

THE NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF January 4, 2010...

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Following complications from a stroke, Fr. Richard Zelonis died on January 3. [Click here to read more about him.](#)

Provincial's Time

Fr. Tom Cassidy starts the week at St. John's Cathedral where he will be one of the concelebrants of the installation Mass of Milwaukee's new archbishop, Jerome ListECKI. On January 10 Fr. Tom will be in Mississippi for the dedication of Good Shepherd Church in Robinsonville.

Fr. Richard Zelonis dies

Following complications from a stroke, **Fr. Richard Zelonis** died in Milwaukee January 3.

Originally from Niagara Falls, NY, Fr. Richard Zelonis, 79, had been a member of the Priests of the Sacred Heart since 1975. He was a 1978 graduate of Sacred Heart School of Theology and was ordained in 1979.

Fr. Zelonis was active in parish ministry for much of his priesthood. His first assignment after ordination was at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Raymondville, Texas. From 1980-82 he was at Christ the King in Southaven, Miss., and from 1983-86 he served at Infant of Prague in Boonville, Miss.

He left Mississippi for South Dakota in 1987. For three years he ministered at St. Martin parish in Murdo, SD. Fr. Zelonis then went east to be closer to his family. He ministered at Holy Family parish in Buffalo and St. Joseph parish in Niagara Falls.

From 1993-98 he served as chaplain at St. Monica's Retirement Home in Racine, Wis. After that, he retired himself, first as a member of the Pinellas Park community in Florida,

and then as a member of the Mississippi community.

In recent years he had been a member of the Villa Maria community in Franklin, Wis., with residence at the Congregational Home in Franklin, Wis.

Funeral arrangements will most likely be next week and will be shared when they are finalized.

Also remember in prayer

Two other members of the congregation also died during the holiday season. **Fr. Gérard Wilhelmus Schoonebeek** had been a member of the Canadian Region. He died on January 1.

Fr. Gérard was born in Haarlem, The Netherlands, on September 14, 1923. He made his first profession on September 8, 1948, and was ordained on July 18, 1954. He was a missionary in Finland from 1955 to 1960 before coming to Canada. He served there for 47 years, working in a variety of roles, including as superior of the seminary at Pointe-au-Chêne (1962-1965), director of a youth center in the Diocese of Saint Hyacinthe, and as pastor of various parishes in the Diocese of Saint Jean-Longueuil (St. Thomas de Villeneuve, St. Isaac Jogues and St. Philippe-de-Laprairie). He also served as provincial treasurer and on the provincial council of French-Canada.

Fr. Gérard retired in Montreal in 2001 and in 2007, moved to Nijmegen (The Netherlands) where he died.

Also recently deceased is **Fr. Hubert Meyer** of the German Province who died January 3. He was born in 1935, professed in 1960 and ordained in 1966.

Sacred Heart School of Theology lost a member of its community as well. **Fr. Michael McLernon** died on Christmas day of a rare form of cancer.

Fr. McLernon had been Associate Director of Spiritual and Human Formation at Sacred Heart since 2000. He held a Master of Education degree and a Certified Addiction Specialist certification from Johns Hopkins University. Ordained in 1957, he was a priest of the Diocese of Harrisburg, Penn. He had served as a parish priest in Pennsylvania and as a campus administrator in Virginia, New Jersey and Connecticut.

The wake will be from 3-9 p.m. on Tuesday, January 5, with vespers for the dead at 7 p.m. The funeral will be on Wednesday, January 6 at 11 a.m. with a brief time for viewing prior to the funeral mass. Both will take place at Sacred Heart School of Theology.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be sent to Haitian Ministries or Catholic Relief Services.

Health updates

As we noted in December, **Nancy Grzeziak**, administrative assistant at Vocation Central, had surgery to remove a brain aneurysm. She recently contacted the office to let people know that she is "doing well and feeling good." Also, she extends her thanks to SCJs and co-workers for their support:

"I am truly blessed for all the thoughts and prayers sent to me from all my wonderful friends with the Priests of the Sacred Heart," said Nancy. "I send my heartfelt thanks to all

my dear friends for the beautiful flowers, thoughtful cards, and much appreciated prayers. I never could have gotten through this crisis without all the special angels I had watching out for me. There have been angels in my life. They perform their acts in human guise, borrowing the faces of family and friends. You know them too, when just the right word is needed or an act of kindness makes all the difference. God bless you all."

Fr. Stephen Huffstetter also shares an update on his health situation. As noted in the last *Fridge Notes*, a mass was discovered in his abdomen. The initial diagnosis is that he has sarcoma, a soft tissue cancer. He will be at the Mayo Clinic for several days of testing starting January 11.

