



Priests of the Sacred Heart

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February 6, 2012

Very Reverend Peter Surdel, scj
Provincial House
O. Box 304
Aliwal North 9750
South Africa

Dear Peter:

While I realize that Bishop Evert Baaij, scj, continued to maintain his affiliation with the United States Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, I also know that his heart was in Southern Africa. I feel honored that I had the opportunity to get to know him when I served as the general councilor responsible for South Africa during Bishop Bressanelli's first term. By then he was settled into Nazareth House and, as noted in his memorial, returned to his ministerial love of giving pastoral care to the sick and infirm.

As it is for all of us, life was sometimes difficult for him. But in all its twists and turns the fact that he could spend so many years after leaving Aliwal North in a ministry he dearly loved is a blessing I know he gave thanks for each and every day.

We will be remembering him in our own prayers, and especially at Mass on the morning of February 9th as he is laid to rest. I think it fitting, since the bishop spent his last years in a retirement community, that this Mass will take place at our new retirement residence, Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake.

I regret that distance and time make it impossible for anyone from the US Province to be present, but I am pleased that Bishop Joseph Potocnak, scj, will be the main celebrant and preach. I trust he will represent the US Province well. Very much like Bishop Baaij, Bishop Joe is a man who may hail from another country but his heart is firmly rooted in South Africa.

Please give fraternal greetings to all. I have fond memories of my visits to South Africa and to our young province. I hope that one day I may have the opportunity to make one more visit to the land that Bishop Baaij came to love so well.

Yours in the Risen Christ,

Very Reverend Thomas P. Cassidy, scj
Provincial Superior