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Obituaries / Msgr. Alfred Soave, 77, Former Pastor at 2 Churches

By Katie Thomas
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Msgr. Alfred B. Soave, a former pastor at St. Andrew's Church in Sag Harbor and later at St. Hugh of Lincoln Church in Huntington Station, died in his sleep March 11 at the St. Pius X residence for retired priests in Uniondale. He was 77.

"Monsignor Soave loved life, good food, people and especially his priesthood," said diocesan chancellor Msgr. Francis J. Schneider, a close friend of Soave. "He touched the lives and hearts of many people and priests during his lifetime."

Born on West 37th Street in Manhattan, Soave attended elementary school at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School in Astoria and graduated from Xavier High School in Manhattan in 1940.

Two years into his studies at Fordham University, Soave decided to become a priest, and he spent the next six years at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington. He was ordained by Bishop Thomas E. Molloy on May 22, 1948, at St. James Cathedral in Brooklyn.

Soave's first assignment was as associate pastor at St. Dominic Church in Oyster Bay, where he also served as chairman of the religion department at St. Dominic High School. Schneider said many of Soave's students have since become priests within the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

From 1960 until 1963, Soave was chaplain of the Newman Club, a Catholic student organization, at the State University of New York in Brookville, which later relocated and became SUNY Stony Brook.

He was active in scholastic athletics, serving as the diocesan representative to the New York State Catholic High School Athletic Association, as a trustee member of the Oyster Bay-East Norwich Recreational Council and as president of the Nassau-Suffolk Catholic High School Athletic Association.

In 1969, Soave was assigned to be administrator at St. Andrew's Church in Sag Harbor, and he became pastor there in 1971. Two years later, he moved to St. Hugh of Lincoln Church in Huntington Station, where he served as pastor.

Soave was named an honorary prelate to Pope John Paul II in 1985, earning the title monsignor.

In 1987, Soave accepted a special assignment as rector at the St. Pius X residence, and he also served as vicar for senior priests. From 1988 until his retirement in 1996, Soave also coordinated the Latin Mass there.

Schneider said Soave's passion for life became clear to nearly everyone who met him, and he often worked his personal interests into his homilies, using stories from operas or novels he had read to color his sermon.

"He made them very real and very human," Schneider said.

Soave is survived by several cousins, said Joanne Novarro, spokeswoman for the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

A wake was held Saturday at the Ceceri Funeral Home in Carle Place, and again Sunday at Our

Lady of Hope Church in Carle Place, a parish where as recently as last month Soave frequently assisted. A mass of transferral was offered later that day, and a funeral mass was held Monday at the church. Interment followed at Holy Rood Cemetery in Westbury.

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