

Remembrance - Brother Casimir Godebye

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Redemptorist Brother Casimir Godebye (1922-2006), whose artistic talents contributed to the work of attracting many to the faith in Singapore, died on Aug 25, aged 84.

BROTHER CASIMIR GODEBYE died at Mount Alvernia Hospital on Aug 25, 2006. He arrived in Singapore in July 1956 together with Father Herbert Myers, from Australia. He studied art and music before joining the Redemptorists in 1940.

In Singapore, Brother Casimir's artistic talents contributed to the work of attracting many to the faith. He first mooted the idea in 1959 to erect the floral wall for the annual procession in honour of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. The late Father Dobson remarked that it was Brother Casimir's artistic creativity which attracted many people to know and love our Blessed Mother.

In the 1960s Brother Casimir took over the choir and started a youth group called "The Primitives". They gathered each Saturday evening to clean the church after the last Novena session, and had fellowship and sing-along sessions. He also started a band called "The Glass Unions". He used to say that we need music to attract and hold the young people to religion.

Surprisingly, in the mid 1970s Brother Casimir left behind the world of bands, choir and pop music and went to live in an ashram (an Indian religious retreat) in India. There he lived as a hermit in complete silence and prayer and learnt Christian meditation under the auspices of Father Bede Griffith, OSB.

On his return to Singapore, Brother Casimir with the permission of Archbishop Emeritus Gregory Yong, established the "Trinity House of Prayer" at the former St. Francis Xavier Minor Seminary where he conducted classes on meditation. In the 1990s, Brother Casimir, health failing, returned to the Novena Church and eventually spent his last years at St. Theresa's Home.

Brother Casimir will always be remembered by his confreres and his many friends in Singapore as a colourful character who enjoyed life to the full.