



FR. JOSEPH M. STELLA, S.D.B.

BORN: Dec. 30, 1909

PROFESSED: Oct. 12, 1935

ORDAINED: July 2, 1944

DIED: April 26, 1986

Dear Conferees,

Fr. Joseph Stella died of a heart attack on April 26 while visiting his family in Monforte d'Alba near Cuneo, Italy.

Classmate and friend, Fr. A. J. Louis, represented the province at Fr. Stella's funeral in the parish church of Monforte on April 28. Also attending were the Vicar General of the Diocese of Alba, Fr. Luigi Testa (provincial of the Subalpine province), Fr. Peter Rinaldi, Fr. Ottavio Stella (Joseph's brother) and two other surviving brothers Francesco and Luigi.

Joseph Stella joined the Salesians as an adult in 1931. From the Salesian missionary college at Ivrea he went to Chieri for novitiate and was then sent to the United States. At Newton, NJ, he completed philosophy studies and was assistant to the novices. In 1941, unable to return to Europe because of the War, he studied theology at Newton and doubled as assistant to the clerics until ordination in June 1944.

In September 1945, with Fr. John Lomagno (Director), Fr. Mark Ferrito (Prefect), Fr. Lucien Trudel, and Brothers "Al" Alicino, Edward Cappelletti, Clement Cardillo, and Chester Szemborski he opened a new high school seminary in Suffern, NY. He was Prefect of Studies for two years there and for one year at St. Michael's Salesian School in Goshen, NY.

In 1948 he returned to Newton where for twelve years he would serve as Prefect and then Director. Under his enthusiastic guidance the Sons of Mary program was established, the novitiate was built, and preparations were made for the accreditation of Don Bosco College.

Men of the province who lived at Newton during that time remember Fr. Stella for his humor, his pranks, his capacity for work, and his Salesian piety. Generations of Salesians trained at Newton learned the devotion of Mary, Help of Christians and came to love Don Bosco through his practical example and anecdotal "Good Nights."



Known for his keen organizational ability, in 1961 he was nominated the province's first "Economer." The following year he became director of St. Dominic Savio High School in East Boston, MA., where he established the financial security of the new school and built Savio Hall — a gym and classroom complex to supplement the aging former John Paul Jones school which housed most of the Savio facilities.

Fr. Joseph Stella became director of the Marian Shrine in West Haverstraw, NY in 1969, and during his six-year tenure the Don Bosco Retreat House was built and extensive renovations were made to existing buildings. In 1975, at the age of 66, he returned to Newton as Financial Administrator, and added an outdoor swimming pool to the college — resident camp facilities. In 1981 he was assigned to Salesian Junior Seminary in Goshen, NY as Financial Administrator.

Memorial services for Fr. Stella were held in Goshen on April 27 and at West Haverstraw on May 2. A month's mind Mass was celebrated at Newton, NJ, on Thursday, May 29.

Fr. Joseph Stella leaves to the province a rich heritage of optimism, work, and prayer. He was a builder who inspired generosity because of his own example and because his benefactors recognized him as a saintly man who would put their money to do God's work.

We knew him as a man of deep faith and trust, with a great love for the Congregation and everything Salesian. His gift for the discernment of vocation was evident during his years at Newton. While at Goshen he served as chaplain to the Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate and was frequently asked to counsel their novices about their choice of a state of life.

I remember him best in an image engraved indelibly on my mind: As the late afternoon sun pours softly through the windows of the seminary chapel in Goshen, he is kneeling quietly before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament — his eyes closed, his face touched by a look of perfect peace and serenity.

Please join this community and the province of New Rochelle as we remember with prayerful suffrage our beloved Fr. Joseph Stella.

Very truly yours,

Rev. Frank Kelly, S.D.B.  
Director

Data for the Necrology:

Fr. Joseph Stella, died at Monforte D'Alba (Italy), April 25, 1986, at the age of 76.