



Marian Shrine
P.O. Box 9000
West Haverstraw, NY 10993

Brother
ALFRED RINALDI

Dear Confreres,

Within the space of nine days, death visited our community twice. Quietly, unexpectedly, during our annual Memorial Day Polish Marian Celebration, death paid its first visit on Saturday, May 29, 1989 to claim our

BROTHER ALFRED M. RINALDI

while he was convalescing at Blue Gate. Just three days before, Bro. Alfred had returned home from a long stay in the hospital. He took some lunch and was resting when he answered the Father's call to "come home."

Bro. Alfred was born in the Bronx, New York City, on September 2, 1914. His road to Salesian life was rocky and varied. At the age of thirty-six, he went to Don Bosco College in Newton, New Jersey as a Son of Mary. He arrived in February, 1950 and in September of that year, entered the novitiate. However, due to chronic illness, he was asked to leave the novitiate in March, 1951, and was hospitalized until October of 1952. It seemed his dream of becoming a Salesian would not be realized. In October, 1952 Father Joseph Stella, of happy memory, invited Alfred to work in the Administrator's office at Goshen, New York. Alfred was hoping to return to the novitiate. However, all the uncertainty about his health did not make that possible, and so in December 1953 he found himself in Albuquerque, New Mexico seeking admission to the Congregation of the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd. However, his heart was still with Don Bosco. The following summer, he received another application from Don Bosco College, Newton. We'll let his brother, Frank, tell the story from here. Frank says: "I was at home in Montgomery, New York, when I heard the doorbell ring. I went to see who it was, and couldn't believe my brother, Alfred, was standing there with his suitcase in his hand. 'What are you doing here?', I said. He said, pulling out the application form, 'I did what they told me. The paper says "fill-out and return immediately." - so, I'm back!'" Alfred was determined.

He entered the Salesian novitiate for the second time in September, 1954 and made his First Religious Profession on September 8, 1955 at the age of 41. He took his religious profession seriously. For, of that day, we read in his private notes:

The last couple of years, Brother Alfred was growing weak and in need of a lot of attention. The confreres living at Goshen were lovingly patient, but the strain of trying to care for him and the demands of the mission made it very difficult and so they asked if I would talk to him about moving to Blue Gate where he could receive the proper care. At first, he was reluctant. Each time we met, we spoke some more, and slowly the idea seeped in. Finally, in early March, 1989 he called me and asked to come to live with the confreres at Blue Gate on a "trial" basis. After one week he decided to stay and, even though there were many adjustments to make, Brother Alfred was making them well and really seemed happy. At Easter time, he wrote to many of his friends telling them how happy he was and of the care he was getting.

On May 6, 1989, Brother Alfred got an attack of shortness of breath and had to be brought to the hospital. It seemed like a simple need for some oxygen, but while there various complications began to develop, and he was in the hospital for twenty-one days. At one point he was becoming uncooperative and the hospital staff asked me to talk to him. I remember I was firm with him and told him I was very concerned that he would not get well. He got upset and began to cry "Please, Father, don't be concerned." I insisted that I was concerned and that he had to cooperate more. He said, "I don't want you to be concerned. I'm sorry. I'll try." It was only after Brother Alfred's death, when I went through his notes, that the full significance of that scene hit me. There I found a note written June 19, 1954 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It read:

to the death of Father Orlando Molina, in Grand Bahamas, Brother Alfred was assigned there for seven weeks and so began his love relationship with the works in the Bahamas. From December, 1978 until a couple of years before his death, Brother Alfred spent his year divided between Goshen and the Bahamas. The last couple of years before his death, Brother Alfred's health had deteriorated so much that he felt it was no longer wise to make the trip to the Island he loved so much.

A number of us tend to remember Brother Alfred only as he was in these last years: frail, sickly, at times demanding and very difficult (especially when it came to trying to get him to eat some nourishing food!). However, Brother Alfred was really one of those "characters" of our province. We remember his quick wit; his horrible puns; his ready joke and those baseball caps which he always wore - (that is, when he was not in his black suit and black fedora hat!) He had all kinds of little tricks which he loved to play on the kids and had a nack for keeping campers entertained for hours. He had a gentle spirit and a kind smile. Perhaps because he had to struggle so hard to become a Salesian, he always showed a deep love for Don Bosco and our Salesian traditions. He deeply loved his Salesian community and community life. For feast days and community celebrations he could always be counted in on some sort of fun. He loved to be of service -- always ready at his sewing machine to help a confrere in need! He was always ready and proud to spread news of our apostolate and wrote many articles for local newspapers in the States and in the Bahamas telling of the mission of his Salesian brothers. Brother Alfred was a family man, and, as his brother Frank recalled at the funeral, with a tear in his eyes, "Alfred always insisted with me that the Salesians were his family."

On the day of my profession I begin to build the super-structure of my religious edifice. Everyday of my religious life is a stone for that structure. A day well spent in the service of God, in prayer, in work and in relations with others, will be a firm, worthy stone, strengthening and beautifying the structure. A day poorly spent is an unworthy, measly stone which will not only mar the beauty of the structure, but may even cause its collapse.

Those who knew Bro. Alfred know that, even on his worst days during his last years of illness, Alfred strived to make each day a worthy stone.

Much of Brother Alfred's Salesian life was spent working in various office positions in our Houses. From 1955 to 1958, he worked in the Administrator's Office in Newton. In 1958, he was sent to Cedar Lake, Indiana where he helped pioneer the Vocation work and organized weekend Retreats to foster aspirants for our school. In 1960, he was sent to work in the Mission Office in New Rochelle, and in 1961, to the Salesian Oratory in East Boston. In 1962, the Administrator at Don Bosco Tech in Boston was in need of an assistant; Brother Alfred was sent and remained in that position until 1966, except for a period of about six months in 1964 when he returned to Cedar Lake as acting administrator. September of 1966 found Brother Alfred doing vocation/retreat work at Sacred Heart in Ipswich, Massachusetts; and in 1967, he was sent back to the Provincial House in New Rochelle, where he continued to do the same kind of work, until 1972. He remained on the staff of the Provincial House till 1975 when, once again, he was sent to Goshen as assistant to the Administrator. He held that position until December 1978, when, due

"Prayer and Resolution: That Our Father in Heaven will call me from this life, rather than permit me to give even a moment's concern to those Salesians who placed such confidence in me. Amen. Alfred A. Rinaldi." It seems, the Lord heard his prayer and Brother Alfred kept his resolution.

As we remember this good confrere, so human and so full of fun, he leaves us with a program of Salesian life that no doubt challenged him and certainly challenges each of us. His resolution taken for his annual retreat of June, 1978 reads:

I must see Christ in each person, in each boy that approaches me for the smallest favor. I must accept each person as Christ. I must accept each person in all his abjection. I want all to accept me in my abjection.

Brother Alfred's example of cheerfulness, fidelity, perseverance, obedience and acceptance serves as an inspiration to us, his Salesian brothers, as we continue on our pilgrimage to the Father.

Please pray for this community.

Faternally in Don Bosco,

Rev. Patrick Angelucci, S.D.B.
Director

Data for Necrology: BROTHER ALFRED M. RINALDI, born in the Bronx, New York, September 2, 1914; Professed September 8, 1955; died at West Haverstraw, New York, May 29, 1989 at the age of 74, after 34 years of religious profession.