LaJuana Eklers, Phyllis Stewart, Kimberly Davis, Darney Hayes, Jr. and Derrick and Stephen Hayes, many step grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and grand nieces and nephews.

Robert was ordained a Franciscan priest in 1947 and took the name, Fr. Venance. He received a bachelor of music with a Voice Major from the Detroit Institute of Musical Arts and an MA in Philosophy at Xavier University in Cincinnati. Robert's faith was paramount in his life. His master's thesis examined St. Bonaventure's Five Proofs for the Existence of God. Robert also learned to be a magician and used this craft in his teaching, music and missionary activities. Music was very much a part of his life. He taught music and philosophy at St. Francis HS Seminary and at Duns Scotus College.

In the late 60s, Robert requested and received laicization. He married Elna Hayes and taught music in the Detroit Public Schools for many years.

Robert was a very gentle soul, loved by all who knew him, including the wonderful staff and clients at Arinas Senior Care who cared for him in his last two years, as well as visitors from Transfiguration Parish and Fr. Jeremy.

Cemetery Details

Holy Sepulchre Cemetery

25800 West 10 Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48033

Previous Events

Service

MAR 25. 11:00 AM (ET)

Holy Sepulchre Cemetery
25800 West 10 Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48033

Tribute Wall



“ *Robert Ignatius Zink*

September 27, 2022 at 08:40 PM



“ *Robert Ignatius Zink*

September 27, 2022 at 06:52 PM



“ *I'm a former student of Mr. Zink, he was one of my favorite teachers. He taught music at Glazer Elementary. He taught me how to play the xylophone. I'm 56 now and still remember him fondly. My condolences to the family.*

Miss. Watkins

Debra Watkins - March 25, 2021 at 01:54 AM

JZ

“ I’m perhaps more hopeful and more thankful this year, than I have been for the previous four. With that hope and gratitude, I share that my Uncle Robert lived a long long and good good life, and he is part of the reason I am even here today.

Uncle Robert Father Venance married my parents on Thanksgiving Day, back in 1952, in the Louisville church, Holy Spirit, where I later attended school (as the parish built a larger newer church on the grounds); the school that taught all seven of my brothers and sisters, and many cousins, nine years each.

My first recollections of him are as the “magician”, and in those very early days for me he was a Franciscan priest.

Of course he went on to do many things for many years, but every thing and every year was filled with grace and good. I’m better because I knew him, and I’m thankful today because of how he directly impacted my life three years before I was even born.

Joe Zink - November 26, 2020 at 02:08 PM



“ Mr. Zink was my music teacher at Glazer Elementary. He taught me how to play the glockenspiel. I never even heard of a glockenspiel! It was fun! Mr. Zink discovered that I was taking piano lessons. He gave me the opportunity to sometimes play for the class. It is because of Mr. Zink that I was recommended to join the school band. I learned how to play the flute and I continued to play it up to college. He has made a dynamic impact on my life. I'll never forget my Mr. Zink.

-- Zelphia D. Williams (formally last named Robinson)

Zelphia Williams - August 31, 2020 at 12:16 PM

DW

He taught me how to play the flute and xylophone. Such a wonderful teacher. I went to Glazer from 1970 to 1974.

Debra Watkins - March 25, 2021 at 01:58 AM

LC

“ *Mr. Zink was my music teacher at Glazer Elementary. He was such a nice man, with music and magic he could put a smile on any child’s face. I am sorry for your loss. What a bless to be related to such a wonderful person. 🙏*

Linda Cleveland - March 25, 2020 at 02:13 PM

KC

“ *I was a student of Mr. Zink at Glazer Elementary School during the early 1970s. He was our music teacher and I remember the magic trick he’d do with a quarter behind our ear. Mr. Zink introduced me to the flute. I continued playing the instrument throughout college. I extend my sincere condolences to the Zink family.*

Kim Cooper - March 24, 2020 at 10:27 PM

AG

“ I will always love and cherish Grandpa. He was an integral part of my early childhood. He taught me to read, how to tie my shoes, and how to play Old McDonald on the piano. My favorite memory is standing next to the piano with my brother, Juan, and singing hymns that Grandpa taught us as he played beautifully beside us. Even after we moved away, I remember fondly Grandpa and Grandma's visits, letters, calls, and cards. Through the years, Grandpa always encouraged my studies, while reminding me to work harder on my grammar! His influence generated a lifelong love for words and inspired my career as a professional writer. He was such a genuine, devoted, caring mentor and the very best Grandpa. My hope is that he left this earth knowing how deeply he was loved.

Rest in Heaven, Grandpa.



