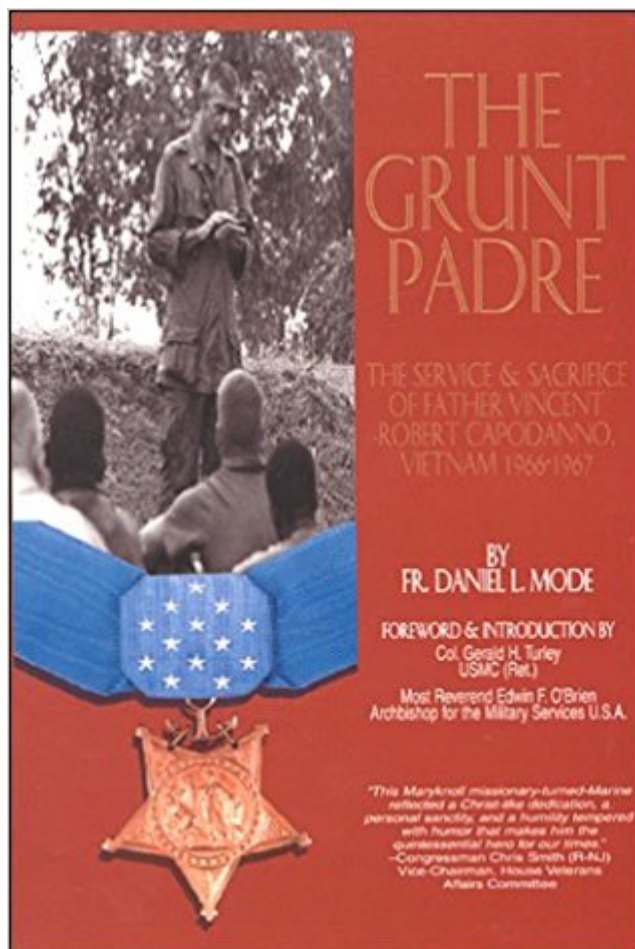


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# The Grunt Padre: Father Vincent Robert Capodanno, Vietnam, 1966-1967



## Synopsis

Navy Chaplain killed in Vietnam 1967 with Marine search unit in operation Swift, outnumbered 2500 to 500 Marines, killed protecting a corpsman who was administering first aid to soldier. Received Congressional Medal of Honor, Bronze Star and 3 Purple Hearts. Even though wounded refused to leave battle area to assist his grunts. Most recognized and respected chaplain in that war, memorials and buildings throughout the world named after him. This is a hero.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Father Daniel Lawrence Mode grew up in a Navy family. Fr. Mode himself is a commissioned Navy chaplain. The author's education includes a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, with advanced degrees in theology and church history. While studying history at Mount Saint Mary's Seminary, he stumbled upon the research threads that led him to uncovering the remarkable Fr. Capodanno story. Besides Fr. Mode's reserve duty as a Navy chaplain, he currently serves as chaplain and Vice Principal of Bishop Denis J. O'Connell High School in Arlington, VA.

I wish there was a more superlative word I could use to describe this book, than inspirational. I couldn't put it down. It is very well written and despite the fact that the author did not actually meet his subject, there is much affection and admiration that breathes through every word that he writes about Fr. Capodanno. This book is particularly significant in a day and age when the reputation of the priesthood has been besmirched by unworthy priests. Fr. Capodanno exemplifies the spiritual heights that a truly committed and faithful priest can reach if he dies to himself and lets Christ live in

him. I can only hope and pray that his cause for canonization moves forward rapidly. He is God's answer to a culture where the popular concept of manhood pales to a mere shadow of what it was meant to be. Men were meant to be chivalrous, valiant, strong, self-sacrificing and PURE. Fr. Capodanno's life is proof that God continues to raise up holy men and women to be a bright light to us, when the lights in our souls flicker and threaten to go out. I can only echo the sentiment of another reviewer who said, "Thank you, Father Daniel Mode, for writing this book."

