

Sebastian Meyer, O.Carm.

1933-2009

By Joseph Kerzich

The Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, Order of Carmelites, mourns the death of the Reverend Sebastian Meyer, O.Carm, who died at the age of 76 on June 24, 2009 at the Northbay Medical Center in Fairfield, California. There, in the morning he had undergone a successful surgical procedure to correct some longstanding medical concerns. Complications afterward led to Father Meyer suffering a major heart attack.

Visitation for Father Meyer was held June 26, 2009, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church, Fairfield, California. A Mass of Christian Burial was held June 27, with interment services following.

Born and baptized as Thomas Frederick Meyer in 1933, in Detroit, Michigan. He was preceded in death by his parents, (the late) Joseph and (the late) Clara Meyer who immigrated to the United States from their native Switzerland in 1923.

After attending grade school at Columbus School, Detroit, Meyer enrolled at the Jesuit-run University of Detroit High School. Although Meyer was in the junior seminary program, within months he decided against a Jesuit vocation. He subsequently began work in a local banking and accounting firm.

Within a few short years, Thomas Meyer attended a spiritual retreat near Lake Michigan which was directed by a Carmelite Priest. The two discussed whether a vocation to the priesthood was in Meyer's future. Within three months after this positive experience Thomas Meyer entered the Carmelite formation program at Mount Carmel College, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada.

Thomas Meyer took the religious name "Sebastian" when he professed Simple Vows in August of 1956 in New Baltimore, Pennsylvania. Exactly three years later, Brother Sebastian made his Solemn Profession to the Carmelites at Whitefriars Hall, the province's major house of study, in Washington, D.C.

Through his formation at Mount Carmel College, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, Meyer studied mathematics and philosophy and received a bachelor's degree in 1959 from St. Bonaventure University, Olean, New York.

On May 26, 1962, with family, friends, and four fellow ordinandi at his side, Sebastian Meyer was anointed a priest at the Cathedral of St. Raymond, Diocese of Joliet (Illinois.) Returning to Whitefriars Hall for an additional year of studies, Father Meyer was initially assigned to the Carmelite's educational ministry. From 1963 through 1968, Father Meyer taught at De Sales High School in Louisville, Kentucky. Subsequently between

1968 and 1973, was stationed at Crespi Catholic High School, Encino, California, serving as assistant principal while continuing to teach.

Then changing his focus towards pastoral ministry, Father Meyer served terms as associate pastor, first at Saint Jane Frances de Chantal Parish in North Hollywood, California, from 1973 until 1977; followed by a one year term at Saint Lawrence Parish, Sacramento, California. In 1978 Father Meyer accepted the position of Director of Pastoral Care at Holy Cross Hospital in Mission Hills, California.

Father Meyer was given his first pastor-ship in 1981, returning to Saint Jane Frances de Chantal Parish, North Hollywood. After nine years of solid leadership and compassionate ministry, Father Meyer entered a well deserved, one year sabbatical. Upon his return in 1991, Father Meyer became associate pastor at Saint Bernadette Catholic Church in Houston, Texas, where he remained through 1997.

After six years in Houston, Father Meyer was assigned pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Fairfield, California. Under his guidance for twelve years, the parish would experience great growth. In December of 2003 Father Meyer unlocked the doors to the newly completed parish church as the sacred space was dedicated for its holy purpose.

“He had a great love for his congregation and a special place in his heart for military men and women serving in harm’s way,” said Mr. Bud Ross, a parishioner of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish who developed a great friendship with his pastor.

Father Meyer’s interests were broader than his parish’s boundaries. He was a strong supporter of the Lay Carmelite communities and the Saint Vincent De Paul Society. He was an honorary life and fourth degree member of the Knights of Columbus. Since 1971, Father Sebastian Meyer was an active member of The Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks of the USA.

After forty-six years of engaging ministry, Father Sebastian Meyer was scheduled to retire this July. Although he will enjoy his reward eternally with his Lord, those familiar with his vigor and focus are not surprised that he ministered actively to God’s people until the very end.

May he rest in peace.