

Father John Molnar, C.Ss.R. 1925 - 2011

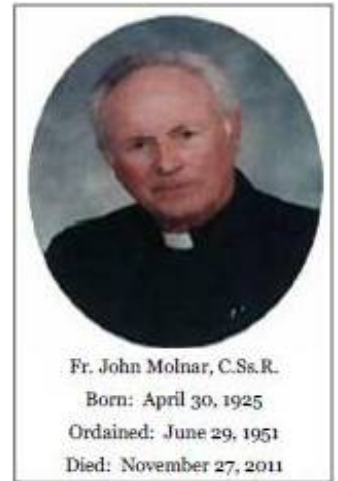
Article by M.C. Havey from archival files and the death notice in The Edmonton Journal

Many confreres, family and friends gathered to celebrate the life of Rev. John Molnar, who died on November 27.

A dedicated, energetic Redemptorist, Fr. Molnar died in Edmonton's Royal Alexandra Hospital on November 27 three months after his 60th anniversary of his priesthood. He was 86.

The wake and Mass of the Resurrection was held in the chapel of Villa Marguerite, where Fr. Molnar had lived since 1999. Rev. Raymond Douziech, Vicar Provincial of the Edmonton-Toronto Province, was the main celebrant.

John Andrew Molnar was born on April 30, 1925 in Medvedovtzi, Czechoslovakia, and was baptized there in the Ruthenian Byzantine Rite on May 3, 1925. Nine years later the family emigrated to Galahad, AB, where he attended public school at Bedford Rural in Galahad and was confirmed in the Latin Rite on July 24, 1939 in St. James Church. Under the sponsorship of the Redemptorists, John studied at St. Peter's College, Muenster, SK (1941-1944). His first languages were Ukrainian and English.



Entering the Redemptorist Novitiate at St. Mary's College, Brockville, ON, he made first vows on August 2, 1946 and his final profession on August 2, 1949. He studied at St. Michael's College of the University of Toronto, graduating with a bachelor of arts degree in 1948 as well as at St. Alphonsus seminary in Woodstock, ON. Following permission of the Apostolic Delegate to Canada, he transferred to the Latin Rite. Bishop John Cody of the London Diocese ordained him on June 29, 1951 at St. Alphonsus seminary.

First appointed to St. Joseph's parish in Moose Jaw, SK (1952-1954), he was assigned to the outmissions of St. Gabriel's parish in Athabasca, AB (1954-1956) and then to St. Gerard's parish in Yorkton, SK (1956-1958).

Returning to university (1958-1959), he graduated with a bachelor of education degree from the University of Alberta in 1959. With this new degree and additional courses in chemistry, physics and calculus from the University of St. Louis a year later, he was appointed as professor of science at Holy Redeemer College in Edmonton until 1964.

Volunteering for the new mission project in Brazil undertaken by the Edmonton Province Redemptorists, Fr. Molnar was appointed as the mission director from 1964-1979. During the 17 years of the mission, Fr. Molnar was one of five Redemptorist priests and two brothers who brought pastoral care to the rural mission of 35,000 parishioners, annually baptizing 1700, conducting 300 marriages and distributing 28,000 communions. Fr. Molnar travelled throughout the parish's 30,000 square kilometres of unpaved roads. He earned a private pilot licence to ease the travel. While in Brazil, he published a manual in Portuguese to help train catechists and pastoral animators on how to build base ecclesial communities.

Returning to Canada, Fr. Molnar served as pastor and hospital chaplain at St. Joseph's, Moose Jaw, (1980-1981), co-pastor at St. Alphonsus, Edmonton, and St. Mary's in Saskatoon before returning to Brazil in 1985 for one year. Back in Canada, he was assigned to St. Gerard's, Yorkton, (1987-1990), to Beaverlodge, AB as pastor (1990-1993) and pastoral assistance at St. Joseph's parish in Grande Prairie until retirement in July 1996.

During the Canadian pastoral assignments, he was very much involved with the Knights of Columbus, Catholic Women's League, Cursillos, youth groups, Worldwide Marriage Encounter and Engaged Encounter.

In 1999, he moved to the Redemptorist retirement community at Grey Nuns and later named Villa Marguerite in

Edmonton. Fr. Molnar entered hospital in the summer and wasn't able to attend the celebrations for his 60th anniversary of priesthood on August 28, although most of the guests visited him in the hospital after the supper.

His body is buried in the Redemptorist plot in Holy Cross cemetery in Edmonton.