Alicia GallegosTrent - March 24, 2020 at 05:02 PM

MO

Very nice, heartfelt tribute!

Mom - March 24, 2020 at 06:00 PM

MM

“ Robert Zink, our uncle, was always cheerful and full of fun. In earlier days, we young McGraths would anxiously await his arrival (occasional visits, maybe once every 2 years or so). Usually, he would pull up to our little house of many children, wearing his Franciscan dress suit with Roman collar. He always borrowed another priest’s car, usually a Model T with stick shift from the floor. (We loved when he would take us for a short ride). As soon as he was inside our house, he would quickly get into more comfortable clothes and start fascinating us with his magic tricks. So fun! In later years, we began to appreciate Robert as a great singer, story teller, and a warm, generous, humble man. He lived an admirable life and has been inspirational to everyone who ever knew him — as a Franciscan priest, as a husband and family man, teacher, musician, singer, and as a devout Catholic. (Pertaining to his Zink family pictures, attached, Robert was the 4th oldest)



Michael McGrath - March 24, 2020 at 04:37 PM

KC

“ Uncle Robert was a good and kind soul. I loved visiting w uncle Robert...he always paid attention to us when we were children and was quick to entertain w music or magic tricks. His faith was strong and he gifted many nieces and nephews w a crucifix at their weddings. External rest grant unto you, dear uncle!

Kara Chavey - March 21, 2020 at 12:46 PM



“ *There are no words to express how much we truly loved and cherished my papa. It was an honor to have him in our lives. The kindness and love he gave to us was limitless. I learned so much from about how to treat others, how to have patience and compassion and so much more. He loved to laugh. He will forever live in our hearts. He loved my mom deeply and it warms my heart to know he is finally home with her. My papa may be gone from this earth but he lives in God's house now without pain and sadness. He was the best papa to us all. It was an honor and a blessing to have had him in our lives. Saying I will miss him doesn't come close to adequately express how much he truly meant to us. I know he walks in God's house now and that gives me peace. Save my seat in heaven right beside you and mom and all the family members who are already with you.....*

Love, Phyllisann

Phyllis Hayes - March 21, 2020 at 10:00 AM

JU

“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Juana - March 19, 2020 at 05:16 PM

JU

“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Juana - March 19, 2020 at 05:14 PM

JU

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Juana - March 19, 2020 at 05:12 PM

LA

“ *It is difficult at best, to attempt to honor my Papa in words because there are so many. It is never an easy task to capture someone's true essence. Papa loved me as any dad could love his own. He may not have given me the gift of life, but he gave me the gift of having him as an integral part of my life for over 50 years! The joy of having him in my life to share all of my milestones is definitely an immense treasure.*

He was also a great Grandpa to my two children. He enjoyed them from birth to adulthood. Always interested in their endeavors and accomplishments. They love him dearly.

Papa, I can no longer see you with my eyes, hear your hearty laughter, feel your sincere hugs, but I will always feel you in my heart. You now rest in the arms of angels. In a place of peace and love.

LaJuana - March 19, 2020 at 03:44 PM

JM

Beautiful, comment LuJuana. We love you, Sally and Jack

PS I submitted an obituary for Robert, Should appear on this site within the next 24 hours.

John McGrath - March 19, 2020 at 05:15 PM

JM

Great photos, too. Thank you, Sally and Jack

John McGrath - March 19, 2020 at 05:17 PM

DZ

Uncle Robert, Rest in deepest peace, dear old soul. Your light shines forever onward.

Daniel Zink - March 19, 2020 at 05:36 PM

JU

Thank you Sally and Jack for your nice comments! Papa truly enjoyed having you close by (in Michigan).

Juana - March 19, 2020 at 05:57 PM

JM

They were always so proud of you!

Jack McGrath - March 19, 2020 at 08:26 PM

JU

I miss them both even though it was their time to go, The fond memories keep flowing through my mind. If any of Papa's family visit Colorado (Denver metro area), please let me know. I would love to take you out to dinner. Take Care

Juana - March 19, 2020 at 09:53 PM

JU

Very nicely written obituary.

Juana - March 20, 2020 at 01:53 PM

JU

Thank you!

Juana - March 20, 2020 at 01:54 PM

MG

Loved Uncle Robert, who sang and played piano and organ so beautifully. He taught us several songs to sing. A sweet and gentle soul.

Margaret M Gerstle - March 21, 2020 at 08:34 AM

JM

Thank you for this, Margaret. Robert was a choral director and taught in short order Margaret and my other sisters a beautiful harmonized version of the Ave Maria, which they sang beautifully at Mom's and Dad's funerals and at family reunions..

John McGrath - March 21, 2020 at 10:34 AM