



Rev. James Craig Plunkett

July 15, 1948 - February 16, 2025

Reverend James Craig Plunkett, a devoted priest of the Diocese of Fresno, peacefully went to the Lord on February 16, 2026

Born to James B. Plunkett and Moselle Nishkian, Father Craig was raised with the values of faith, dedication, and service that would later define his priestly ministry. He attended Garces Memorial High School in Bakersfield from 1962 to 1966 and went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Animal Science from California State University, San Luis Obispo (1966–1971) . Answering a deeper call to serve the Lord, he pursued theological studies at Saint Meinrad School of Theology in St. Meinrad, Indiana.

Father Craig was ordained a deacon on October 29, 2005, and ordained to the priesthood on May 27, 2006, for the Diocese of Fresno by Most Reverend John T. Steinbock. That same day, he was incardinated into the Diocese of Fresno.

Throughout his priestly ministry, Father Craig served faithfully in several parishes across the Diocese. He began as Parochial Vicar at St. Philip the Apostle in Bakersfield (2006), later serving at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Clovis (2009). In 2016, he was appointed Administrator of Divine Mercy Parish in Clovis and was named Pastor there in 2018. His retirement was accepted on September 1, 2020, by Most Reverend Joseph V. Brennan.

In addition to his parish ministry, Father Craig served as Spiritual Advisor to the Catholic Professional and Business Club (CPBC) from July 1, 2015 to July 1, 2017, guiding Catholic leaders in integrating faith with their professional and civic lives.

Father Craig will be remembered for his gentle presence, faithful leadership, and steadfast devotion to the people entrusted to his care. His years of service reflected a shepherd's heart — one that sought to accompany, encourage, and uplift those he served.

May he now share in the eternal reward promised to good and faithful servants.

“Well done, good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your master.”
— Matthew 25:23

Visitation will be held at St. John's Cathedral on Thursday, March 12, 2026 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. with a vigil service commencing at 6:00 p.m.

A Funeral Mass will be celebrated at St. John's Cathedral on Friday, March 13, 2026 at 10:30 a.m. Interment will follow at St. Peter's Cemetery.

Cemetery Details

St. Peter's Cemetery

264 N. Blythe Avenue
Fresno, CA 93706

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 12. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (PT)

St. John's Cathedral
2814 Mariposa Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Vigil Service

MAR 12. 6:00 PM (PT)

St. John's Cathedral
2814 Mariposa Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Funeral Mass

MAR 13. 10:30 AM (PT)

St. John's Cathedral
2814 Mariposa Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Tribute Wall

JP

“ *Worked with Craig at Stauffer Chemical Company. Craig was a salesman. Happy person full of life. We were friends as well as coworkers. Craig had many friends and I recall him mentioning a sister. I'm sure he will be missed.*

Joy Poston - March 13 at 02:15 AM

LC

“ *The Music Ministry at St Philip the Apostle in Bakersfield will have a mass said in honor of Fr Craig. Sending love and prayers to his friends and family.*



Liz Cervantes - March 08 at 03:30 PM

GG

“ *I met him at Garces and remained a dear friend until the end We had frequent conversations sharing God, laughter, and many memories. I spoke when he was made Administrator at Divine Mercy in Clovis... I knew the kindness, faith, and spirit he shared with all in his orbit,.. He was a loving servant for his God . I sadly watched and shared his decline. May he now be at peace and at home. May God bless him
Good bye my friend... with love Gregg*

Gregg Gunner - March 08 at 02:33 PM