



## Raphael "Ray" Kern

July 23, 1958 - July 19, 2022

The Mass of Christian burial for Raphael "Ray" Kern of Verndale, will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, July 25, at St. Hubert's Catholic Church in Blue Grass. Visitation will be held at the church on Monday from 9:30 a.m. until the time of the Mass.

Days before his 64th birthday, Ray unexpectedly passed away, on July 19, 2022, at Sanford Health in Fargo, ND

Raphael Joseph Kern, known by everyone as Ray, was born to Valerian and LaVonne (Bounds) Kern on July 23, 1958, in Ely, MN. He graduated from high school in Ely and then lived at the home farm north of Verndale while attending the Vocational Technical College in Staples to become a machinist. In the summer of 1977, on a trip back to Ely, he began to date his soon to be wife, Debbie Mattila. They were married on January 14, 1978 at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely. They began their life together in the Twin Cities area for nearly three years where Jeremiah (Jerry) and Joseph (Joe) were born. Shortly after Joe was born, they moved back to the Verndale farm where Marie, Matthew (Matty) and Raya became family additions. In 1987, they built a home about one mile from the farm which is where Hillary was born—the final addition to the Kern family.

Ray worked as a machinist for 3M in Staples and was proud that he was

never late to work in his 35 year career. He passed down that sense of responsibility to all of his children. Ray had a “machinist’s eye” and enjoyed the challenge of figuring things out. Four of his children would go on to work part-time jobs at 3M.

In his earlier years Ray was an avid trapper, hunter, and outdoorsman. His love for deer hunting would carry on to his later years. Deer hunting season was always a special time for Ray with all the preparations including cleaning and sighting in rifles, clearing shooting lanes, gathering hunting clothing for everyone, and the never-ending deer stand repairs. Family bonding took place while discussing who was going to sit in which deer stand, and then exchanging the hunting stories of each day.

It was such a joy for Ray when the grandchildren started coming. He enjoyed giving them 4-wheeler and tractor rides, pulling them around in sleds behind the snowmobile, and giving “jammie drives” around the block to count wildlife. The grandchildren loved to sit on Papa’s lap to talk, read books, and watch YouTube videos. He showered them with “err oohh” bear hugs and “bully-bullies”. Getting the whole family together at the cabin in Ely on the 4th of July each year was a highlight of the summer. Family was his pride and joy. His children were always leaning on him for advice, guidance, and wisdom.

Ray loved the history of the Kern family and farm. He collected and restored family heirlooms and was known to never throw anything away. He enjoyed tinkering on his tractor and was always involved in some sort of project around the property.

Ray was a devout Catholic who prayed the Rosary often, a testament to his loving and faithful parents. He was a humble, gentle, and passionate husband who couldn’t stand to be away from his wife. Being with her is what he enjoyed the most. He loved Debbie more than anything in this world and it

showed just as much, if not more, in year 44 of marriage as it did on day one.

Preceding Ray in death was his father, Valerian. Ray will always be remembered by his loving wife, Debbie of Verndale; mother, LaVonne Kern of Verndale; children: Jerry Kern of Verndale, Joe Kern of Lisbon, ND, Marie (Shawn) Mullen of Duluth, Matt (Stacy) Kern of Blaine, Raya (Eric) Olson of Verndale and Hillary (TJ) Hanson of Mapleton, ND; grandchildren: Jared, Olivia, James, David, Max, Isaiah, Isaac, Augustine, Shania, Taylor, Evan and Tylon.

Serving as pallbearers will be Ray's children.

Burial will be in St. Hubert's Catholic Cemetery, Blue Grass, MN.

Memorials may be directed to Mater Dei Apostolate at [materdeiapostolate.org/donate](http://materdeiapostolate.org/donate) (PO Box 3359, Duluth, MN 55803)

# Cemetery Details

## St. Hubert's Catholic Cemetery

17343 220th Street  
Sebeka, MN 56477

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 25. 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Hubert's Catholic Church  
22008 Co Rd 23  
(10 miles N. of Verndale on Co Rd 23)  
Blue Grass, MN 56477

## Service

JUL 25. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Hubert's Catholic Church  
22008 Co Rd 23  
(10 miles N. of Verndale on Co Rd 23)  
Blue Grass, MN 56477

# Tribute Wall



“ Schuller Family Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern



Schuller Family Funeral Homes - July 22, 2022 at 07:55 PM

GD

What a beautiful video tribute ❤️❤️❤️

Gene & Mary Denny - July 22, 2022 at 09:19 PM

MU

This video is absolutely beautiful! I'm so sad that all those who he loves and who love him are suffering such a loss of an obviously beautiful father and husband.

maria uselman - July 23, 2022 at 12:04 AM



To all the Kern family....I am so sorry for your loss....I am sorry especially for Jerry who I know from fishing with he and Joe Slette. such a beautiful tribute video. Its obvious some people exist and some people live. The Kern family lives life right and loves to help others , which in my mind is of the best of traits one can have

John Klabunde

John Klabunde - July 23, 2022 at 04:24 PM

CO

My prayers are with all of you.

