

Beloved Father Monie retires from Ministry

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Some institutions are called “Home for the Aged” or “Nursing Home.” We, Redemptorists, have an institution which we call “St. Clement Health Care Center.” Our institution is not simply a home where our aged priests and brothers live. Nor is it a nursing home where only the infirmed live. Rather, this center is a home for a Redemptorist community. In that home, we extend our loving care to those among us who are sick and elderly.

St. Clement Health Care Center is located in Liguori, 30 miles south of St. Louis. Nearly 80 years ago, the Redemptorists bought a farm in the foothills of the Ozarks. At that time, this farm was far out in the country. Today it is surrounded by residential neighborhoods. Over the years the Redemptorists have built a monastery, a publication house, a convent for the Redemptoristine nuns, a health care center and a cemetery on this property.

St. Clement Health Care Center was built in 1989. Since then, many of our Redemptorist confreres have lived at St. Clement’s. They received loving health care, both physically and spiritually. Some confreres were in need of long-term health care and lived their sunset years at St. Clement’s. Other confreres needed time for rehabilitation. After they regained their health they returned to active duty.

The Redemptorists own and operate St. Clement’s, but the Redemptorists hire full-time professionals in the medical and health care fields. These professionals, men and women, are present 24-7 to care for resident Redemptorists. The Redemptorists on staff handle the

administrative duties as well as providing spiritual enrichment for the residents.

Last summer, Fr. Monroe Perrier decided that the time has come for him to take up residence at St. Clement's. Our Provincial Superior honored his request. On January 12, he will leave the St. Gerard community in San Antonio and begin living at St. Clement's, joining a couple of his classmates and friends who are presently living there.

Back in the early 1930s, a babe was born in the Irish Channel of New Orleans. He was the last of seven children. His parents named him Monroe, after the name of the doctor, his father's friend, who delivered all seven children. However, throughout his life, especially amongst the Redemptorists, he was affectionately known as Monie.

Monie's father died when he was a very young boy. The loving presence of his mother left a lasting impression on him. His mom attended daily Mass. She was a prayerful woman, who invited Monie to join her at Mass and prayers. At some time, Monie probably dreamt of the day when he would be the priest at the altar, celebrating those Masses and leading people in prayer.

Monie attended St. Alphonsus Elementary School in New Orleans. After graduation, Monie pursued his dream by attending the Redemptorist seminary high school, St. Joseph Preparatory College, in Kirkwood, MO. Monie continued his graduate studies at Immaculate Conception Seminary, located on the beautiful shores of Lac Labelle in Oconomowoc. There he studied philosophy and theology. In 1958, he was ordained. From then on he was known as Fr. Monie. Many southerners tremble at the thought of freezing temperatures and knee-deep snow banks. Not Fr. Monie. He enjoyed the cold weather and the ground blanketed with snow. During his seminary days he was frequently seen playing hockey on Lac Labelle or cruising around the lake on speed skates or even tobogganing the hills of Wisconsin. He loved it.

After ordination he was assigned to the Redemptorist seminary high school in Lacombe, LA. There he taught French and Latin to the seminarians. Fr. Monie dedicated eight years as a professor. He then embraced parish ministry. He was assigned to Redemptorist parishes in Baton Rouge, Corpus Christi and Houston. After many years in parish ministry, Fr. Monie joined a mission team, traveling from parish to parish preaching the Good News.

Every three years the Redemptorists would elect a confrere to be the Vice Provincial Superior. In 1990, Fr. Monie was elected Vice Provincial of the New Orleans Vice Province. For nine years he was the superior of the Redemptorists in the south central United States.

Following his Vice Provincial days, Fr. Monie came to San Antonio. He was given the role of formation director for college seminarians. The seminarians lived in Liguori House, the former home of the Sisters of Notre Dame, which is now known as St. Gerard Catholic Church Office and Center.

During the past couple of years, Fr. Monie has been in residence at St. Gerard. During this time he regularly celebrated Masses for the folks at St. Joseph's downtown and for the Sisters of the Holy Spirit. Occasionally, he would celebrate Mass at St. Gerard. Other pastors also invited him to celebrate Mass or hear confessions in their parishes.

Many, many people have been touched by Fr. Monie's gentle and understanding spirit. He loved his priestly vocation. He loved to minister to people. He was always available to those in need. We have been blessed at St. Gerard with Fr. Monie's presence.

We hosted a celebration for Fr. Monie last weekend. Fr. Monie joined the Redemptorists and parishioners and friends to celebrate a Mass. His close friend, Msgr. Douglas Fater, preached the sermon. After Mass, everyone – parishioners and Fr. Monie's family and friends – enjoyed time together with refreshments and a delicious meal.

Fr. Monie and I drove to Liguori on Monday. Fr. Monie's classmate and friend, Fr. Gerry Siebold, moved to St. Clement's about a month ago. Fr. Gerry and some of Fr. Monie's very dear Redemptorist friends warmly welcomed him.

Fr. Monie's farewell message to us is: "Let us pray for each other."

Fr. James Shea, C.Ss.R.

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