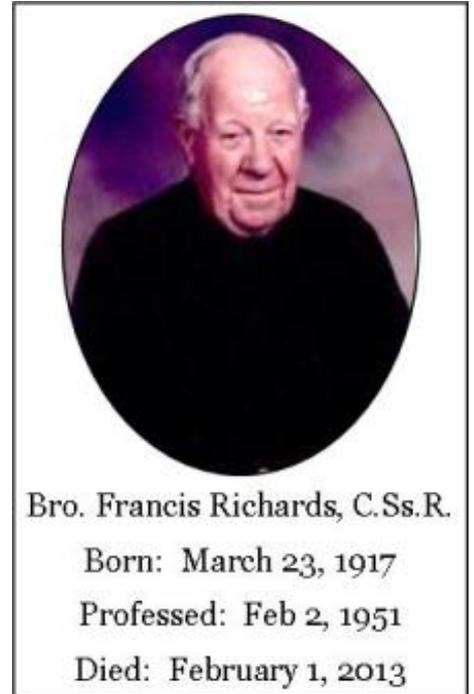


# Brother Francis Richards, C.Ss.R. (1917 - 2013)

By Fr. Mark Miller, C.Ss.R.

Brother Francis was born in Liverpool, England on March 23, 1917 (the youngest of five children) and baptized on the same day. He spent much of his early years in an orphanage — St. Vincent’s School in Preston. He worked on farms in England until 1947 when he emigrated to Canada. Here he worked at his brother’s farm, rented from the Redemptorists, near Peterborough. It was there that he met the Redemptorists — he mentioned meeting Fr. Martin Kennedy at a mission and then contacting Fr. Bob MacDonald at St. Alphonsus Parish. He entered the novitiate in L’Abord á Plouffe on Feb. 2, 1950 with Fr. Neil Corbett as his novice master and Fr. Jim Davis as associate. A year later he was professed as a Redemptorist brother. The reports of him in the novitiate are positive and the final one, prophetic: “He should make a good brother and persevere until death.” He was always a cheerful worker and a pleasant presence in the community.



I was struck by the outline of his assignments in one document from 1993:

1951-52	Woodstock	refectorian
1952-53	St. Patrick’s, Toronto	sacristan
1954	Woodstock	farm, refectory, maintenance
Second novitiate	L’Abord á Plouffe	
1955-62	Charlottetown	sacristan, all
1963-64	London	sacristy, garden
1964-74	Saint John	sacristy, garden, house
1974-80	St. Patrick’s, Toronto	sacristan
1981-84	St. Alphonsus, Windsor	sacristan
1984-94	Holy Redeemer, Windsor	Omnia

After the closing of Holy Redeemer College in Windsor, Brother Francis was stationed at Holy Redeemer Parish in Sudbury where he helped in whatever way he could in the community and the parish. He befriended many parishioners and, as two of his brothers (John & Jerry) lived in Sudbury, he was able to enjoy family times. He had a great love for his nieces and nephews. In 2008, due mostly to failing eyesight, he moved to St. Patrick’s in Toronto and then spent most of his last year at LaSalle Manor in Scarborough.

Brother Francis listed his two hobbies as playing the piano and gardening, which to my mind reflect his positive, cheerful outlook on life. He did forget to mention another hobby—teasing the fathers! He was also very, very faithful to prayer.

We shall miss this gentle, cheerful man who was such a dignified and upbeat presence in our midst. May he rest in the Father’s Peace.

