

Fr. J. Alan MacGregor, C.Ss.R. (1925—2015)

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

(Adapted from the excellent biography in our Archives)

Fr. Alan MacGregor was born in Edmonton in 1925. He was baptized at St. Francis Parish but his family attended St. Alphonsus Parish until the newly created St. Clare's Parish was erected in the 1950s. He received his education at several locations: Camrose Normal School, Immaculate Conception Elementary, Ithaca NY, Foremost Elementary in Medicine Hat and Eastwood High in Edmonton. In 1939, he achieved the highest marks in the Grade 9 High School Entrance Examinations for the Foremost District of Alberta, receiving a Governor-General's medal for academic excellence.

Fr. Alan began his novitiate in Saint John in August 1943 and finished it at St. Mary's College, Brockville where the novitiate moved in April 1944. He professed first vows on August 15, 1944. After studying at St. Alphonsus seminary, Woodstock (1944-1950), he was ordained on June 29, 1949 by Bishop John Cody of the Diocese of London.

In 1951, Fr. MacGregor received a B.A. degree from Assumption College in Windsor and the following year an Ontario Teaching Certificate from the Ontario College of Education in Toronto. After courses in classics at the Catholic University of America in Washington during the academic year of 1952-1953, he taught for seven years (1953-1960) at St. Mary's College in Brockville as a professor of Latin and mathematics. He also coached the winning debating teams of that period.

He returned to Western Canada and taught at the newly-opened Holy Redeemer College in Edmonton (1960-1969). During that time, he received a B.Ed. from the University of Alberta in 1962 and an M.A. in classics from the Catholic University of America in 1969. He also took courses in modern European history during 1967-1969.

At HRC, Edmonton, Fr. MacGregor was one of the most respected teachers and priests. He was always well prepared, made his subjects interesting, never picked on individual students, and lived his life with a precision that allowed everyone to set their clocks by his schedule. He was a popular confessor who took to heart St. Alphonsus' admonition to be a lamb in the confessional.

When the college closed, Fr. MacGregor embarked on almost four decades of pastoral work, starting with St. Joseph's parish in Moose Jaw, SK (1969-1971, 1973-1979). Between pastoral assignments there, he taught at Vanier Collegiate (1971-1973), a local high school. At St. Gerard's parish in Yorkton, SK, (1979-1987), he served as superior/pastor (1983-1987) and as chaplain to the nearby Canadian Forces base (1979-1983). He was pastor at St. Theresa's in Kelowna, BC, (1987-1993), and then moved to St. Mary's parish in Saskatoon as assistant pastor (1993-1996). Like many Redemptorists, he was involved in many local parish and community organizations, such as the John Howard Society and AA. He was an active member of the Knights of Columbus.

In 1996, he was assigned as a pastoral assistant at St. Patrick's Toronto where he lived until 2012 when the



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monastery underwent renovations. He spent hours and hours in the confessional and was greatly missed when his health no longer allowed him to make the long walk from the monastery to the church. He decided to return to Alberta and joined the retired confreres at Villa Marguerite (2012-2013), moving to Youville Home for nursing care in December of 2013.

With his terrific intelligence, Fr. MacGregor was always a keen learner, who read voraciously and studied everything from the daily newspapers to the Classics, who often surprised people with his knowledge of sports, and who was at heart a humble servant of God's people in whatever ways were asked of him. He died 11 days after his 90th birthday, never complaining in his last year of the gradual decline in his health and abilities.

Because Fr. Alan MacGregor's funeral was so soon after Fr. Edward Kennedy's, many friends and parishioners were able to attend both funerals.

Fr. Alan's nephews Alex and Freddie along with his niece Fiona, spoke openly of their affection for their uncle and participated in various ways in the funeral liturgies.

May he rest in the Peace of Christ with the rich reward for all his labours in over 70 years as a Redemptorist and 65 as a priest.



*Fr. MacGregor at work at student's desk at St Mary's College, Brockville.
Photo courtesy of the Archives*



*Fr. MacGregor
working at
Combermere
during summers
while at
seminary (circa
1947).*

*Photo courtesy
of the Archives*



Frs. Joseph Murphy, Edmund Quinn and Alan MacGregor at the opening of Yorkton rectory, 1981

Photo courtesy of the Archives



*Frs. MacGregor and Kennedy with
Bishop John Cody of London on the
occasion of their ordination June 29,
1949*

Photo courtesy of the Archives

