

Trending

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The priest of 55 years was frequently heard on EWTN television and radio. He was 81 when he died Oct. 21.

CANCUN, Mexico — Father Pablo Straub, who regularly appeared on EWTN television and whose voice was heard on EWTN Radio, died Oct. 21 in a hospital in Cancun, Mexico.

A member of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, colloquially known as the Redemptorists, and a priest for 55 years, Father Straub was easily recognized and well loved from the numerous series he hosted and the retreats he gave over the years.

“Father Pablo was a longtime host on EWTN and a friend to many of us here at the network,” noted Michael Warsaw, chairman and chief executive officer of the EWTN Global Catholic Network. “We feel a profound sense of loss at the news of his passing.”

It was easy to mistake Father Straub as having a Hispanic background. Born in May 1932 in East Rockaway, Long Island, at an early age he entered a Redemptorist seminary in the Hudson Valley in New York, and, while there, he learned Spanish from some classmates.

After he was ordained in 1958, he was assigned to missionary work, where he became proficient with his newly acquired language. His ministry serving the poorest of the poor took him to Puerto Rico for 20 years, then to the Philippines, the Andes Mountains of Peru and, finally, Mexico for more than 20 years.

Father Straub was active not only in Mexico, but also in the United States, giving missions and retreats frequently through his media outreach. He was a gifted speaker and was comfortable in front of a camera. Often, Father Straub would appear holding a large crucifix.

“Father Pablo carried the cross of Christ with him throughout a life spent professing our Lord’s all-merciful love to the multilingual Catholic masses of the Americas,” remembered Doug Keck, the president and chief operating officer of EWTN.

“Father Pablo wore his heart on his sleeve and, with the crucifix he carried, kept his crucified Lord close to his heart,” said Brian Martin, who added that he felt blessed to be the producer for Father Straub’s *Holy Week Retreat*, *Advent Retreat* and *Meditations on St. Alphonsus Liguori and St. Gerard Majella*.

“You knew that his heart was given completely to his mission in life, as seen by the many missions he gave,” Martin said.

Over the years, anyone who heard Father Straub was immediately drawn by his devotion to the faith, his enthusiasm for it and his eagerness to share it with everyone. These traits were his hallmarks, along with the sense of humor he was apt to show.

Warsaw recalled a recent meeting: “I was with Father Pablo just a few weeks ago in St. Louis, and though he was physically slowed by the symptoms of his previous stroke, his voice and his preaching were as powerful as ever. We will miss that voice here with us, but we are confident that God the Father will welcome home this holy and faithful servant.”

In addition to his service as a retreat leader, Father Straub founded two religious congregations, which combine the contemplative and the missionary, one for men becoming priests and one for women religious: Los Consagrados (and Consagradas) del Santísimo Salvador — the Consecrated of the Most Holy Savior. Their convent and seminary at Mount St. Alphonsus is located near the Coyuca Lagoon on the Pacific Coast just north of Acapulco. (A video showing Father Straub at the seminary can be viewed [here](#).)

A Spiritual Father

Martin noted that he was a genuine spiritual father to many.

“What you saw was what you got with Father Pablo,” he said.

“Some of us referred to him by the Spanish word *Abuelo* (grandfather).”

Among the many deep impressions Father Straub made on Maria Christina Ramos of EWTN Viewer Services came during his visit to Philadelphia one October.

“Father was from Long Island and in his youth had been a big fan of the Brooklyn Dodgers,” Ramos remembered. When he arrived at a friend’s house for dinner with others, the TV was on with the World Series.

“It amazed me when Father said that he had ‘given up’ watching the World Series as a sacrifice!” Ramos vividly remembered. “One would think that watching it would be one of his very few ‘treats,’ but he even gave that up for souls.”

Sister Mary Agnes of Jesus of the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration remembered that when Father Straub came to the network to make a series he would also give a lesson to the sisters.

“They were always very beautiful and spiritual,” Sister Mary Agnes said. “He had a great love for the holy vows and for Our Lord. He was an inspiration.”

While at EWTN, Father Straub stayed at the Madonna guest house. It was there he gave a little glimpse into his constant devotion, as one of the sisters noticed while working at the house.

“He worked very hard for the Lord,” Sister Mary Agnes remembers. “He had a little timer on his desk, and when it would go off, he would say, ‘My God, I love you!’ He would make constant acts of love to the Lord. He would remind himself that way. He was a man in love with God.”

Martin added that he “was a large-souled man, one to whom everyone looked for direction, strength, inspiration,” and he remember his “singular faithfulness as a man after God’s own heart.”

Anna latesta is among those he blessed.

Her first encounter with Father Straub was when he came to Malvern Retreat House in Malvern, Pa., to give a Divine Mercy conference. She and her husband, Bob, worked closely at Malvern with families and at the Marian Day for families.

“He really touched my heart,” Anna latesta said, recalling that special memories continued to grow after that first meeting. “What a privilege it was to know him and watch him work. People would wait in line at the retreats to be in his company. He made each person feel they were the only person there.”

“Through the years, he has been to our home and office,” she said. “Our youngest child was born in Mexico. Of course, Father Pablo was particularly drawn to her. When I mentioned his name last night, she had wonderful memories of how endearing he was.”

Mercy and Joy Personified

latesta vividly recalled the lasting inspiration Father Straub was.

“He personified mercy,” she said. “He was so radiant with the love of Christ. And he exuded joy. He had that childlike quality, even though his teachings were profound. He had that twinkle in his eye that made you want to be in his presence. You had the wonderful realization you were in the presence of Jesus.”

Martin said that you can tell much about a man by the legacy he leaves behind. From Scripture, he quotes Psalm 112:6 in reference to Father Pablo: “The just man shall be in *everlasting remembrance.*”

Martin said, “Father Pablo Straub has loved much, in the manner of the Most Holy Redeemer, and, therefore, he is loved much and will be continually so. May he rest close to the Redeemer’s Sacred Heart in paradise.”

Joseph Pronechen is a Register staff writer.