



Thomas Michael Kelly

April 12, 1930 - February 4, 2026

Thomas Michael Kelly, age 95, passed away on February 4, 2026, at the Medilodge of Sault Ste Marie, Michigan. Tom was born in Chicago, Illinois, on April 12, 1930, to the late George and Mary Ellen (Haley) Kelly.

Thomas was the beloved husband of thirty-six years to the late Mary Ann, nee Duffy. He graduated with a bachelor's degree from St, Mary's of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois. Tom earned a four-year study grant to the Gregorian University in Rome and a degree in Theology. He was ordained a Catholic priest in Rome. Returning from Rome in 1956, Tom was aboard the Andrea Doria when it sank approaching the United States. He has been cited in numerous books and articles about the sinking credited with helping to save other passengers.

As a priest, he spent fifteen years in the Archdiocese of Chicago serving parishes, and as teacher and department chair at Quigley North seminary/high school. Tom was active many organizations in the Archdiocese. While in this position, he received master's degree in Sociology from The University of Notre Dame and master's degree in Education from Loyola University.

In 1970, he moved to Sault Ste. Marie and began his teaching career at Lake Superior State University as an Assistant Professor of Sociology, a position he

held until his retirement in 1992. In 1977, Tom was named the Distinguished Teacher of the Year. In retirement, he continued to support LSSU by teaching and lecturing to classes. In 1993, LSSU awarded him with the Status of Professor Emeritus. He consulted on employee education both at Algoma Steel and St Mary's Paper Company for many years.

Tom and his wife Mary Ann were active in the Catholic Newman Center and at St. Joseph's parish. For thirty years, this work involved sessions in marriage preparation and religious education for many groups in the United States and in Canada. After the death of Mary Ann, he became involved in volunteering to the Hospice of the East Upper Peninsula (EUP). Based on his work, the governor of Michigan appointed him to the Chippewa County Board of the Michigan Department of Human Services.

As widower, Tom began writing poetry sets and shared them with friends and family. He also relied on single support groups. A life well shared with many he touched.

Tom is survived by three generations of nieces and nephews.

Tom was preceded in death by his soulmate of thirty-six years, Mary Ann; sisters, Mary Ellen (Joseph) Rauch and Joan Kelly; and brother, George (Mary) Kelly.

A Celebration of Tom's Life will be held on May 16, 2026, at the St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, 606 E 4th Ave, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783. Visitation will begin at 10:00 AM with the Memorial Mass to begin at 11:00 AM.

Donations in Tom and Mary Ann's name can be made to the Hospice of the EUP, 308 W 12th Ave., Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783. www.hospiceoftheeup.com

Condolences may be given to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY **16**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church
606 E. 4th Ave.
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

Celebration of Life

MAY **16**. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church
606 E. 4th Ave.
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

Tribute Wall

SN

“ Tom and Mary Ann were precious to me and my whole family. We met them in Indianapolis in 1965 or 1966. Mary Ann babysat me and we were in contact with them for years. We visited Tom a few years ago in Sault Ste. Marie, and loved seeing him. He was always positive, kind and caring to all of those around.

With love,

Susan (Swisshelm) De Nies

Susan De Nies - May 16 at 05:01 PM

CG

“ My sincere condolences to the family of Professor Kelly. I had him for Soc of Sex at Lake State many decades ago, but I didn't really get to visit with him and his beautiful wife until after. They would come to Frost Donuts for a donut often and chat with me as I worked and whoever else was there. He was such a beautiful and sincere man. He and Mary Ann meant a lot to me and I have thought of them often over the years with gratitude. Thank you Prof Kelly for your incredible light and love. We will see you again someday in the great Ever-after. ❤️

Cathy Gammon - May 13 at 08:39 PM

SD

“ Tom (and MaryAnn) was an integral member of our Canadian family for almost fifty years. We met them when they attended a Marriage Encounter 'core' group meeting just outside of Echo Bay, Ontario (15 min. drive from Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.) They knocked on the Lefevre's door one evening and walked into our hearts! We met as a core group sharing our spiritual lives for almost 30 years and as a close group of friends ever since. They were the most loving and caring people who shared their life stories and their faith with us and we all , five couples of varying ages, grew as individuals, as sacramental couples and as parents raising our families together.

Tom and MaryAnn were instrumental for Francis and I (we can only speak for ourselves as one of the five couples) in growing our Catholic faith, spiritual life as a married couple and raising our children in the faith. We all shared our 'ups and downs' , our struggles and our 'triumphs' of married life, as we walked the journey together in faith. We were blessed to have the Kellys who guided us gently and were always present to share insights, faith and love. We were family! We shared birthdays and anniversaries and birth of children and we thank our God for the gift of them in our lives.

We miss them both.

Our deepest condolences to all of you, Tom's family members, and pray that our loving Lord will hold you close and bring comfort and Peace to your hearts.

God bless you all,
Sonia and Francis Dube, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

Sonia Dube - May 12 at 08:09 AM

SM

“ My association with Tom Kelly began while I was in high school. Tom and his wife Mary Ann hosted high school students at their home one night a week during the school year for age appropriate Catholic instruction as we were aging out of religious "School". They were terrific people and those that attended the classes got a tremendous benefit from their wisdom and experience. I studied Criminal Justice at Lake Superior State and minored in Sociology and Tom was my professor for a number of classes through my four years there. My wife and I married 5 months after our graduation from Lake State and Tom was our Marriage adviser and preparation counselor. He became a family friend. After I retired, we started coming back to the Sault for extended visits in the summer months and I would see Tom regularly at McDonalds in the morning or Penny's Kitchen at lunchtime. I even ran into him one day at the Verizon store. Everytime I saw him it was a special treat to spend a little time with him. We also converse over facebook often. One of the last times I spoke to him he told me he had written a short book about his experience on the Andrea Doria and volunteered to send me a copy. I received it a couple of weeks later, and he had autographed it for me. It's now one of my most prized possessions. My prayers and heartfelt sympathies go out to his family. Tom surely got the most out of the godly life he lived. He positively touched so many students and others with his volunteer work over his long lifetime. Well done sir and rest in peace.

Steve McLeod - February 27 at 06:09 PM

FE

“ My sincere condolences to the extended family and friends of Prof Kelly. He was a great Professor and mentor to many students over the years and I enjoyed his 'Sociology of Sex' class but may have been disappointed there was not a lab offered. 😞. May all the fond memories give you comfort knowing that he is in heaven celebrating with his soul mate Maryanne, those colleagues who went before him and his extended family. May you rest in eternal peace Prof Kelly. Fly high with the angels 😇 ✨ 💙 💛

Fern - February 26 at 09:26 AM

JE

“ 5 files added to the album Tom With Friends



Jen - February 25 at 09:28 PM