

CIA agent killed in bomb blast remembered as loving husband, father

ARLINGTON, Va. – Harold Brown Jr., one of seven CIA agents killed in a bombing in Afghanistan Dec. 30, was a loving and involved husband and father, said a fellow parishioner at Brown's Virginia Catholic parish.

"He was a bright light in the community – always very pleasant, just an outstanding man," said Peg Telesca, director of religious education at St. Mary of Sorrows Parish in Fairfax.

Brown, a native of Massachusetts, lived in Fairfax Station with his wife, Janet, and the couple's three children: Paul, 12; Lena, 10; and Claire, 2.

A funeral Mass for Brown was celebrated Jan. 9 at St. John's Church in Clinton, Mass. A memorial Mass was to be celebrated Jan. 15 at the worship center at St. Mary of Sorrows.

Brown, 37, died at a former military base in Khost City after a suicide bomber set off an explosion. The blast killed Brown and six other American intelligence agents and left six others wounded. The Taliban later claimed responsibility for the bombing, and it has since been named one of the worst attacks in CIA history.

Brown had a bachelor's degree in political science from George Washington University in Washington. Prior to working for the CIA, Brown was an Army officer and worked for the State Department. He had been deployed to Afghanistan last April.

An active parishioner of St. Mary of Sorrows, he taught elementary religious education classes. He also was involved in the Knights of Columbus.

Colleen Turgeon, director of music at the parish, knew Brown through his two oldest children, who are involved in the children's choir. She remembers him as a very

supportive and enthusiastic father who always had a smile on his face.

“Harold was the kind of parent who always showed up when the kids were singing at Mass and he was in town and just beamed with pride seeing what his kids could do,” Turgeon told the Arlington Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Arlington Diocese. “He would pick them up after practice and would always smile and say hello to us.”

Even though his job often took him away from his family for long periods of time, Turgeon said Brown was always highly involved in the community when he was at home.

“When he was here, he did everything he possibly could, knowing the times he’d be out of town on duty were necessary,” she said. “He was a very loving and positive Christian father – of the Christian values, he exemplified all of them.”

She said Brown, his wife and their children were “just a beautiful family” and “did whatever they could do for each other, supporting each other, which she called “the mark of a great Christian family.”

Father Stefan Starzynski, parochial vicar, remembers seeing Janet and the family on Christmas Eve, only five days before Brown was killed. When he spoke to Janet, she talked about how excited the family was for Harold’s return home in a few months.

“We say it all the time, ‘they’re nice people,’ but this family really was – their children are delightful, the whole family was a delight to know,” Father Starzynski said. “They were very involved and we’ll try to be as supportive as we can and do whatever we can do to help.”

According to Turgeon, Brown’s death has touched the whole parish.

“He was a big supporter of our parish and our programs. There are groups that will miss his support and we hope that we as a parish can be supportive of his family and his children in these difficult times to come,” she said.