

## In Memoriam

### As God Wills...

Redemptorist Brother Manuel Martinez, remembered as an unassuming, hard-working confrere, died on the morning of March 15, 2011 at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Towson, MD. He was a member of the religious community of Redemptorists at St. John Neumann Residence at Stella Maris in Timonium, MD.

Brother Manuel was born on July 22, 1928 in Regla, Spain. He professed his first vows as a Redemptorist on August 2, 1959 and was stationed for twelve years in the official capacity as sacristan at St. Clement's Church in Saratoga Springs, NY. However, his energy level went far beyond his official duties. "He also found time to train altar servers, work in the youth ministry program, and organize the biggest and best basketball leagues in the region," says his confrere Father Sean McGillicuddy.



His next assignment brought him to the parish of St. Boniface in Philadelphia. For the next 33 years he served, once again, in the official capacity of taking charge of the parish office. However, this full-time duty was not sufficient. Fellow Redemptorist, Father Anthony Russo recalls, "Brother Manuel also took care of the sacristy, visited the sick, ran the training program for Eucharistic ministers, and taught religious education classes in the school. And as if this weren't enough, he would fill in for the bookkeeper on a regular basis as well."

"Brother Manuel's communion call list was extensive," says Redemptorist Provincial Kevin Moley. "But he went above and beyond taking care of peoples' spiritual needs. He made sure they had bread on the table and food in the pantry. He would take them to the store to ensure that they had the basic necessities, and, if they were sick or disabled, he would do their shopping for them."

"He was pure Spaniard," chuckles Russo. "We went to a few Phillies' games so he could learn the fundamentals of baseball, but in the end he was far more passionate in his discussions about Spanish history, Spanish culture, and Spanish saints."

McGillicuddy recounts the equally passionate story of refutation and reconciliation that occurred between Brother Manuel and the parish organist. "They had an extremely heated argument one time about Spanish politics and for a moment it looked like they were going to go their separate ways. But true to their religious convictions, they eventually shook hands and became life-long friends. They also agreed that they would never discuss politics again."

Co-worker, Father Gerard Brinkmann attests that "Brother Manuel liked people, was full of energy — he never seemed to slow down and was always eager to take on more responsibilities — and was an inspiration of genuine, wholesome piety. I often saw him praying before the Blessed Sacrament." To the casual observer, Brother Manuel may have appeared to be a quiet, traditional, even regimented religious. But to those who really knew him he was quite forward looking. He was intellectually well-read, had tremendous marketing savvy, and even worked out at the local gym on a regular basis.

But the true legacy of his life was his desire to follow the Will of God. In 1990, when asked by his superiors if he wanted to be transferred away from St. Boniface Parish, Brother Manuel replied in a letter: "I never asked to be transferred since the very first day on which I entered the Congregation, and I am not planning to ask now. ... I get up at 4 a.m. and walk around the church for one hour. I do the same at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m.. (The doctor says) I am supposed to walk for four hours daily, but that is all the free time I have." In these daily walks around the sanctuary of the Lord, Brother Manuel traveled closely in the footsteps of an earlier confrere who wrote, "Here the

will of God is done, as God wills, and as long as God wills.” That confrere was Gerard Majella, CSsR, the patron saint of religious brothers.