And **Dn. David Nagel** has some good news about his health: "Following radiation treatments the oncologist told me that there are no signs of lymphoma remaining. The most recent scan was done before Christmas and on Christmas Eve I received the good news from the doctor."

Retired

On January 1 **Fr. Frank Wittouck** joined the ranks of the retired. **Fr. Richard MacDonald**, will be taking over as pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Raymondville, Texas, and its missions. **Fr. Frank** will do a spiritual renewal program at the Oblate School of Theology until May and then return to the Valley to do parish work and continue prison ministry.

Ground broken

The ground-breaking for the new rectory at Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in Houston took place yesterday, January 3. **Retired Archbishop Joseph Fiorenza** presided at the ceremony. Construction will take between seven and nine months. **Fr. Ed Killianski** is pastor of OLG.

Days of Celebration and Commemoration

The 2010 edition of "Days of Celebration and Commemoration" (previously known as the birthday calendar) will be mailed to SCJs with the most recent *Cor Unum*. However, a PDF of the calendar is available for download at the homepage; or you can click [HERE](#).

Also, as we have for the past several months we will continue to share a bit of information about deceased members of the province on or near the anniversary of their death. This week we remember seven SCJs:

Fr. Frank Hudson (January 5, 1996): Originally from Pueblo, Colo., **Fr. Frank** learned about the community through a magazine advertisement. He began his studies at Divine Heart Seminary in Donaldson, Ind., and professed his vows in 1945. After his ordination in 1952, he had a brief stint as provincial secretary to **Fr. Richard Kiefer**, SCJ. But soon after, he was back at the minor seminary — this time as a teacher.

"I did that for 12 years and really enjoyed it," he said in an interview shortly before his retirement. But as much as he enjoyed the work, he wanted to challenge himself to something different. Abruptly changing his lifestyle, he became a missionary in Zaire, and later, South Africa. Yet even in these mission assignments, he found himself teaching.

When he returned to the United States, he was again a teacher and it was while he was

teaching at a Catholic high school in San Bernardino, Calif., that Fr. Frank learned he had multiple sclerosis. He completed the school year, and on the suggestion of the provincial superior, returned to Hales Corners to tend to his illness. Retirement was hardly in his plans though. In Milwaukee he took on another teaching job. He continued to teach full-time until 1988.

Fr. Henry Hogeback (January 7, 1941): Fr. Henry was born in Oldenburg, Germany, in 1890 and joined the Priests of the Sacred Heart in 1912. Arriving in the United States in 1923, Fr. Hogeback went to Washington, D.C., to study English at Catholic University. While he was brushing up on his new language, Frs. Keilman, Emonts and Prantaver were also coming to the States to help Fr. Matthias Fohrman develop the missions in South Dakota. Fr. Hogeback joined them after his studies in Washington.

In October, 1924, Fr. Hogeback was appointed regional superior of the congregation in the United States. Soon after assuming the position, he called the SCJs together to plan for future ministry. It was then that the decision to open St. Joseph's Indian School was made.

After numerous fund raising campaigns, a severe fire that burned the school to the ground and ten years worth of missionary work among the Sioux, Fr. Hogeback transferred to the community house in Ste. Marie, Ill., where he replaced Fr. Rotermann as superior. There he taught German and continued to raise funds for the province.

When the new seminary was established in Donaldson, Ind., two years later, Fr. Hogeback was on the road again, becoming its superior. While there, he also taught Latin and Greek to the students. He continued to raise funds for the province, working in close collaboration with Br. Fidelis Mueller, SCJ.

On January 7, 1941, Fr. Hogeback, along with Br. Fidelis, died in an auto accident on the way to a meeting with one of the mission clubs in Chicago.

Br. Fidelis Mueller (January 7, 1941): Br. Fidelis was born in Germany in 1894, and professed in 1920. He died only 21 years later, as noted above, with another of the province's founding members, Fr. Henry Hogeback.

After his arrival in the States 1929, Br. Fidelis headed for the monastery in Hales Corners, where he was stationed until 1939. Most of his work involved raising funds for the province and its missions, which he did with great success. For hours at a stretch, Br. Fidelis would sit at his desk, writing out personal campaign letters and thank-you notes to early benefactors. When he wasn't writing to the friends of the province, he was visiting them, traveling to various cities across the country for weeks at a time.

Transferred to Donaldson in 1937, he continued to raise funds. "While it is true that I have been met with disappointments, it is also true that I have been surprised and encouraged by the generosity and interest of people who are willing to do good," wrote Br. Fidelis about his fund-raising activities.

