

FAREWELL TO OUR FRIEND, MICHAEL

Lori Kalgard
Director of Marketing & Events

Michael Thome was an early supporter of RPR and instrumental in getting KZZQ 101.9 FM Williston-Tioga, ND on the air. Without his generosity, RPR would not be broadcasting from western North Dakota. He believed in the RPR mission so deeply and because of his support more people in the Williston area can learn about the Catholic faith and hear the Word of Jesus Christ every day.

Michael was always tuned into RPR. If he was in his tractor, in his shop or on the road, RPR was on his dial. He was our eyes and ears in the Williston area and if the signal ever failed, Michael would graciously let us know. He was a man who didn't like any pomp and circumstance, but only spending a few minutes with him, you knew he enjoyed good conversation and was genuinely concerned about people. He had a quiet sense of humor and his love for Jesus and his Catholic faith was unmistakable.

He never missed calling in during the fall and spring live drives, often times during the 7:00 AM hour. It wasn't just a phone call with a donation, he always made time to chat with those answering the phone. It could be a weather report, an update on planting, harvesting or the calving season; he always took time to talk for a few minutes. In the busyness of the Live Drive, it was a welcome conversation. He was a very humble man, always making his donations anonymously, and they were usually given in honor of the priests and seminarians in the Bismarck Diocese, the souls in purgatory, and always at least one donation in honor of the RPR staff.

RPR Development Director, Mike Kiedrowski had the honor to work with Michael on different occasions in the last six years.



Michael Thome

He said, "Michael was a breath of fresh air and was always gracious and encouraging to us and our mission. He will truly be missed, but his legacy and what he stood for will remain in perpetuity through the family he loved and the apostolates he supported."

A few years ago, our banquet staff was able to put a face to the voice and name when he attended our fundraising banquet in Williston. We were honored to meet him personally after many of us had only talked to him on the phone. After the banquet, he stayed and helped pack all our equipment until the last piece was tucked into the suburban. Then with a few hugs and handshakes he was on his way back home about an hour away. That's just who he was.

On October 27, 2023, Real Presence Radio lost our dear friend. Michael had become not only an avid listener and supporter of RPR, but a friend to our staff. At 71 years young, God felt his work was done on this earth and called him home.

Real Presence Radio extends our deepest sympathies to the family members that Michael left behind. His surviving sister and brother and several nieces and nephews will clearly feel the void he has left behind. His sister, DorisAnn, says, "We will truly miss his smile, laughter and his occasional mischievousness. But we will cherish the many memories we shared." There will also be an emptiness that his RPR family will feel as well. Rest in peace, our dear friend, Michael.

Year in Review

"When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy" Matthew 2:10

Merry Christmas! Thank you so much for all of your support in 2023. We could do nothing without your words of encouragement and your prayerful gifts. Real Presence Radio began broadcasting EWTN content on November 6, 2004, starting what has become an important source of catechesis and faith building throughout the upper Midwest. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we're still going 19 years later! Here's an abbreviated 2023 "Year in Review."

- **Fall and spring live drives:** Over 150 listeners shared stories of conversion, re-engagement into the faith, and returning to the sacraments. Our live drives remind us that our mission makes a difference and this evangelization method increases the faith in those whose hearts are open. (Our next Live Drive will be May 15-17, 2024)
- **Local content:** 102 episodes of Real Presence Live plus special broadcasts at the ND March for Life in Bismarck, ND, the Steubenville Youth Conference in Rochester, MN, the Faith and Business Conference in Sioux Falls, SD, Catholics Building on Faith in Rapid City, SD, and Putt 4 a Purpose in Fargo, ND (among others). We were blessed to have had over 400 guests and more than a dozen hosts joining you from around the listening area. We are excited to add Wednesdays into our weekly programming in 2024!
- **Inspiring speakers and listener gatherings:** Our banquet speakers reminded us about the importance of our faith in this crazy world and how RPR can make a difference. It is truly a gift to have these events, giving us the opportunity to meet our listeners and supporters and to invite more people into this mission. Catch us in Aberdeen, Fargo, or Duluth in early 2024!
- **We've Moved!** Real Presence Radio has moved to an updated and larger space (with lower rent). We are excited about our future in this new space, and we are excited to put our office back together!



Lynne Devitt

- **Technical challenges:** The radio world is ultimately about our technology, and not surprisingly, we've had to replace a handful of important pieces of equipment. Our Gillette transmitter failed to the point of disrepair. After that failure, we decided to replace three Simian computers that are necessary to program and load content. Our transmitter building in Rochester sustained water damage after significant rain and will require a new roof in the spring. Most recently, three older, in-office "bridge-its" did not come back after the move. Our plan is to replace more equipment in 2024, before it impacts our signals.
- **New donors:** As long-time, faithful donors leave their earthly home, we feel blessed to continue adding new members to this apostolate. We still have work to do as we recover from two years of downturns in donations, but we know the best gift we can give to those who so generously started this mission is to continue adding new donors so we can broadcast to the next generation of truth seekers.

Thank you for your 2023 gifts. Thank you for evangelizing with us. We pray that you consider our mission worthy of your continued support in 2024. We truly cannot do this without you.

Lynne Devitt

