

In Remembrance: Fr. Warren Drinkwater, C.Ss.R., a Son of the South

 redemptorists.com/in-remembrance-fr-warren-drinkwater-c-ss-r

Plentiful Redemption



**NEWS FROM THE REDEMPTORIST
CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA**



Beloved Fr. Warren Drinkwater, one of our most charming and “colorful characters” from the South, died on August 31 at St. Clement Redemptorist Mission Community in Liguori. A friendly confrere who found his niche in the preaching apostolate, he relished his years spent on the road as a “traveling man.”

Warren George John was the second of three sons born to William and Genevieve Hornsby Drinkwater on August 24, 1936 in New Orleans. He attended St. Alphonsus Parish School in the Irish Channel and was on track to become a Redemptorist at an early age. Like many young boys, his vocation was greatly influenced by serving as an

altar boy under the guidance of Brother Benedict.

He entered the Redemptorist formation program at St. Joseph Preparatory School in Kirkwood, MO. They were happy years for him and he professed temporary vows on August 2, 1957. He professed perpetual vows on September 2, 1960 and was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Roman R. Atkielski of Milwaukee at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Oconomowoc on December 27, 1962.

A week later, Fr. Warren went home to celebrate his first Mass at St. Alphonsus Parish in New Orleans. It was a grand celebration, made even more memorable by a little girl named Paulette, who carried the hosts in the entrance procession. She was so nervous that she wept; the hosts were still moist with her tears at the time of the consecration.

Newly ordained Fr. Warren spent the first decade of his priesthood in parish ministry in the South, where his ability to speak French was a definite asset. His first assignment was at Blessed Virgin Mary of the Holy Rosary Parish in Houma, LA, where he served from 1964 to 1968. He served at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Crowley for a year before he joined the faculty of Redemptorist High School in Baton Rouge in 1969.



Fr. Warren (seated, left) celebrating his birthday with confreres at St. Alphonsus in New Orleans in 1984.

A few years into his assignment, he was asked to help integrate the State Industrial School for Colored Youth, in response to a federal mandate requiring Louisiana to integrate all levels of its penal system. He served as chaplain and was joined by a woman who served as an intake officer. Integrating the all-black school (now the Louisiana Training Institute) was a real challenge. He enjoyed working with young kids who had gotten into trouble. He thought taking the kids to the adult penal institution would scare them from committing further crimes, but it didn't work. Inmates at the adult prison would call out to him by name because they knew him from their juvenile days.

Fr. Warren served less than a year at St. Leo Parish in Versailles, KY before he was assigned north of the Mason-Dixon Line in 1972. He joined St. Michael Parish in Chicago, where the friendly confrere with exceptional conversational skills, found his niche as an itinerant preacher. After a three-year stint, he returned to his beloved South and devoted the remaining 34 years of his public ministry to preaching parish missions and promoting *Liguorian Magazine* at parishes throughout the country.



Fr. Warren and his mom at his first Mass.

He felt blessed to have been able to visit all 50 states and Canada, and regaled confreres with tales of his adventures on the road, each a segue to the next. His travel mishaps and encounters with the highway patrol were just as interesting as the people and places he visited. Those who followed in his wake were pleased to hear that he was fondly remembered.

Fr. Warren was assigned to Redemptorist communities in Lacombe and New Orleans from 1975 through 1990, when he and several other confreres established St. John Neumann House, a semi-retirement community, in the former Sisters of Mercy Convent near Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary School in Biloxi, MS.



They were enjoying life when Hurricane Katrina devastated the coastline in 2005. The Redemptorists camped out without running water or electricity for about three weeks. As the youngest in the community, Fr. Warren had the job of cleaning the latrine. One day when he pitched the last bucket, the wind blew the contents back on him. He got his 15 minutes of fame. A *McNeil-Lehrer News Hour* broadcast featuring panoramic scenes of the Mississippi Coastline suddenly zeroed in on him wading in the Gulf of Mexico and pouring bowls of water over his head. His only explanation: he had been improvising a shower, as he had learned as a seminarian camping in the summers.

Fr. Warren lived in a FEMA trailer before eventually moving into the renovated

rectory at Our Mother of Sorrows Parish. Although he officially retired in 2006, he remained active in ministry and was considered a blessing to the local community.

On his 50th jubilee of ordination, he said his greatest joy came from receiving people back into the Church, administering the sacraments, and witnessing the milestones in the lives of those to whom he ministered. And of course, the Eucharist – the center of it all.

Fr. Warren remained in Biloxi until health issues necessitated his relocation to St. Clement's in Liguori, where he was a valued member of the community until his death. May Fr. Warren rest in the eternal peace of the Redeemer.





Rev. Warren George Drinkwater, CSsR

St. Clement Redemptorist Chapel
Private Funeral Services

Thursday: September 03, 2020

03:00pm – Rosary

07:00pm – Vigil/Wake

(Livestream:<https://www.facebook.com/andy.patin9>)

Friday: September 04, 2020

10:00am – Mass/Burial (*follow after Mass*)

(Livestream:<https://www.facebook.com/andy.patin9>)

**Eternal rest grant unto Fr. Warren, O Lord.
And let the perpetual light shine upon him.
May he rest in peace. Amen**