



Fr. Frank Brauer Jr.

JUL 1, 1946 - MAR 30, 2026



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Father Frank J. Brauer, Jr. passed away on March 30, 2026. He was 79 years old. Devoted son of the late Frank Brauer, Sr, and the late Louise Brauer. Treasured brother of Cheryl Brauer, the late Rose Bradford, Carol Dillow, and husband Jack. Cherished uncle to many nieces and nephews, also survived by other family and friends.

The funeral mass will be held on Wednesday, May 20, at 10:00 am at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, 13717 Cuba Rd., Hunt Valley, MD 21030

Obituary obtained from the Catholic Review, April 2, 2026, written by Kate V. Jones.

For much of the COVID-19 pandemic, parishioners of the Catholic Community of St. Francis Xavier in Hunt Valley gathered outdoors for Mass under the leadership of their pastor, Father Frank Brauer. An altar was set up on the grass, families brought their own chairs and, even on Christmas Eve, the community worshipped together outside, warmed by fires tended in steel drums by Boy Scout members.

“It was a lot of work,” remembered Pat Alhouse, a former pastoral associate at St. Francis Xavier. “It was lovely. It was a sharing moment of community.”

That commitment to fostering community, even in challenging circumstances, defined Father Brauer’s priesthood. He died March 30 in Florida after a short time in hospice care. He was 79.

Known for his quiet demeanor and playful sense of humor, Father Brauer had a gift for bringing people together – often in simple but meaningful ways.

When he arrived at St. Francis Xavier in February 2006, he hosted a party to meet parishioners, setting the tone for a pastorate marked by hospitality and connection, Alhouse said. Though he enjoyed gatherings and laughter, he remained a private man.



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In a 2021 interview with the Catholic Review, Father Brauer said his main goal in ministry was to bring parishioners closer to Christ, but not hog the stage while doing it.

“I think it’s one of those things that you don’t want to be imposing things on people,” Father Brauer said. “You got to make them feel comfortable that they want to do this. And that’s why you dialogue with them to make sure that this is the right thing for all of us.”

Alhousie remembered him as a “gentle man,” noting that many people “didn’t get to know him” well. He loved traveling and cooking, and delighted in playfully stirring up children in religious education classes before quietly slipping away with a smile.

“Frank was a witty guy. He was fun to be with,” said Father Bill Viola, a retired priest and former pastor of St. Joseph in Odenton.

Father Brauer formed close friendships during his time at St. Mary’s Seminary in Roland Park, where he studied alongside Father Viola and Father Robert Mitchell of New Jersey.

“He was always perfect,” Father Mitchell said. “I was in every class with Frank for five years and he was meticulous at taking notes. He was also a bundle of fun.”

The three often traveled together, taking trips to Ocean City, touring France and cruising to Mexico. Father Mitchell also recalled Father Brauer’s determination to host a parish dance in Baltimore despite freezing rain and icy conditions.

“He did it,” Father Mitchell said, with a chuckle. “He was a fun person. I know in his parishes, he was loved.”

Father Brauer’s friendships extended beyond the seminary. Father Viola frequently visited his home in Baltimore’s Locust Point neighborhood, where he grew close to the Brauer family.

“They became my adopted family,” Father Viola said. “I was very close to Frank and his mom and dad.”

Raised in Locust Point, Father Brauer’s home parish was Our Lady of Good Counsel in South Baltimore. He initially pursued seminary studies in high school before deciding against the



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priesthood. After graduating, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy Reserve ahead of being drafted.

Although he did not see combat in Vietnam, he served overseas and survived a harrowing incident at sea. In 1968, the U.S.S. Banche was anchored off the coast of Rhodes, Greece, when a powerful storm overwhelmed the aging World War II-era destroyer, according to the 2021 Catholic Review article.

“I said, ‘Well, I’d better get up to the bridge and find out what’s going on. And by the time I got up to the bridge and found out we’re abandoning ship,” Father Brauer told the Catholic Review. “Our friends always said that we just sank the ship so we could go home to our mothers.”

After his military service, Father Brauer spent about 15 years working for a Baltimore shipping company, including time based at the former World Trade Center complex in New York. During those years, he drifted away from regular church practice before eventually returning to the faith.

“That was one of those things. I sort of wandered away from going to church and I decided this isn’t right,” Father Brauer said in the 2021 interview. “And I started going back to church and just became more and more active in the church.”

He was ordained to the priesthood in 1986. He served as associate pastor of St. Ursula, Parkville (1986-90); associate pastor of the Church of the Resurrection, Ellicott City (1990-96); administrator of St. Patrick, Cumberland (1996-97); pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Edgewater (1997-2006); and pastor of the Catholic Community of St. Francis Xavier Parish, Hunt Valley (2006-21).

Upon retiring in 2021, Father Brauer moved to Florida with his sister.


“He was very ready to retire,” Alhouse said. “He always wanted to be in Florida. It was his happy place.”


Email Katie V. Jones at kjones@CatholicReview.org

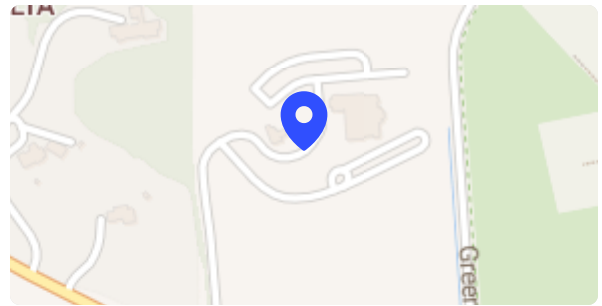


Mass

 **Wednesday**, May 20, 2026

 10:00 AM ET

 **St. Xavier Hunt Valley**
13717 Cuba Rd., Hunt Valley MD 21030





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Frank by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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