

In Memoriam

Father Salamon: A Spirit of Joyful Song

Father John Joseph Salamon died peacefully on January 22, 2013 at the St. John Neumann Residence at Stella Maris in Timonium, MD, surrounded by the members of his religious community who were praying for him.

Father Salamon was born on July 8, 1919 in Manhattan, NY, professed his first vows as a Redemptorist on August 2, 1940, was ordained on June 17, 1945 and died on January 22, 2013.

He attended high school at St. Mary's College, the Redemptorist Preparatory Seminary, in North East, PA. When he finished his novitiate year in Ilchester, MD he went on to complete his theological studies at Mount St. Alphonsus, the major seminary in Esopus, NY, where he was ordained.

From 1946 to 1950 he served in St. Wenceslaus Parish in Baltimore. Then he returned to the Redemptorist Preparatory Seminary as a professor where he taught math courses until 1957. Next he served in parish work again in Baltimore, but this time at the Redemptorist parish of St. James until 1961.

Father Salamon continued his priestly ministry for a brief period in the Vice-Province of San Juan at Holy Cross Parish in Christiansted, St. Croix in the Virgin Islands. Then in 1966 he was transferred to the Vice-Province of Richmond where he served faithfully for more than 30 years.

From 1966 to 1969 he was stationed at Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish in Tampa, FL. For the next seven years he ministered in Orangeburg, SC where he took charge of two of the out-missions from that center. Then he returned to Tampa to continue parish ministry for four more years at OLPH.

In 1980 Father Salamon was stationed with the Redemptorist community at St. Alphonsus Villa in New Smyrna Beach, FL until 1999 when he was transferred back to the Baltimore Province and stationed at the St. John Neumann Residence in Saratoga Springs, NY.

On July 1, 2009 Father Salamon was among the first Redemptorists to take up residence in the newly established St. John Neumann Residence at Stella Maris in Timonium, MD.

Father Ed Gray, who learned geometry and trigonometry from Father Salamon recalls, "As a professor, Father Salamon was actually quite a character — in the best sense of that term — because during class recitation he always gave students a second chance to solve problems correctly. I can't say for sure, but I doubt that he ever flunked anyone during his tenure at North East. He appeared to have something of a gruff exterior but he was actually the soul of kindness on the inside, and that was side that came across to all of us."

Another former student, Father Bill Spillane, explains, "When we were learning math, the Korean War was in full blaze at the time. So Father Salamon would take a few minutes of class time to keep us up-to-date on current events while explaining how the ancient Egyptians used rope stretchers to take accurate measurements in the past! He was a gentle prof who certainly knew how to solve the most difficult equations at the blackboard, even if we couldn't."

"Here in the south," says current Vice-Provincial of Richmond, Father Jerome Chavarria, "one of the vital apostolates performed by the confreres stationed at the Villa is called 'swing' man. Although these confreres are semi-retired, they cover the weekend liturgies at remote parishes so that other clergy can have some vacation time. Father Salamon was a generous 'swing' man when he came to New Smyrna.



“And while some confreres would kid him about collecting new shoes, socks, and watches to give away,” continues Father Jerome, “he was also a gatherer of souls as well. I followed him to several assignments and the people always spoke highly of his service and his joy.”

“He was very quiet at Saratoga,” admits his final superior, Father Gerard Szymkowiak. “But even the onset of dementia here in Timonium brought him a spontaneous gift of singing. He was especially fond of patriotic songs and wasn’t opposed to combining adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with strains of ‘God Bless America.’ I’m sure he is singing joyful anthems with the angels even now.”