



# Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters

*called by the Spirit • embracing the world*

**PROVINCE BULLETIN**

Vol. 40 No. 4—USA—APRIL 2020

## Divine Interruptions for a New Day

*Written By: Fr. Tom Umbras, SVD*

What's going on here? What is this silent, hidden and invisible visitor that is unpredictably stalking us, incessantly trying us, and turning our world upside down, interrupting our routined lives and obliging us to change our ways? We call it the "virus", but could it be something more? In the midst of uncertainty, suffering and death, could this be a metaphorical divine messenger; trying to let grace seep into our mediocre souls and invite us to a deeper encounter with God? As we are being pushed into awareness and reality of our limitations, of relationships, of physical space and presence, we are being invited to a greater generosity and thinking as well as acting in favor of the well-being of others. Our customary comfort zones are being challenged to expand and embrace others who are more vulnerable during this transitional time. Jesus identified with such as these when he said: Whenever you do this for one of these little ones, you do it for me. This is the holy scandal of the Incarnation as is, that God becomes what we hide from and are afraid of, and only asks that we see with love what is before us and "shelter in place", and "stay at home" with the One who is our Life, our Freedom from fear, and our Destiny.



*Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters: in the United States and in the Caribbean*

*Northfield, IL*

*Grayslake, IL*

*Epworth, IA*

*Antigua*

*New York, NY*

*Waukegan, IL*

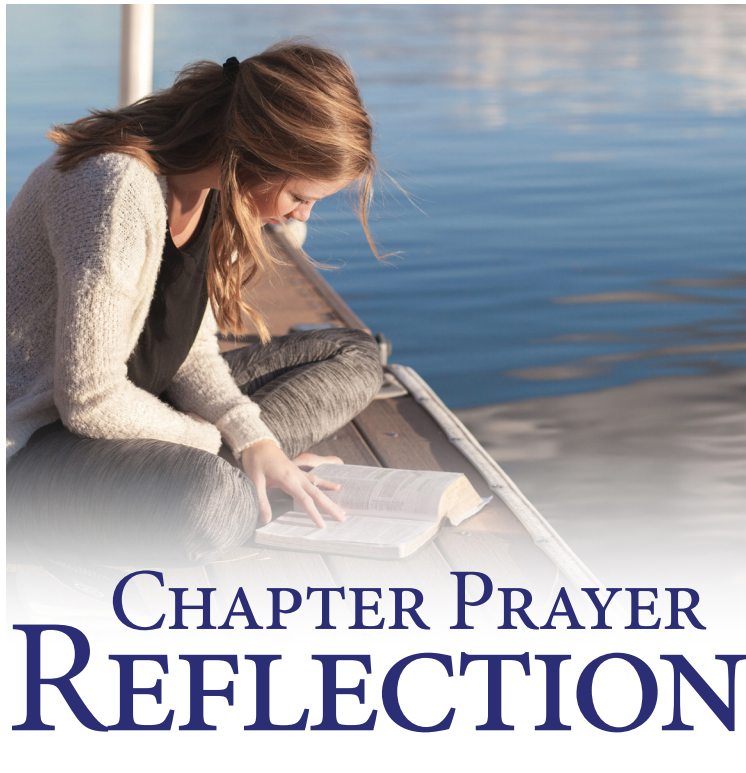
*Chicago, IL*

*Memphis, TN*

*Jamaica*

*St. Kitts*





# CHAPTER PRAYER REFLECTION

Sr. Dorota Maria Piechaczek, SSps

*"In union with our Founding Generation and the thousands of SSps who have gone before us, we entrust our whole Congregation into your providential care."*

We continue our reflection surrounded by and surrendered to the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic development. While the Chapter is postponed, we intensify our prayer for the Congregational Leadership Team who has to deal with the rescheduling as well as for the chapter itself in the process of incorporating this new development.

At the end of the chapter prayer, we again express deep gratitude for and unity with those on whose shoulders we stand. They have 'run the course' and we look up to them. Confident in the communion of saints, we call on their help to carry on the mission entrusted to them faithfully and innovatively and to pass it on to the next generation. We believe that many of those who walked before us are in full communion with God; therefore, we too surrender our lives and the life of our Congregation to the Triune God. Divine Spirit fill us, lead us, live in us, make of us your instruments, be present and act in this world through us as we confess: "Jesus is the Lord!"

*Recall some of the Sisters who affected your life, who modeled missionary living for you, and are gone to eternity. If possible, visit a cemetery.*

# Book of the Month

**"EATING TOGETHER,  
BECOMING ONE"**

*By: Thomas O'Loughlin*

In November 2020, Pope Francis called on theologians to explore whether normal Catholic practice should be changed to allow Christians belonging to other churches, to share fully at the table when they take part in a Eucharistic celebration by Catholics.