Just reading a couple of the reviews choked me up, let alone the book itself. In the life story of Father Vincent Capodanno, we find the essence of Christianity: the "normal" Christian life as it is meant to be lived. A hallmark of the saints is heroic virtue, especially among the martyrs. While Father Vincent may not have been a martyr in the strict sense, he embodied the heroic virtue of a saint very much like those of Christianity's persecution-laced early centuries. John Keeley, Fr. Vincent's division chaplain, stated in his official report: "He just wanted to be with the grunts. He was more a Marine than anything else." Fr. Vincent knew everyone in his battalion and every one of them knew and was transformed by him. With the missionary zeal of a Maryknoller, he gave his all in apostolic ministry to the troops. In his last heroic act, he shielded a hospital corpsman from enemy fire and thus died for his friend (ref. John 15:13). For his actions that day, Fr. Vincent was awarded, posthumously, the Medal of Honor -- one of only three chaplains so awarded in the Vietnam War. Even World War II's renowned "Four Chaplains", who died alongside most of the crew of the sinking *Dorchester*, were honored, not with the Medal of Honor, but with the Distinguished Service Cross, our military's second highest award. Now Fr. Capodanno is being considered for sainthood in the Catholic Church and "Grunt Padre" author Fr. Mode is the main postulator promoting his cause for canonization. This is a win-win scenario. A man awarded the Medal of Honor may well become a saint. Not unlike Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, honored with both the Templeton Prize and the Nobel Peace Prize. As for the rest of us, we too can be inspired to a higher calling simply by reading this book. Fr. Dennis

A fantastic book to read. Father Capodanno was a most unique, dedicated Marine Chaplain who served his country, fellow Marines and his belief in God, and gave his life as the ultimate sacrifice. I am grateful that Fr. Mode researched and documented the life journey of Father Capodanno in this wonderful book of *THE GRUNT PADRE*. I would highly recommend this book to everyone!

As a member of the Order Sons of Italy in America, Fr. Vincent R Capodanno Lodge #212 in Staten

Island, I am proud to say that this book is an honest depiction of a man well loved and on his way to sainthood. It is an honest depiction of his life and his heroism and should be read by everyone as an inspiration and testament to the human spirit. Author: Marianna Randazzo  
Given Away, A Sicilian Upbringing  
Brooklyn's Best: The Michael Behette Story

This is a wonderful biography of service, sacrifice and love. Fr. Capodanno is now declared "Servant of God," a stage on the road to being declared Saint by the Catholic Church. He lived his faith in self-less service. The book is also a reminder of those difficult years of contention over the Vietnam War. Fr. Capodanno rose above that (inspired by the same motives of love and support for one's country that still moved many Americans then) and served as a military chaplain, giving of himself completely for those he served--Catholics and those of other faiths as well. He reflected the love of Christ through his life and ministry. He is a wonderful role model of love and service for all people--ordained and laity.

I first discovered Fr. Capodanno's story through my dad, who is very devoted to this Medal of Honor winner. I bought this book to learn more about his life, and found his story to be fascinating. The book details Fr. Capodanno's childhood and teen years, his experience as a Maryknoll missionary and his short career as a Navy chaplain stationed in Vietnam. While telling the story, Fr. Mode weaves in excerpts from letters, conversations, homilies, etc. The book is very well-researched and written and includes photographs of Fr. Capodanno and his family, as well as information on memorials in his honor and the Medal of Honor citation. Although written from a Catholic perspective, I think this book would appeal to non-Catholic readers, especially those with a military background, as a story of virtue and bravery displayed by a courageous young man. I'm giving this book to my 14 year-old son to read because I think it's important for young men to have role models besides sports heroes and movie stars. Fr. Capodanno is a true hero, and his story is inspiring and compelling. My only complaint is that the editing could be better. There are several typos and grammar errors that are mildly distracting. Side note: I recently visited Staten Island, Fr. Capodanno's home town, and was able to visit his grave and drive down Father Capodanno Blvd. using information from this book.

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