

In Memoriam

Father Poux: A priest with peace of soul

Father Francis Poux died on September 17, 2012 amidst the prayers of his confreres at the St. John Neumann Residence at Stella Maris, in Timonium, MD.

Father Poux was born on November 1, 1933 near Meadville, PA; professed his first vows as a Redemptorist on August 2, 1957; and was ordained on June 17, 1962.

After graduating from St. Agatha High School, located near his birthplace of Frenchtown — an unincorporated community in Crawford County, PA — he studied Latin at St. Mary's College, the Redemptorist Preparatory Seminary in North East, PA. When he finished his novitiate year in Ilchester, MD, he went on to complete his theological studies at Mount St. Alphonsus, the Redemptorist Major Seminary in Esopus, NY where he was ordained.



For the first 25 years of his priesthood Fr. Poux's foreign mission assignments in Brazil included work in Aquidauana and Curitiba, as well as the responsibilities of serving as superior in the Redemptorist communities at Bela Vista, Telemaco Borba, Paranagua and Campo Grande.

"We left for South America at the same time," recalls his classmate, Fr. Paul Miller. "I knew he would do well because he was a solid priest even though we rarely saw each other in Brazil because we were stationed miles apart."

This same sentiment was echoed by his confrere, Fr. John Roche, who recalls, "In those days, our surroundings were extremely poor. We didn't have electricity continuously throughout the day and often no water either. Geographically, the territory was 4 or 5 times larger than Texas but with only 33 kilometers of asphalt — everything else was sand and mud — and the only reason we had some pavement was because a military general lived at the end of that road. Life was rough. But Fr. Poux and I functioned well in the Cursillo movement which brought life to the Church and to the people."

When he returned to the States in 1989, Fr. Poux served in several parishes in Lancaster, PA; Boston; Lima, OH; Odenton, MD and Baltimore. Two of his former rectors at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Baltimore, Fr. Mike Sergi and Fr. Kevin Milton agree, "Poux covered the Bayview Hospital like a blanket. He went every day and brought the sacraments to the Catholic patients there. All the nurses knew him by name because they realized how much comfort he brought to the sick when they needed a priest most; when they were down and out."

Two other classmates, Fr. Tom Travers and Fr. John McGowan recall, "He had a great singing voice and anchored the bass section of the choir by himself. We used to tease him about talking too much. But he loved our common life: outdoors and in. He played all sports well — hockey, a fantastic catcher in baseball." "And in the

common room we even played two-handed pinochle,” adds another peer, Fr. Frank O’Rourke.

Perhaps his zeal for the people and his love for the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer is best summarized in Fr. Poux’s own words which he wrote on July 31, 1957 at the age of 23: “I used to go over and over the Maryknoll Magazines and enjoyed just looking at the pictures of the young priests, how happy they all seemed! Was I to be a Maryknoll?”

“My question was answered in the form of a Mission given by a Redemptorist. I had seen these Fathers before: 40 hours, helping out on Sundays, etc. But all of a sudden this priest who gave such down-to-earth sermons, who stood at the altar rail in a long black cassock with the big rosary hanging from his wide cincture, and who clearly meant every word he said, this priest captured my eye and my heart.

“Without knowing just what the Redemptorists did, or what kind of life they led, I wanted to be one of them. He was giving his service to God, and yet in talking to him, I discovered that in doing this, he was one of the happiest men I had ever met. He loved his life, his order, and his God. He showed me what the religious life held out to a man ... Love of God ... Peace of soul.”

May your soul rest in this peace, Fr. Poux. Rest in God’s peace now and forever. Amen.