

EULOGY FOR FATHER THOMAS SCHMIED

Delivered to the Parishioners of Holy Redeemer Parish
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
September 15th & 16th, 2018



He was only with us for two brief years, but for many he left his mark, for some an indelible one! Father Thomas Schmied, who came to our parish in August 2008, passed away peacefully after a long battle with cancer on Monday evening, September 10th, 2018.

Father Tom was born on Holy Thursday, April 22nd, 1943 in Columbus, Wisconsin. He grew up on a farm and at the young age of 14 left home to attend St. Lawrence Seminary in Mount Calvary, Wisconsin. He graduated from there in 1961 and then joined the Capuchin Order taking his first vows in September 1962. The next seven years were spent studying for the priesthood. He was ordained in Marathon, Wisconsin on September 12th, 1969.

His ministries varied from Secular Franciscan Spiritual Assistant to serving as Chaplain in hospitals in the Milwaukee area. He helped out in many parishes for a while and then joined the Capuchin preachers for nine years giving parish missions and retreats. He was an Associate Pastor in Marathon, Wisconsin for two years before moving to Michigan's Upper Peninsula where he helped out in parishes for the next 20 years.

Fortunately for us he accepted the invitation to come to Winnipeg to serve our parish in August 2008. Unfortunately for us his stay was short lived as he was called to return to the United States to serve as pastor at St. Francis of Assisi parish in Saginaw, Michigan in 2010.

Father Tom embraced his new parish from the moment he stepped onto Canadian soil. I am sure many of you will remember his enthusiastic, and sometimes peculiar, ways as he provided wonderful spiritual and secular guidance on all levels. Under his watchful eye the defunct Pastoral Council was resurrected, he encouraged the writing and presentation of a Passion Play by parishioners on Good Friday, hosted a Winnipeg World Day of Prayer service, sat on the Northeast Winnipeg Ecumenical Committee, attended and participated in our family camps at Red Rock Lake, and made a surprise appearance as a model at the Ladies Auxiliary Fashion Show. Who could forget that gnome-like figure as he shovelled the walk after a heavy snowfall, a thick parka over his habit and an old-fashioned hat with flaps covering his ears? His list of projects to improve our physical space was endless much to the chagrin, I am sure, of staff and council members alike. However he did not just suggest or order things to be done, he stepped right up to the plate and pitched in.

But most of all, Father Tom was a true Franciscan. Like St. Francis he strove to live a very simple life embellished only by prayer. A computer, iphone, and television were nowhere to be found in his rectory. His form of social media was simply pen and paper to write volumes of letters on a regular basis to those he cared for and loved. He drove his dark green truck, named Clare after another of his favourite saints, into the ground hesitating to replace it until absolutely necessary. And who could forget the little garden that he planted at Jubilee Mennonite Church. No matter where he went he planted a garden and called his garden plants his "kids".

In his *Canticle of the Sun* St. Francis mentions Brother Sun, Sister Moon and Sister Death. In his last letter to one of our parishioners Father Tom mentioned that he was eagerly awaiting the arrival of Sister Death. He would want you to know that he loved being pastor at Holy Redeemer, loved his parishioners, and loved being in both Winnipeg and in our beautiful country if only for a short period of time.

Grant him eternal rest, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon him.