



Father Ralph Simeone, S.D.B

Born:

August 17, 1921
Kensington, Connecticut

Religious Profession:

August 16, 1941
Castelnuovo Don Bosco, Italy

Ordination:

July 2, 1950
Bollengo, Italy

Died in the Lord:

October 19, 1981
Don Bosco College
Newton, New Jersey

“With Christ I am nailed to
the cross, I live now not with
my own life, but Christ lives
within me.”

Gal. 2:19.

From the last Mass celebrated by Fr. Ralph, Feast of St. Ignatius of Antioch, Martyr, October 17.

Father Ralph Simeone died in the intense awareness that he was being conformed to Christ through his own sufferings. That vital consciousness in him was Father Ralph's final faith-filled message to his confreres: "If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."

Though his strength was rapidly failing, Father Ralph was able to say one final Mass in his own room on the morning of October 17. One of the clerics shared that memorable hour with him and helped him as he struggled through this last Eucharistic Sacrifice. We had urged Father Ralph to sit while saying Mass. He in turn had looked at us carefully and said, "What kind of sacrifice would that be?" As St. Ignatius of Antioch, whose memory he commemorated in his last Mass, Father Ralph was being ground up to be one with the Bread of Christ, the Eternal Priest.

Father Ralph was stricken with cancer in November, 1977. Two operations, radiation, and chemo-therapy did not succeed in gaining a remission. While the disease did cut short his teaching, he was an excellent teacher of languages, he continued in his writing nearly to the end. His special theme was Mary. Nor did he ever let go of his study. In his last months Sacred Scripture was his favorite occupation. "I will learn as much as the Lord gives me time for," he said. Four years after he was stricken he finally succumbed in October, 1981.

Born in Kensington, a suburb of New Britain, Connecticut, Father Ralph lived in the United States in his earliest years. But he was raised in Italy where he attended the Salesian High School at Gaeta, south of Rome. He became a Salesian on August 15, 1941 after his Novitiate at Castelnuovo Don Bosco in Piedmont. He did his philosophical studies at San Callisto and Foglizzo and his practical training at our famed missionary institute, Ivrea. After studies at Crocetta and Bollengo, he was ordained during the Holy Year, 1950.

Within a year Father Ralph had returned to the United States where his parents and most of his family had taken up residence. He was assigned to St. Francis School in Watsonville, California and a year later to Edmonton, Canada, where he served the needy young of St. Mary's Home for seven years as Prefect of Studies.

In 1959 he was named associate pastor of St. Dominic Savio Church, Bellflower, California. Beginning in 1960 he spent 14 years at Rosemead at both Don Bosco Tech and St. Joseph's Aspirantate with only a brief return to Bellflower, 1970 - 71 and Director of Don Bosch Technical Institute from 1971 to 1974.

He came to Don Bosco College in 1975 after a year at Watsonville. At Newton he quickly gained a reputation as a dedicated linguist, teacher, and author of his own texts. Even when very sick he taught close to his room and would not concede his responsibility until it became impossible to maintain the needed strength to communicate. He lived to the end in cheerful submission to duty. Father Ralph died in the strength of his faith and in the sufferings and resurrection of Christ.

Our community at Newton upon doctor's recommendation and because we knew it was our Brother Ralph's wish, kept him at the College during his final days and to the very last moment. He breathed his last most gently in the presence of the Director and two of the clerics.

We had been moved by his deep faith and indomitable courage. Our faith - in the value of his suffering, in the efficacy of his prayers for us, in the power of his priesthood as our confessor and through his daily Mass - helped to support him. He also knew that we loved, esteemed, and respected him. He died in that knowledge and conviction.

Now may he intercede for the community which sent him forth to the Lord he clung to so forcefully in all his trials. May his perseverance win perseverance for the young Salesians who are just beginning their pilgrimage in religious life. From his great strength of mind and heart may we all derive a similar dedication.

Because he loved Mary so deeply and wrote so well of her, may he obtain her favor for us all.

Edward P. Liptak, SDB

August 15, 1982

The Assumption of Our Lady