In his book, EATING TOGETHER, BECOMING ONE, the author, Thomas O'Loughlin provides his contribution to that challenge. He argues that the various ways of thinking about what we are doing in the liturgy should lead us to see intercommunion as enhancing our participation in the mystery of the Church and the mystery we celebrate. O'Loughlin writes as a historian, theologian, liturgist and pastor; but it is above all his pastoral perspective that invites the reader to join in the debate proposed by Pope Francis. This is a book which provokes much enriching discussion.

*- Sr. Betty Tranel, SSps*





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Sr. Judy Vallimont, SSpS

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In Lent the COVID-19 pandemic broke our full force. It's Easter now, and the pandemic is still raging in our world. Somehow Lent is still here; Lent and Easter are all around us in a mysterious mix of blame, selfishness, and wants with goodness, generosity, and compassion. These days of shut-in and stay-at-home ring a quiet beckoning call to us as missionaries. Listen. Hear God's call; hear Jesus' words: "Come aside and rest awhile." Can you not pray one hour with me? Martha, you are busy about many things; but Mary has chosen the better part. Peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give." In the suffering, in the uncertainty, and even in the fears we hear the Spirit calling and whispering to us to step aside, to be still.

We stay in the quiet, gathered together as one community. Like the women who followed Jesus during his life and onto his death and burial, we are puzzled and don't understand. Life as we know/knew it is buried by this pandemic. We ponder the WHY: Why is this happening? Why can't we do something? Why didn't someone/anyone see this coming? Why couldn't this have been avoided? We hear the blaming and see the finger-pointing. Sometimes we join the ranks of blaming. We see how one action (or non-action) affects many, rippling out into the neighborhood, the nation, the world. It's a lesson still being learned and yet to be lived.

Why can't we missionaries go out? Like the disciples we sit in the upper room of our hearts fearful and wondering where is that Spirit that was promised? When is that Spirit that was promised going to come? God loves the world so much... What really is the message of Easter, of Jesus' giving all for love of all? What new life will be present if each act of love we see and hear about reverberates and spreads like the virus? Yes, we see signs everywhere the reaching out in so many ways: neighbor helping neighbor; medics risking lives to help others; friends using technology to stay in touch; family doing face time together on their iPhone and/or iPad. We see it in our own communities as we live more closely together, as we grow in consideration for the well-being of others by "distancing" and wearing masks. We learn new ways of being together and grow more deeply in our understanding of one another and of being a missionary presence.

The experience of this Easter Pandemic gives greater insight into Jesus' command: "Go out into the whole world." The love and care we show each other during these "shut-in" days spreads into the whole world. Moving with hope toward the reopening of our countries and economies, we know a new world is dawning. Life will not be the same. We KNOW because we believe Jesus lives and goes before us. Immersed in the life of the Trinity transforming the world with compassion, we go from "pandemic" to NEW LIFE. God is LOVE, Alleluia!

“ In the suffering,  
in the uncertainty,  
and even in the fears  
we hear the  
Spirit calling ”





# NEWS & APPOINTMENTS

## *Decisions of the Provincial Leadership Team at its meeting of April 4, 2010:*

*Sr. Marie Eunide Voltaire, SSpS received admission to renew vows. The plan is that Sr. Marie will renew vows at the Holy Family Cathedral in St. John's, Antigua on Sunday May 10. Sr. Marie also requested to wear the religious habit.*

*Yolette Dorce was granted admission to Novitiate! The beginning date and place of the novitiate program is still pending.*

*Requests from SSpS Sisters Yanet Hernandez Lopez and Theresa ThanhThao Nguyen, CMRM for admission to Perpetual Vows in our Congregation were forwarded to the Congregational Leadership Team.*

*Earlier on, we carved the week of August 8-14 to gather as a Province and have the General Chapter echoing. Since this will not happen, the PLT asked Sisters Carol and Margaret Anne to offer us the "Contemplative journey through our Constitutions" during this time. Sisters, please plan to attend.*

*We are working on the details of the program. We envision it, as originally planned by the Sisters, as a retreat with a short introduction, much time for personal reflection, contemplation, and a time for sharing in age groups according to reflection points provided. The goal of us doing it together is to gain new insights into our Rule of Life and to read it in the light of the new developments and calls in the Church and in the society, to come to a common and forward-looking understanding of our mission in this Province and of our goals.*

*If any Sister would feel that this time would not fully satisfy her spiritual needs, she could request to make another retreat. Sr. Judy is in conversation with Fr. Dennis Callan regarding the retreat in June with the hope that it will take place.*



**MARK'S MONTHLY TIPS**

*Monthly Upkeep for Seasonal Change!*

With April winding down we all have some important maintenance tips to help to ensure safety and reduce infestation as the weather changes.

