

Fr. Ronald E. Bonneau, C.Ss.R., Obituary

 redemptorists.net/in-memoriain/fr-ronald-e-bonneau-c-ss-r-obituary

Father Ronald E. Bonneau, C.Ss.R., of the St. Mary's community, Annapolis, Maryland, died on November 9, 2021, aged 76 and eleven months.

Born on December 12, 1944, in Hanover, New Hampshire, he was the son of Edward and Helen. He was baptized at Sacred Heart, Lebanon, New Hampshire, on December 24, 1944, and confirmed at the Redemptorist parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Bradford, Vermont on June 7, 1958. He attended public grammar school and high school before transferring to St. Mary's Minor Seminary, North East, Pennsylvania from 1962 to 1964. He made his first profession on August 2, 1965, at St. Mary's, Ilchester, Maryland, and final vows on September 2, 1968, at St. Alphonsus College, Suffield, Connecticut, where he attended from 1965 to 1968. He took his M.Div. (1971) and M.R.E. (1972) degrees at Mt. St. Alphonsus Seminary, Esopus, New York, where he was ordained on June 20, 1971, by the Servant of God, Terrence Cardinal Cooke.



Shortly after completing studies, his dream of a missionary's life began with his arrival in Asunción, Paraguay, on September 8, 1972, but he immediately set out for Cochabamba, Bolivia, to learn Spanish at the Instituto de Idiomas which was directed by the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. Beginning in December 1972, he spent the next 24 years as a missionary in Paraguay. His assignments for the Vice-Province of Asunción were in Bella Vista Norte from December 1972 to February 1973; Pedro Juan Caballero from 1973 to 1978 and rector from 1978 to February 1981; Asunción II from February 1981 to February 1982, where he initiated the formation pre-novitiate program; Asunción, Our Lady of the Pillar, Director of the National Seminary from 1982 to 1989, where he also taught music and theology; and Asunción, St. Raphael, Barrio Tembetary, Asunción where he was pastor. During this period, he served for three years on the National Board of the Cursillo Movement in Paraguay, set up an institute for formation of religious, served as both an extraordinary and ordinary vice-provincial consultant, and served on the priests' senate of the Diocese of Asunción.

In 1989 Father Bonneau took a sabbatical between May and December in the United States and Italy, where he completed a six-month renewal course in Nemi.

Returning to the vice-province, he served as novice master from 1990 to 1993, in Carapeguá, Paraguay. Also, during this time, he served as pastoral administrator of St. Bonaventure Parish in Asunción in 1992. Together with his novices, Father Bonneau served the main church and its 52 out missions. In 1993, he was named pastor of

Santísimo Redentor in Asunción, which had a school with 1700 children from 1994 to 1996. At the same time, he was asked to be the executive secretary of the Office for Ecumenical Affairs for the Paraguayan Bishops Conference. During this period, in the aftermath of the nation's dictatorship, the churches banded together to influence the writing of a new national constitution. Father Bonneau made a significant contribution to this work, in part because he had been a vocal advocate for justice in the years during the dictatorship.



After his father's death in 1994, he asked to be returned to the United States to be closer to his family. In January 1996, he returned to the Province and was stationed at Most Holy Redeemer, NYC, participating in various courses to enable his "re-entry" to ministry in the United States. In the spring of 1997, however, the pastor, Father Tom O'Connor, died and Father Bonneau was asked to assume duties as pastor and rector of the community from May 1997 to August 2002. In 1997, he also joined the North American Commission on Redemptorist Spirituality. Father Bonneau also became pastor at Immaculate Conception, Bronx, NY from August 2002 to August 2008. He then



began a renewal course at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park, California, with an emphasis on the Second Vatican Council. He returned to take up residence at Mt. St. Alphonsus, Esopus, New York, but was there only briefly. In 2009, both Father Bonneau and Father James Gilmour began a specialized ministry serving the Spanish-speaking communities of the Diocese of Metuchen as co-directors of the Office for Hispanic Ministry. This continued until June 20, 2012. Then his talents were needed as Novice Master and Assistant Novice Master in Toronto Canada for the North American Conference. In September of 2017 Father Bonneau took up parochial duties at St. Mary's, Annapolis, Maryland.

In September 2020, Father Bonneau began a round of chemotherapy to treat bladder cancer and the following year he celebrated his fiftieth jubilee of ordination. In September 2021 he underwent surgery again and was at the St. John Neumann Residence for rehabilitation, but his health began to decline. He died surrounded by his confreres.