Carol Derby Osborn - July 24, 2022 at 06:33 AM

BH

*What a beautiful tribute. So much love in that family. Our prayers are with all of you. The Hanson, family*

**Barbara Hanson** - July 24, 2022 at 09:09 PM

DM

“ *Condolences to the family. I ran into Ray a few years ago at Sams ... grew up across the street from him....old memories of Studebakers and Arctic Cats!*

**dave marttila** - July 26, 2022 at 06:52 PM



“ *"The Old Rugged Cross 30" Rose Gold Sonnet Chime was purchased for the family of Raphael "Ray" Kern.*



July 25, 2022 at 07:34 AM

BB

“ *Bradley P Bounds lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern*



**Bradley P Bounds** - July 24, 2022 at 11:31 PM

SE

“ *Prayers for you all, thinking of you, Marie, and your family. God bless.  
Dcn Kyle, Sandy, Elisabeth and Maria Eller*

**Sandy Eller** - July 24, 2022 at 07:37 PM

JC

“ Our deepest sympathy to the Kern family. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you as you navigate through this tragic loss. We hope that all the love and happy memories you all hold and shared help bring you peace. Our hearts go out to you. \*hugs\*



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**Jim and Janell Carr** - July 23, 2022 at 10:39 PM

MB

“ What sad, sad news. We didn't know Ray well, but knew him as a terrific neighbor on Garden Lake. He came from a line of can-do folks, and there's no doubt his family continues this most valuable tradition. A more thoughtful, kind, and gentle man has been lost to us all. Our thoughts and prayers to the family.  
Neighbors Peg and Bob

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**Margaret Butorac** - July 23, 2022 at 06:06 PM

BT

“ My condolences to the Kern family and friends. I met Val and his wife after I bought my property near their cabin on Garden Lake, and of course Jerry soon after..... when family came up, I'd run into them here and there. Many times I walked across the road to just check on things if I saw tracks going in the drive. Always friendly and with a smile, we'd have short chats. R.I.P., and peace to the family.  
Bear on the Fernberg Road

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**Barry Tungseth** - July 23, 2022 at 03:50 PM

BB

“ Prayers to all of the families!!



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**Bruce and Barb Brown** - July 23, 2022 at 03:07 PM



“ [Memorial Trees](https://www.schullerfamilyfh.com/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was purchased for the family of Raphael "Ray" Kern.

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July 23, 2022 at 11:42 AM



“ Pink Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Raphael "Ray" Kern.



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July 23, 2022 at 11:28 AM

RS

“ I had the privilege of working with Ray at 3M. I always had the utmost respect for him. So sorry for your loss. May the Lord give you strength in the days ahead. Roddy Sams

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**Roddy Sams** - July 23, 2022 at 11:24 AM

MH

“ *Marlsdene Heinen lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern*



Marlsdene Heinen - July 23, 2022 at 09:45 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Raphael "Ray" Kern.*



July 23, 2022 at 08:13 AM

TF

“ *The Jake Uselman family purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Raphael "Ray" Kern.*



The Jake Uselman family - July 23, 2022 at 12:14 AM

LM

“ *Linda McIntire lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern*



Linda McIntire - July 23, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MK

“ Mike And Tammy Kircher lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern



Mike and Tammy Kircher - July 22, 2022 at 11:40 PM

WS

“ Ray always had a huge heart...helping everyone, spreading kindness to all and a radiant smile! Our hearts hurt for you Deb and your wonderful family. May you each continue to feel Ray's (Dad/Grandpa) love n Gods love wrapped around you till you can be reunited in heaven. So grateful for God's gift of Salvation n eternal life. Please know we care deeply for each of you and love you each dearly. Continued prayers for God's comfort, peace and strength.



