News



Al Kresta, host of "Kresta in the Afternoon" on Ave Maria Radio, is pictured in an undated photo. Kresta died June 15, 2024. (OSV News/courtesy Ave Maria Radio)



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Longtime Detroit-area radio personality Al Kresta died June 15 six weeks following a liver cancer diagnosis. He was 72.

Kresta, who was host of "Kresta in the Afternoon" on Ave Maria Radio, was formerly a top-rated Christian talk radio host and evangelical Protestant pastor in the 1980s and 1990s who returned to Catholicism, the faith in which he was raised. In 1997, Domino's Pizza founder Tom Monaghan recruited Kresta to launch Ave Maria Communications, where Kresta served as president and CEO in addition to his duties as a host, broadcaster, speaker and author.

On June 14, his daughter Alexis Love posted on his CaringBridge page that Kresta was at home surrounded by family, and that his hospice nurse believed he was "actively dying."

"Every family member had a chance to have a lucid conversation with him before he lost his ability to converse. He has received the apostolic pardon and can raise his hands in praise during worship music," she wrote. "Please join us in praying him through the gates of heaven straight to the throne of grace. Angels fill this place."

On June 15, she posted, "Al had an extremely peaceful passing into eternal life this morning at 10:26. I will post more details about the last few days when I'm able. It

has been a graced time."

Kresta is survived by his wife, Sally, whom he married in 1977, and their five children.

In an announcement about Kresta's death, Ave Maria Radio called him "a devoted husband and father, as well as an exemplary teacher and preacher of the faith of Jesus Christ."

"He was a broadcaster, writer, and author who was, first of all, a missionary," it said. "He drew upon his unique faith background to create what was, arguably, the most fascinating — and most spiritually constructive — talk radio program on the radio in its day."

Kresta authored four books: "Why Do Catholics Genuflect?: And Answers to Other Puzzling Questions About the Catholic Church" (Servant, 2002); "Why Are Catholics So Concerned About Sin?: More Answers to Puzzling Questions About the Catholic Church" (Servant Books, 2005); "Moments of Grace: Inspiring Stories from Well-Known Catholics (with Nick Thomm)" (Servant Books, 2008); and "Dangers to the Faith: Recognizing Catholicism's 21st Century Opponents" (Our Sunday Visitor, 2013).

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In 2003, Kresta lost his leg to necrotizing fasciitis, an infection sometimes described as flesh-eating bacteria.

According to the CaringBridge page, "In early April Al began to notice during his regular gym time working with his new prosthesis that he was growing significantly weak and his abdomen was swelling. After a month of tests on April 29th he was admitted to University of Michigan Hospital and on May 3rd he received the very difficult diagnosis of Liver Cancer."

Social media posts in May suggested that Kresta was working to regain his strength so he could undergo cancer treatment, noting, "Al is being treated by some of the best doctors in the world. He has placed his care in their hands and in the hands of the Lord and he is determined to get better." The family asked for prayers.

After news of Kresta's passing began to circulate, many Catholics took to social media to express their condolences and prayers, highlighting the impact his show had on them. Upon the confirmation of his death by the family, the CaringBridge page has received several messages thanking Kresta for his wisdom and inspiration, as well as prayers for the family.