

Fr. Carl W. Hoegerl, C.Ss.R., Obituary

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Father Carl W. Hoegerl, a member of the St. John Neumann community at Stella Maris, Timonium, Maryland, died on November 4, 2021, age 98.

Carl W. Hoegerl was born October 10, 1923, in Harmonsburg, Pennsylvania, near “metropolitan Meadville,” and was schooled in St. Peter’s Parish in Conneautville. He grew up in a farm house, the son of John and Rosa (Turcovics) Hoegerl. His father was the brew master of the Sharon Brewing Company, in Sharon, Pennsylvania, and he commuted each week from Harmonsburg to Sharon, returning for the weekend. He took the interurban streetcar that ran in front of the house to Lineville, where he got the Bessemer Railroad to Sharon. The importance of the streetcar and train system running through this part of the state engendered in young Carl a life-long fascination with locomotion. His older brother Ludwig managed the family farm. Carl had three other brothers: Otto, Joseph, and John. He also had a sister, Mrs. William Massett, of West Seneca, New York. Father Carl outlived them all.



Carl Hoegerl was baptized November 1923 in the Chestnut Corner Church of the Conneautville parish [St. Peter’s]. He attended the Sacred Heart Grammar School in Erie, Pennsylvania between 1930-1934 (grades 1-4) and St. Agatha’s in Meadville, Pennsylvania between 1934-1938 (grades 5-8). In 1935 he made his confirmation at St. Agatha’s in Meadville.



Hoegerl entered the Redemptorist high school at nearby North East, Pennsylvania in 1938, and there he developed a voracious appetite for reading. He was class organist and, in his last year, was valedictorian. He matriculated to the novitiate at Ilchester, Maryland in 1944, where he professed vows August 2, 1945, and went on to further studies at Mt. St. Alphonsus Seminary at Esopus, New York. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Stephen Donahue of New York in the chapel at Mount St. Alphonsus on June 18, 1950. After ordination and the completion of his tercenium at Annapolis, Maryland, he began graduate studies in medieval history at the Catholic University of America, from which he took an M.A. in 1953, producing a thesis on Islam in late antique Spain.

A long period as an educator ensued. Between 1953 and 1972 he was a professor in the Redemptorist minor seminary at North East, teaching Latin, Greek, English and History (1953-1964) and then at the major seminary at Esopus (1964-1972), where he also served as prefect of students. To gain greater proficiency in subjects of interest, Father Hoegerl was certified in Spanish and Intercultural Studies at the Catholic University of Puerto Rico's summer school in 1964. He was certified in July 1965 by Peter Wilhousky in a master class in choral conducting. A fellowship from the American Association of Theological Schools (1967-1968) allowed for study at the University of Münster. At Münster he expanded his knowledge of Martin Luther and Reformation history, and passed through Checkpoint Charlie to East Berlin. He also travelled extensively in Europe, including a brief sojourn in Finland above the Arctic circle.

Upon his return to America, he added a master's degree in education from Iona College in New Rochelle, New York. From 1972 to 1978 he was master of novices for the three American provinces of the Redemptorists (Baltimore, St. Louis, and Oakland) when they were gathered at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin.



Returning East in 1978, he was appointed pastor of St. James and St. John Church, Baltimore. He enjoyed urban ministry—his only foray into direct pastoral work to this point—and used his brief pastorate to collect a large reservoir of information on Redemptorist history in Baltimore. After only two years, however, he was called to Rome by the Redemptorist Superior General Joseph Pfab who appointed Hoegerl to the Redemptorist Historical Institute at the order's general headquarters. Now as a member of the Collegio San'Alfonso, he began to publish documents related to Alphonsian spirituality and texts associated with the foundation of the order. From 1983 to 1986 he was executive secretary of the Commission on Redemptorist Spirituality in Rome.

Again at the request of Father Pfab, in 1984 Father Hoegerl began work on the canonization cause of the Servant of God, Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R., and was appointed by the prefect of the Congregation of Saints Causes as an external assistant. Father Hoegerl was able to canvass important archives around Europe for information on Father Seelos and this also broadened his knowledge of the history of the Baltimore Province as well. In 1987, Hoegerl began full-time work on the Seelos cause, which eventuated in 1996-1998 with the completion and publication of three massive volumes that comprised the *Positio super Vita, Virtutibus et Fama Sanctitatis*. It proved from documentary sources the heroicity of the virtues of Father Seelos and led to Seelos' beatification on April 9, 2000. He was a concelebrant with Pope St. John Paul II at the beatification Mass in St. Peter's Square.

Father Hoegerl has assisted the scholarly world in a variety of ways, including the writing of a number of book reviews in publications like the *Catholic Historical Review*, *American Ecclesiastical Review*, and *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*. Since its inception in 1987, Father Hoegerl has been a member of the group that has become known as the Institute of Redemptorist Historical Studies of North America (IRHS-NA). He was chairman of the Institute until his resignation in 2004; but remained involved in writing the early section of the history of the Redemptorists in North America for the General History of the Congregation, a project that is currently dormant.



His contribution to the history of the Baltimore Province is prodigious as well. In 1989, Father Hoegerl was re-assigned to the Provincial House in Brooklyn to become archivist of the Baltimore Province. He continued in this dual capacity until 2011 when he became Archivist Emeritus.

Father Hoegerl's pastoral zeal had not subsided even though he took on the archival work full-time. In December 1991, John Cardinal O'Connor appointed him temporary administrator of Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish in Manhattan, the Redemptorist church on East 61st Street. The appointment ended within a matter of months. However, he also helped faithfully nearly every weekend at Our Lady of Hope Church in Carle Place, Long Island, between 1992 and 1999.

Among Father Hoegerl's interests is his enjoyment of nature. He assisted in the greenhouse while a student at Esopus and later in life grew orchids. He is also renowned for his walks around Manhattan (where he chronicled every church visited) and earlier in life, for mountain climbing, particularly in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. In the Whites he summited nearly all of the "Presidents" in that chain of mountains with elevations above 4000 feet.

For his life-long service and accomplishments, the Institute for North American Redemptorist History presented Father Hoegerl with its 2013 Seelos Award.

Funeral arrangements to follow.

