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# *Requiescat in pace*

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## **Fr Russel John Morison CSsR**

Birth            17 August 1924  
Juvenist        27 January 1939  
Profession     2 Feb 1944  
Ordination     4 Sept 1949  
Death           27 July 2021

### **Family**

Mother:        Philomena Margaret Collins  
Father:         Russel Henry Morison  
Formal name: Russel John George Morison

Brothers:      Ron, Keith, Leo, Neville, Bruce  
Sisters:        Jewel, Nance

Fr Russ Morison CSsR died peacefully in the Hospice of the Sisters of Nazareth, in Melbourne, Australia. He was our oldest member of the Province and had been suffering with many of the ailments characteristic of his age. His death is seen as a merciful release.

He was the eldest child of a close-knit family of 8 children, of whom three are still living (2021).

Some initiatives stand out in his missionary life:

### **1. Founder of the Redemptorist Lay Missionary Society**

Fr Russ Morison is arguably one of the first Redemptorists to seize the energy of Vatican II and form a Redemptorist Lay Missionary Society in Sydney, Australia in 1965, which is still in existence today under the name of Redemptorist Lay Community. His emphasis was on the laity participating in the mission of the Congregation as a society of lay people under instruction of Redemptorists, feasting on the charism of St Alphonsus. The connection between the mission and the laity was so clear to him that his strength of conviction allowed him to convince the Provincial Council to set up this Society.

### **2. Founder of Hofbauer Centre – an outreach for Religious and laity with mental health issues.**

In 1973, Fr Morison requested leave to study at the Blanton Peale Institute for Psychotherapy in USA with the intention of setting up a centre for Catholic clinicians to address pastoral issues arising from the mental illnesses of Religious and laity. His initiative bore fruit with the establishment of 'Hofbauer Centre' which ran from 1977 – 1992 with a team of clinicians intent on



providing pastoral counselling. His concerns were focused on marriage and family situations as well as Religious life and vocation issues. Fr Morison was trained in Freudian psychoanalysis.

3. Everything he did, was seen through the lens of mission. His early priesthood was spent on parish missions in every community across Australia and New Zealand and even into New Guinea. These experiences shaped his later vision of a Lay Society and Catholic practitioners of Mental Health. He was able to learn the Ukrainian language and participate in the mission in Australia and New Zealand as a recognised bi-ritual priest.

He was a deeply respected member of the Congregation whose talents in lay formation and psychology brought both appreciation and some suspicion. He was however driven by the vision of Christ to go out to others and also to do something helpful - cure illnesses. His vision was wide, his hide was thick and his love for the mission of the Congregation ever so deep. A most extraordinary confrere whose legacy will be recognised for many years to come.

### **Psychotherapy Awards**

Certificate in Group Therapy	Cairnmillar Institute, Victoria	1969-72
Certificate of Pastoral Psychotherapy	Blanton Peale Graduate Institute NY, USA	1973-76
Certificate of Marriage & Family Therapy	Blanton Peale Graduate Institute NY, USA	1974-76
Master of Science in Education	Iona College, Rochelle, NY, USA,	1973-76
Doctor of Ministry	Andover-Newton Theol. School, Boston	1973-76
Personal Therapy & Psychoanalysis	Dr Louis Birner, NY, USA	1973-76

### **Associations**

Member, American Association of Pastoral Counsellors (MAAPC)

Member, American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (MAAMFT)

Member, Association of Clinical Pastoral Counsellors (MACPC)

Member, Australian Psychological Society (MAPS)

President, Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, Victoria (1981)

### **Vocation Story written in his Novitiate in 1943**

“I was born in Shepparton on 17 August 1924 and was reared there. I attended Saint Brendan’s primary school, taught by the Sisters of Mercy and from there I made my first confession and communion in the parish church. I was also confirmed there. In 1937, I finished the primary course and in the next year went to the Sacred Heart secondary school also run by the Sisters of Mercy at Shepparton. During the September of my year there, (1938) a mission was preached in the parish church by Redemptorist Father’s Williamson and Keegan. For about two years before this, the idea of the priesthood had been growing upon me although I did my best to stifle it, for I was frightened and repelled as I came to realise better what it all entailed. Early in 1938, I decided finally that God wanted me to be a priest and began to pray daily to learn what to do. I learned the difference between the religious priesthood and the secular, but things seemed at a standstill until September, when during the mission, I heard from some of the boys that one of the missionaries had an eye out for vocations. He spoke to me whereupon I began to think and it seems that this was what I had been praying for accordingly. I had several talks with Father Keegan and as a result went to Galong as a Juvenist the next year 1939.”

## **Apostolate**

1950 - 1955	Mayfield - missions
1952	Ukrainian language studies
1956	Perth - missions
1957 - 58	Ballarat - missions
1959	Ballarat - Lector in scripture
1960	Ballarat - Lector in morals
1962	Mayfield - missions
1963	Hobart - missions
1964	Mayfield - missions
1965 - 67	Pennant Hills - superior and minister and missions
1965	Founded the Redemptorist Lay Missionary Society (RLMS) in Sydney
1965	Created the famous Redemptorist vocation film
1965	Granted faculties in the Ukrainian rite.
1966	Missions in New Guinea and Rabaul, New Britain
1967	Ukrainian mission in New Zealand
1968	Kew - missions
1968	Formed a Redemptorist Lay Missionary Society (RLMS) in Melbourne
1968 - 73	Religious Renewal program - Australia wide
1969 - 72	Studies in group psychotherapy at Cairnmillar Institute, Melbourne
1969 - 72	Kew - Superior
1972	Yarraville - Superior
1973	Brighton - Religious Renewal Program
1973 - 76	Studies in USA
1977	Returned to Australia and appointed to Brighton
1977 - 93	Director of the Hofbauer Centre for Pastoral Psychotherapy
1993 - 2002	Teaching spiritual direction at the Archdiocesan Institute for Spiritual Development, NY, USA. Residing with IHM sisters in Westchester
2003 - 12	Kogarah
2013 - 15	Kew - retirement
2015 - 21	Nazareth House, Camberwell