

Celebrating

THE ETERNAL LIFE OF . . .

Fr. Robert C. O'Connor, SJ, long time teacher and pastor, died on Saturday, May 23, 2009, in Clarkston, Michigan. Fr. O'Connor was born on Chicago's South Side on March 3, 1927, to Arthur J. and Mary O'Connor and was baptized at Saint Sabina Church. Fr. O'Connor served in the United States Army Air Force as a weather observer from 1945–1947. He then attended the Chicago Musical College from 1947–1949. In 1949 he enrolled at Loyola University Chicago, graduating in 1956 with a Bachelor of Science. Fr. O'Connor entered the Jesuits at the former novitiate at Milford, Ohio, in 1955 and was ordained to the priesthood on June 14, 1964.

Fr. O'Connor is perhaps best known as a teacher. "He was a French teacher much beloved and respected by his students," remembers Mr. Edward Hausfeld, who taught with Fr. O'Connor during his time at St. Xavier High School. "He greeted everyone with a smile and personal greeting and displayed a sense of humor which we all cherished." Fr. O'Connor was first assigned to teach at Saint Ignatius College Prep in Chicago in 1960. In 1966 he joined the faculty of St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati, where he taught French, Latin, Speech, and Theology until 1993.

While teaching at St. Xavier, Fr. O'Connor also made time for extra-curricular activities. "He was an avid tennis player who coached for many years and played tennis several times a week at a local tennis club," recalls Fr. Dennis Ahern, SJ, who also taught with Fr. O'Connor at St. Xavier High School. "He always was very careful about his appearance. He was a gentleman."

In 1997, Fr. O'Connor was assigned as assistant pastor at St. Xavier Church in downtown Cincinnati. "Pere O'Connor' generously gave himself to working at St. Xavier Church presiding at Masses, hearing confessions, and meeting with parishioners and people from the street who would drop in at the parish office," recalls Fr. Robert Thesing, SJ, former pastor of St. Xavier Church.

"As a younger priest, counselor, teacher and friend, he always enjoyed our gatherings, whether a family wedding or other occasions, dining in our home or out," says Mrs. Lucille Vehr, a long time parishioner of St. Xavier Church.

"I find it hard to realize that Fr. Bob is no longer with us," says Mr. Hausfeld. "He lives on as a vibrant memory in our hearts at St. Xavier."

Fr. J. Richard VandeVelde, SJ, well known Loyola University Chicago professor who also served as business manager of *Company* magazine, died on Tuesday, August 11, at the age of 74. "He was one of the great men of our province," says Fr. J. Michael Sparough, SJ. "Vande' could theorize with the best of them, but he was a scholar with his feet on the ground."

A native of Chicago, Illinois, Fr. VandeVelde was born to Alfonsine Marie and Joseph Richard VandeVelde on February 21, 1935. He attended St. Thomas of Canterbury School, and went on to graduate from Loyola Academy in Wilmette, Illinois, in 1953. That same year Fr. VandeVelde entered the Society at the former novitiate in Milford, Ohio. Before he was ordained to the priesthood on June 6, 1968, Fr. VandeVelde had earned a bachelor degree in Latin from Loyola University; a master's degree and a doctorate in Mathematics from the University of Chicago; and a licentiate in Philosophy from the former West Baden College in Indiana.

While Fr. VandeVelde served in many capacities over the years, he is most frequently remembered as a professor at Loyola University, where he taught continuously since 1968. "Fr. VandeVelde was always ready to give his time to students and university programs of any sort," recalls Fr. Donald Rowe, SJ. "While he was very focused on his math studies and teaching, he enjoyed cooking on Saturday nights for his community and friends. Summers would find him out in front of the Jesuit house, planting and tending flowers. I think the food, flowers, and friendship softened the absoluteness of Math."

In the past few decades, Fr. VandeVelde added "emerging technologies" to the list of his many passions, teaching one of the first online classes at Loyola University. "My major connection with him was when he started doing the web work for *Company* in the mid nineties," remembers *Company* editor Martin McHugh. "He was one of the first Jesuits on the Web, and he helped us get *Company* up on the Web at a pretty early time." In 2003 Fr. VandeVelde entered semi-retirement. At that same time he began as business manager for *Company* magazine.

"As long as I have known him, he was always very approachable and was someone whose counsel was always wise and kind," says Fr. Thomas Tobin, SJ. "For someone who was an accomplished mathematician, he was remarkably down-to-earth, someone with a great deal of common sense."



Fr. Robert C. O'Connor, SJ
1927–2009
Clarkston, Michigan



Fr. J. Richard VandeVelde, SJ
1935–2009
Chicago, Illinois

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