In Memoriam: Msgr. George P. Graham (1926–2016)
Msgr. Robert J. Batule

The Reverend Monsignor George P. Graham, a member of the Advisory Board of the Society of Catholic Social Scientists, died on October 10th of last year. He was in the sixty-fourth year of his priestly ministry, almost all of it in service to the Diocese of Rockville Centre where he worked as a canonist and as a pastor before becoming active in the Society of Catholic Social Scientists.

He started out as a parish priest in the Diocese of Brooklyn, but after just a few years Fr. Graham was selected by the founding Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre to work in the Chancellor’s Office. Not long after that, he was assigned to advanced studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where he obtained degrees in canon law, including his first doctoral degree. For nearly fifteen years, Fr. Graham worked in the diocesan marriage tribunal and while there he received papal honors with the title Monsignor. In 1981, Msgr. Graham was appointed the Pastor of Saint Bernard Church in Levittown, New York, where he served until his retirement in 2001.

Msgr. Graham was a voracious reader and loved to study, especially in fields related to his priestly ministry. Thus, it was not surprising that he pursued and received a second doctoral degree in the area of Religious Studies at New York University. He wrote his dissertation on the American philosopher William James.

Msgr. Graham joined the Society of Catholic Social Scientists after its founding in 1992, and was eventually asked to serve on the Advisory Board of the Society and also was its New York Metropolitan Chapter President for a number of years. He attended national conferences and delivered papers a good many times. He also wrote an impressive number of entries for the encyclopedia volumes produced by the SCSS in recent years. In 2012, Msgr. Graham was the recipient of an award from the SCSS for his scholarly contributions and the counsel he had given to the officers of the Society.

All the while Msgr. Graham was a dedicated pastor, he maintained an active interest in academic affairs and would happily accept offers to teach and generously share his vast storehouse of knowledge and learning. For more than a few years, Msgr. Graham taught as an adjunct faculty member at Saint John’s University (Jamaica, New York), Molloy College (Rockville Centre, New York) and Saint Joseph Seminary (Yonkers, New York).

Msgr. Robert J. Batule

When I was a seminarian, I worked in a summer program at the parish where Msgr. Graham was pastor. Every morning before the activities commenced for the day, Msgr. Graham could be found in the playground talking to youngsters—either before or after he offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Just days before his death, I was fortunate to see Msgr. Graham. His sister was at his bedside and together they were praying the rosary.

As the Society marks its twenty-fifth anniversary this year, we pause and give thanks for members and advisors like Msgr. Graham. They gave the best of themselves that Catholic social thought might be promoted in as many ways possible given our vocations and the mission of the SCSS. May we continue to benefit from the prayerful intercession of Msgr. Graham and all the other faithful sons and daughters of the Church from where they are now, we pray, in the heavenly Kingdom.

_Requiescat in pace. Tu es sacerdos in aeternam._