

IN REMEMBRANCE: Michael Schnittker, C.Ss.R.

Br. Michael Schnittker died on January 20 after sustaining severe head injuries in a recent fall at St. Clement Health Care Center. Quiet and reserved, Br. Michael will be most remembered for his warm smile and sincere efforts to perform his work to the best of his abilities.

Born on July 24, 1938, Br. Michael grew up the fourth of five children on a farm outside of Cunningham, KS. A rough and tumble boy, he enjoyed bull riding as a youngster. Later in life, he relaxed by watching rodeo events and his favorite baseball team, the LA Dodgers, on television.

Br. Michael was a late vocation. He enlisted in the US Navy in 1959, working in the naval post office on ships and at bases around the world. He fondly spoke of his time in Guam, and confreres remember vivid descriptions of the clumsy gooney bird antics that he witnessed. After he was honorably discharged from the military, he lived in several different states. When he felt called to religious life he enrolled at Holy Redeemer College. He professed first vows as a Redemptorist in 1973 and perpetual vows in 1977.

Br. Michael was assigned to many ministries throughout the Province. He began Redemptorist life with a brief stint at Holy Redeemer Parish in Detroit, followed by assignments at St. Joseph's Preparatory College in Edgerton and Holy Redeemer College in Waterford. He served a term at St. Michael's Parish in Chicago and was briefly at St. Alphonsus Parish in Davenport, IA. He was assigned to the Health Care Center in Oconomowoc in 1981 and helped organize the move to St. Clement's Health Care Center in Liguori in 1988. He was in charge of setting up the kitchen and hired the kitchen and janitorial staff. All these years later, Lee Ray, Joy Fowler and Laura Matlock are still helping to prepare delicious meals. They all have deep respect and love for him, and still remember how he liked things to be done.

In 1992, Br. Michael spent a few months at Palisades Retreat House in Federal Way, WA but returned to the health care center until 1996. He spent two years at Picture Rocks Retreat House in Tucson and then a year at St. Joseph Parish in Wichita. In 1999, he was assigned to Our Lady of Perpetual Help Redemptorist Parish in Kansas City. He was most involved with the senior center until he retired in 2008. A year later, medical issues prompted his move back to St. Clement Health Care Center. Despite his many ailments, he maintained a positive outlook.

In addition to a Funeral Mass at St. Clement Health Care Center on January 24, there will be a service for Br. Michael in Pratt, KS and he will be buried in the family plot in Cunningham. May he rest in peace.

Submitted by Kristine Stremel, with contributions from Br. Paul Yasenak