Wayne and Sheila Stave - July 22, 2022 at 11:22 PM

AS

“ Amanda Snyder lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern



Amanda Snyder - July 22, 2022 at 11:05 PM



“ Max Kern lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern



Max Kern - July 22, 2022 at 08:20 PM



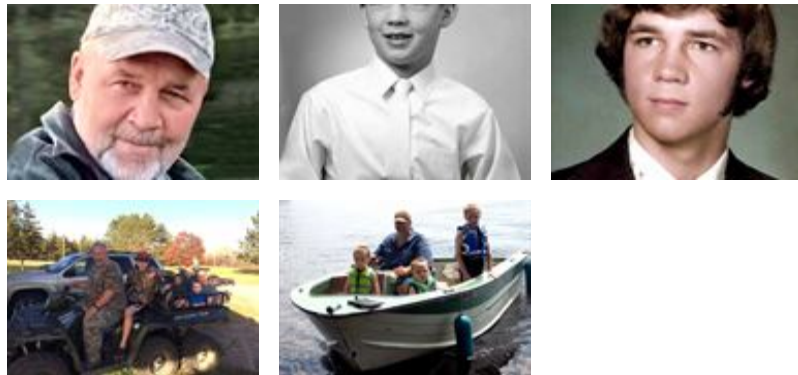
“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Raphael "Ray" Kern.



July 22, 2022 at 08:06 PM



“ 47 files added to the album LifeTributes



Schuller Family Funeral Homes - July 22, 2022 at 07:43 PM

JH

“ Joe And Diane Hinkle lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern



Joe and Diane Hinkle - July 22, 2022 at 06:51 PM

BC

“ Brent And Tabitha Captain lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern



Brent and Tabitha Captain - July 22, 2022 at 06:19 PM

KU

“ Karen Umland lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern



Karen Umland - July 22, 2022 at 04:55 PM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Raphael "Ray" Kern.



July 22, 2022 at 03:46 PM

LA

“ Lisbon Education Association purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Raphael "Ray" Kern.



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Lisbon Education Association - July 22, 2022 at 03:40 PM

SK

“ We miss you so much papa 😭 Love you always and forever...  
💜 Stace 💜

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Stacy Kern - July 22, 2022 at 02:02 PM



“ Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Raphael "Ray" Kern.



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July 22, 2022 at 10:07 AM

LW

“ Louis And Tina Wegscheid lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern



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Louis and Tina Wegscheid - July 22, 2022 at 08:51 AM

MK

“ *Max Kern lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern*



Max Kern - July 21, 2022 at 07:16 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Raphael "Ray" Kern.*



July 21, 2022 at 07:06 PM

MK

“ *Ray Kern was an animal person. He loved animals and was always with them. Even though he is not with us today, he still holds a place in our hearts. He is dearly missed and in a better place. My condolences to Grandma Debbie and family. With love and support, Max Kern*



Max Kern - July 21, 2022 at 04:33 PM

RS

“ *Rhonda Snyder lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern*



Rhonda Snyder - July 21, 2022 at 12:35 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Raphael "Ray" Kern.*



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July 21, 2022 at 12:24 PM



“ *Our deepest sympathies for the family. Ray was a great neighbor.*



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**Brent and Cheryl Hahn** - July 21, 2022 at 11:39 AM



“ *Deb and family: So very sorry for your loss. May God bless Ray's memory to all of you and surround you with peace and comfort.*

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**Bill and Nancy Zondlo** - July 21, 2022 at 11:01 AM



“ *Jennifer Masog-Podratz lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern*



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**Jennifer Masog-Podratz** - July 21, 2022 at 10:59 AM

RJ

“ I am so sorry to hear what happened to Ray. He and you Debbie, were so good to Romie and Betty. They really depended on you for all their help and you were there for them. May God bless you now with His loving comfort and help you in the days ahead.

Rose Kern Johnson - July 21, 2022 at 09:43 AM

AG

“ Angela Gaffke lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern



Angela Gaffke - July 21, 2022 at 09:30 AM

GG

“ Ginger & Roland Gilbert lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern



Ginger & Roland Gilbert - July 21, 2022 at 09:25 AM

GD

“ Kern Family, We are so sorry for the loss of Ray, we are keeping you all in our thoughts and prayers. He was such a kind and compassionate man and he will be missed by so many. Love you all 🙏❤️



Gene & Mary Denny - July 21, 2022 at 09:01 AM

PD

“ *Patty Desrocher lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern*



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**Patty Desrocher** - July 21, 2022 at 07:50 AM

GD

“ *We are so sorry for the loss of Ray 😞 He was such a kind, and compassionate man and will be missed by so many. May God give you all strength to help you in the difficult days ahead. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all 🙏🙏🙏*

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**Gene & Mary Denny** - July 20, 2022 at 11:29 PM

GD

“ *Gene & Mary Denny lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" Kern*



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**Gene & Mary Denny** - July 20, 2022 at 11:24 PM