



SECRETARY OF THE PROVINCE

## REDEMPTORIST PROVINCIAL RESIDENCE

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# Father Murphy: The Harrier Hound of Heaven\*

Redemptorist missionary, Rev. Jerome Andrew Murphy, died on April 17, 2015 in the St. John Neumann Residence at Stella Maris in Timonium, Maryland amidst the prayers of his confreres. He was 3 days short of his 94<sup>th</sup> birthday.

A viewing will be held in the house chapel on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor at Stella Maris on Thursday morning, the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April at 10:00 AM followed by a concelebrated Mass at 11:00 AM. Celebrants need to bring an alb only. Stoles and chasubles will be provided.

Interment will take place at the Sacred Heart Cemetery in Baltimore.

Father Murphy was born in Brooklyn, New York on April 20, 1921. He was professed in Ilchester, Maryland on August 2, 1946, ordained to the priesthood on June 17, 1951 at Mount St. Alphonsus Seminary in Esopus, New York and died on Friday evening, April 17, 2015.

For the first thirty-five years of his priestly ministry, Father Murphy worked in several locations in Brazil. These included Campo Grande, Miranda, Monte Alegre, Telemaco Borba, Curitiba and Paranagua. He was appointed superior of the communities in Guaratuba and Santo Antonina. In addition to his pastoral duties, he founded an educational program called "The Training for Christian Leadership," which successfully prepared catechists to instruct others in the Catholic faith.

On October 17, 1987 due to a stroke, he requested a transfer from the then Vice-Province of Campo Grande to the Vice-Province of Richmond. It should be noted that this was the first time in his religious life that he asked for something for himself. Determined to overcome his disabilities, he spent only one year at the St.



*Rev. Jerome A. Murphy, CSSR*

Alphonsus Villa in New Smyrna Beach, Florida before resuming his priestly duties for three more years at St. Joseph's Parish in Tampa. In 1990 health-related issues once again forced him to retire to the Villa until 2008 when he required full-time nursing care at Saratoga Springs, NY. In 2009 he was transferred to the St. John Neumann Residence/Stella Maris in Timonium, Maryland where he completed his earthly ministry of sacrifice and prayer for others until he died.

As a seminarian Father Murphy was dependable when it came to his community responsibilities and a very cooperative co-worker, even if he rarely chose to take the lead in a given project. He was a serious student, excellent in his prayer life, and zealous about keeping even the least significant rule. He was a man who held high ideals which were rooted in a strong religious life. In fact the amount of hours he spent praying in chapel was nothing short of edifying.

One superior described his spiritual nature as a gold mine of supernatural energy. Yet, despite this exceptional virtue, or maybe because of its authenticity, he always managed to maintain a healthy balance in his normal dealings with others. Although timid by nature, his judgment was accurate. Perhaps his biggest fault, if you can call it such, was his ability for abstractionism, which, in some instances made him appear to be a dreamer, but ultimately sustained his drive for idealism.

"He was a saint," declares his sole surviving classmate, Father John Kelly, "and a wonderful confrere. He was the oldest in our class and a person you would want to be stationed with. You would also want him on your sports team because he was a gifted athlete, especially in golf and baseball. He was the consummate center fielder and made only one mistake that I can recall. After that error he decided to *catch* the ball first and *then* bless himself!"

At age twenty-five, novice Murphy, looking back on the path of his vocation, declared there were three things that influenced his decision to become a missionary priest. "First, when I was seventeen, I started the new year off by saying a *Hail Mary* at the stroke of midnight. I have no idea why because I was at a New Year's party at the time. Second, receiving the first blessing of a newly ordained Redemptorist left a marked impression on me. Third, a mission talk I heard at St. Anselm's church."

He writes: "I was on the track team then and I frequently called upon God to help me win the race. When I ran cross-country I used to stop in St. Augustine's church to rest. Only God knows what grace worked on my soul as I gazed at the tabernacle. It doesn't seem possible to me, except by grace, that, sitting before the Blessed Sacrament, having contact with priests, listening to a mission talk, and a friendly calling on God to help me win a race could lead me to the altar, but it did."

We might say that St. Paul's second letter to Timothy mirrors the life and ministry of Father Jerome Murphy: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race. I have kept the faith (2 Tim 4:7).

*\*Harrier is a term given to cross-country runners because of their persistence in a race which is akin to the perseverance of a hound dog that never gives up.*