

## In Memoriam

### Missionary, chaplain, rector, preacher

Redemptorist Father Arthur Mahoney, a missionary, military chaplain, rector, and mission preacher, died Saturday, July 17, St. John Neumann Residence at Stella Maris in Timonium, MD. He was 86 years old and suffering the advance of Alzheimer's Disease.

Mass of Christian Burial was offered Wednesday, July 21, at St. Mary's Church, Annapolis, where Father Mahoney had been serving since 2001. There is a Perpetual Adoration Chapel there in the crypt level of the church, where the priest would pray after his afternoon walk. Father John Harrison, homilist at the Funeral Mass, said: "The easy, comfortable way he spoke about Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament conveyed to me that he was no stranger to the Eucharistic Chapel, or to the Divine Guest who is constantly waiting for people to come to Him. There was a familiarity there when he spoke of his visits. I could tell that he was with a Friend."



A Bostonian by birth, Father Mahoney was the son of Arthur and Josephine Murphy Mahoney. He was born Aug. 6, 1923, and grew up in St. Margaret Parish in Dorchester. He completed three years at Boston College High School before entering the Redemptorist juvenate, St. Mary's Seminary in North East, PA.

He spent his novitiate year at Ilchester, MD, and made his first profession of vows in 1946. Going on to higher studies at Mount St. Alphonsus in Esopus, NY, he made his final profession in 1949 and was ordained to the priesthood on June 17, 1951. One of his classmates, Father Lawrence Lover, recalled that his confrere "was a great singer, a tenor, and he sang with our choirs both at North East and at Esopus." Father Mahoney's first love, though, was for mission preaching, although it "took him a long time to get there," Father Lover added.

Father Mahoney's first three priestly assignments were to the U.S. Virgin Islands: at Holy Cross Church in Christiansted, St. Croix, in 1953; at Sts. Peter and Paul Church (now a cathedral) in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, in 1954; and back at Holy Cross in 1960. After 13 years in the tropics, Father Mahoney was assigned to St. Michael Church in Baltimore. He was there for only a year when an urgent call for Catholic chaplains to minister to the military troops in Viet Nam led to his volunteering for such service.

"He was a Yankee Doodle Dandy patriot," said his confrere Father John Kelly. "He even had red, white and blue suspenders." Father Kelly noted that Viet Nam veterans served as pall bearers at his friend's funeral.

In 1968, Father Mahoney wrote from Viet Nam: "Presently I work in and out of the main base camp of the 4th Infantry Division. We are located 30 miles from the Cambodian border, just south of the town of Pleiku. A rather fair number of the Vietnamese in this area are Catholic, many fled from the north." He mentioned that he was celebrating four Masses at the base each Sunday and that throughout the week he would celebrate Mass at various places, sometimes going by helicopter to forward fire bases. In the course of his service there, he was awarded two bronze medals, according to Father Kelly.

On Father Mahoney's return from overseas, he was based at Fort Meade in Maryland and often visited Father Lover, who was rector at the nearby novitiate in Ilchester.

After completing his military service, Father Mahoney was assigned, pro tem, to St. Alphonsus Church in New York City in 1971 and then to San Alfonso Retreat House in West End, NJ, the following year. He went to Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Baltimore, serving as rector from 1972 to 1978, when he became rector of St. Christopher Church on Kent Island, MD. In 1984 he was appointed rector of St. Gerard Church in Lima, OH.

Father Harrison first met Father Mahoney at St. Christopher Church, when he would come up from Brazil to visit his parents on Kent Island. "In 1981, when my dad suffered a heart attack at the County Court House in Centreville, Father Mahoney was summoned by parishioners who worked at the Court House," Father Harrison recalled. "Yes, he remembered the day, he confided to me some 25 years later. He said he was speeding from St. Christopher's to Centreville, about a 30-minute drive. He told me that he was pulled over for speeding by a State Trooper. As soon as the Trooper saw who it was, and what his mission was, he told him to go on. He arrived in time to give my dad the Anointing of the Sick. Dad did not survive the heart attack. So, I am eternally grateful to Father Mahoney for being there for my dad that day in 1981."

After Father Mahoney's three-year term in Lima, which included not only a large parish and school, but ministry at a State Penitentiary, the priest began his traveling missionary days. Father Lover recalled that even as far back as North East, his classmate took courses to train his singing voice for preaching and became an active member of the public speaking group. Finally, in 1987, he was appointed to serve with the Missionary Band, that group of Redemptorists who travel no matter what the weather and live out of their suitcases for the purpose of preaching at far-flung parishes to regenerate and renew the faith of the people. Often with Father Kelly, often with Father John Devin, Father Mahoney would preach from Maine to Florida.

During those years he was stationed briefly at St. Wenceslaus Church in Baltimore and then at St. Philomena Church in Pittsburgh. He was assigned to St. Clement Mission House in Ephrata, PA, in 1993 and to St. Mary's Church in Annapolis in 2001.

Father James Quinn, then pastor of Our Lady of Hope Church in Baltimore, reported to then Father Provincial Joseph Kerins about a mission preached by Fathers Mahoney, Kelly and James Breen:

"We feel that the Mission did a great deal of good and that it is the type of Mission that is badly needed in our modern world and Church. Many of our people went out of their way to thank us for having the Mission and tell us how much they derived from it.

"These three men are real priests and no pastor need hesitate to invite them to conduct a Parish Mission. They are really dedicated and it was a privilege to have them in our parish. God willing, we will have them again."

Looking back over the range of ministries Father Mahoney had exercised -- as a missionary in the Virgin Islands, as a military chaplain, as a pastor and rector of Redemptorist communities, and as a mission preacher -- Father Lover said. "He did well in them all.... He was enthusiastic about everything he did. He preached enthusiastically, he played sports enthusiastically. He put his whole heart into everything he did."

Father Mahoney, whose mother died when he was very young, is survived by his younger half-sister, Mrs. Mary Egan of Sherborn, MA.