

In Memoriam

Father Maceda: Enchanting Historian

Redemptorist missionary, Rev. Thomas Gregory Maceda, remembered as a cantor-priest who was always available and always on time, died March 13, 2012 surrounded by the confreres in his religious community who were praying the rosary for him at St. John Neumann Residence, Stella Maris in Timonium, MD. He was 74.



Father Maceda was born on June 1, 1937 in Brooklyn, NY. He professed his first vows as a Redemptorist on August 2, 1958. He was ordained a priest on June 23, 1963. He began his missionary career by learning Spanish and serving for eight years in Caguas and Guayama, Puerto Rico; Las Matas de Farfán in the Dominican Republic; and also in Frederiksted in the Virgin Islands.

In 1972 Father Maceda was transferred to North East, PA and for the next twelve years he served as a history professor in the same St. Mary's High School Seminary where he himself had been educated as a seminarian.

In 1984 he was appointed for four years as the pastor of Presentation Parish in Port Ewen, NY. Next he served for five years as an assistant administrator in Manhattan in the parishes of Most Holy Redeemer and St. Cecilia, and finally for more than eighteen years in his home parish, the Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Brooklyn, as a dedicated and reliable associate.

"He was the type of priest you could count on," says his former rector at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rev. Kevin Moley. "And very few people realize how significant it is to have a man who will be there when you need him and serve generously and happily in doing whatever work needs to be done. But even more importantly, he was not only present but also on time for any assignments and for any community acts. You may not think this is noteworthy, but Father Tom always led the hymns for our liturgies. And because his singing never went flat, let me tell you, this really was a big deal."

His most recent rector, Rev. Joseph Tizio, echoes a very similar sentiment. "Father Maceda was a wonderful community man. I know he worked hard when he was pastor at Port Ewen and throughout his early years of priesthood, but he continued to contribute a great deal here in his senior years of ministry. You could talk to him about anything and he was extremely knowledgeable on almost any topic. He was really a joyful presence who could lighten up a meal, perk up peoples' spirits, and bring life to those around him. We will miss him."

His younger confreres mirror this remembrance of him as well. "He always enjoyed lingering after meals," recalls Rev. Frank Mulvaney, "and talking about any subject from the theology of the Eucharist to the themes of old black-and-white movies. He looked forward to the annual Thanksgiving Day gatherings at OLPH when confreres from neighboring parishes joined our community celebration. This gave him an opportunity to use his keen intellect and

probing mind to create a host of trivia games and quizzes which everyone enjoyed.

"And he was really excellent with the liturgical celebrations," Fr. Mulvaney continues. "I can remember him chanting morning prayers with the people in church during Triduum services. He got them to sing and pray louder than anyone else could. And he was also a very caring man who never bragged about his kind deeds. When I was a deacon and preparing my first homily in Spanish, I was extremely nervous although I tried not to show it. But Father Tom sensed my anxiety and gave me my first grammar — a concrete, very practical book that really helped me. I think this is one of the reasons we younger confreres looked up to him. We knew he was working with some of the most abandoned groups in the city, doing counseling with marginalized folks — the kind of work that St. Alphonsus would do. He was a sincere, honest, holy priest, and the people really loved him. Is there any better tribute for a Redemptorist?"