Fr. Leonard Will (January 7, 1995): Originally from Baltimore, Md., Fr. Leonard learned about the Priests of the Sacred Heart through a classmate who also wanted to be a priest. "I never thought about diocesan priesthood; I always wanted religious life," said Fr. Will. "And I've always had a strong devotion to the Sacred Heart."

Fr. Will arrived as a student at Sacred Heart Monastery in 1928. He professed his first vows in 1934 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1940. His first assignment was in East Chicago, where he ministered at Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Jude parishes.

In 1948, he went to Divine Heart Seminary in Donaldson, Ind., where he taught religion and history. It was during this time that he requested work in the missions. On February 15, 1950, Fr. Will left the United States on a boat headed to South Africa. He arrived in Cape Town on March 8. "I loved it there," he said of South Africa. It was six years before he would return for a visit home.

In 1974, he returned to the United States. For six years he ministered at a small parish in Cleveland, Texas, before beginning his retirement at age 71. In 1994, he joined the Pinellas Park retirement community.

Fr. Adolf Koller (January 8, 1975): Artist, teacher, scholar — these are the words most often used to describe Fr. Koller. Born in Weiden, Bavaria, on June 17, 1902, he entered the diocesan seminary in Regensburg in 1923. Six years later he entered the SCJ novitiate, and in 1932, he made his final vows. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1932.

After ordination, Fr. Koller continued his studies at the University of Bonn and in Rome. He later taught, and completed special studies in archeology, art and culture. In Europe, Fr. Koller's artistic skills were in constant demand. He restored artwork in ancient churches throughout Germany and neighboring countries, including the Santa Maria delle sette dolore in the Campo Santo Tedesco, Vatican City.

Fr. Koller transferred to the United States in 1936 to teach at Sacred Heart Monastery, and in 1942, became a naturalized American citizen. During the war years, he was the chaplain for several other religious communities. He entered the Military Ordinariate in 1945 and was assigned as chaplain to the Prisoner of War Camp at General Billy Mitchell Field in Milwaukee.

He continued to work on his art in the United States. He designed the chapel at Divine Heart Seminary, and Bishop Schlarman of Peoria, Ill., commissioned him to design new stained glass windows in the diocesan cathedral.

After 22 years in Hales Corners, Fr. Koller transferred to Great Barrington and later Victorville, to work with adult vocations. His last assignment was as a hospital chaplain in California.

Fr. Gregory Meyer (January 8, 1977): Born in Ontario, Canada, Br. Gregory served in the Canadian armed forces during World War II before coming to the SCJs. Despite a congenital defect in his right eye, he became well known for his ability as a sharp shooter while in the military.

In 1955, he went to the novitiate in Ste. Marie, professed his vows in 1956 and shortly after, returned to Canada where he served at the SCJ seminary in Delaware. He spent six years there.

In the fall of 1963 he moved back to the United States to serve at St. Joseph's Indian School. A year later, he was at Sacred Heart Monastery where he tended to many of the "background tasks" of the community: bookkeeping, laundry, cooking, cutting hair, gardening and serving as beekeeper for the monastery community.

His dedication to his work was almost as intense as his dedication to prayer. Often before the sun could peek through the windows of the chapel, Br. Greg was sifting quietly in his pew, making his morning meditation.

Fr. Jack Nitzki (January 11, 2005): Fr. Jack was a native of Chicago and first came to the Priests of the Sacred Heart as a young student at Divine Heart Seminary in Donaldson, Ind. He professed his first vows in 1948 and was ordained in 1956.

Much of his religious life was spent in education, either behind a desk as a student or in front of a blackboard as a teacher. Following philosophy studies at Sacred Heart Monastery in Hales Corners, Wis., Fr. Jack headed to Rome, where he earned a degree in theology from the Gregorian University and a degree in canon law from the Lateran University. Back in the States, he also studied liturgy at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn.

His first teaching assignment was back at Divine Heart, where he taught for a year before leaving for his studies in Rome. Following the completion of his canon law degree in 1961, he returned to Sacred Heart, where he taught and served as prefect of studies. He later entered provincial administration, serving as a provincial councilor and as provincial secretary.

But not all his years of ministry were in the halls of academics. He did pastoral ministry at Immaculate Conception Church in Elmhurst, Il. (1977-1980), and at Our Lady of Guadalupe in East Chicago (1981-1985).

Then it was back to Milwaukee, where he served for many years as a resource to both the province and the congregation on canonical issues.