1. Check that windows open and close properly, and that the locking mechanism locks properly.
2. Ants will become active this time of year. place ant traps in areas that you notice activity.
3. Be aware of the location of the electrical breaker box in case a breaker should trip.
4. Be aware of the location of the main water shut off in case a water leak occurs.

*Enjoy the upcoming month knowing that your property is ready for the season!*

*- Mark Kelly*





# Our Stories

## Experiences at a Glance During the Covid-19 Pandemic

SSpS US Province



### ROGERS PARK COMMUNITY

Written By: Sr. Margaret Anne Norris, SSpS

As a principle, we see the importance of staying at home, as a way of following the regulations and advice of health care officials as well as government officials, in order to care for one another, to protect ourselves and others from virus contamination. As we make the healthcare of others and of ourselves a priority, it is an act of caring about well-being. This is also true when we observe social distancing within the house. And we can use the restrictions we feel as a prayer for others.

We are growing in concern for and closeness to people around the world who are affected by the virus. We feel a strong sense of connectedness to our Sisters, the SVD's, and others around the world who are serving people and/or holding online prayer services. When you are forced to stop like this, you begin to see and hear and reflect more deeply. Staying at home brings quieter time with more opportunities for quality community prayer and meals together, more possible than when Sisters are out at school or ministry, often in the evenings. There is more time for personal reflection and for concern for our neighbors, students, co-workers, fellow students, as well as for all those we read or hear about in the news.

We have set our community routine, pray and eat together regularly. Some Sisters have online classes and

ministries. There is a sense of being 'confined', unable to be very active in ministry; a sense of helplessness in the face of the many needs. We are learning how to respond creatively and wisely to the many who get in touch with us, wanting to share their fears and concerns. Our own faith is challenged; we have needed to pray more simply and deeply.



Rogers Park, Illinois Community Building.

### WAUKEGAN COMMUNITY

Written By: Sr. Elwira Dziuk, SSpS

A small and invisible virus continues to bring havoc to our everyday lives. Our schedules and activities have changed or in many cases were put on pause. Life as we've known it gave way to a very different order that took some time to get used to. Despite our worries about the progression of the virus, let us see a glimmer of hope, a spark of a new light that opens us up to some new possibilities.

How ironic or maybe how providential that the stay-at-home order began during Lent, a season that encourages us to slow down and take some extra time for reflection. We certainly miss participating in the Holy Eucharist every morning and during Lent we missed praying the Stations of the Cross with other parishioners. However, this time of slowing down and staying at a distance encourages us to do things in a different way. Perhaps at this time of refraining from direct contact with people in

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SSpS Sisters gather for a special televised Easter Mass at the Convent of the Holy Spirit in Northfield, Illinois.

our ministry settings, we are called to embrace the world with our good thoughts and prayers as people struggle to keep hope alive. We deeply feel for those who are less fortunate and we are open to the limited calls to prepare take-out meals for the homeless in our neighborhood soup kitchen. We also help a local hospital with the critical shortage of protective equipment by sewing some pre-cut face masks.

Above all, as we hear the news reports and calls from our families and friends for prayer, we set aside an hour each day in front of the Risen Lord, to intercede for those who are on the front lines responding to the horrific pandemic and those who are directly affected by it. Maybe this is where the Spirit is calling us today, to embrace the world with compassion.

## KEEP THINGS MOVING

Written By: Sr. Monica Zhang SSpS

Most people are experiencing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic right now. As a former worrier, I am still in the process of reducing worries especially at this special time. However, I discover that I am not thinking much of the coronavirus cases and deaths' numbers that make me scared, but reflecting/meditating on what and how God is working in me, and how it changes my normal life.

During this current crisis period, one of changes I have been experiencing is that the relationship with my fellow sisters who are living with me becomes closer and deeper. Because of staying at home, we have more chances to meet each other and share almost everything especially at our meal time together. We become real companions for each other in this painful and joyous time. Of course, there are also some unpleasant moments that cause us to get to know each other more. Thank God for these great

experiences of being together. Life is going on.

Keep building the closer & healthy relationships with one another. Reconnecting oneself, others, and having stronger faith in God are essential during this difficult time. Even though I cannot go out as often as I want, I treasure the time of staying home. I try to find something meaningful to do such as rearranging the files, cleaning the shed in the backyard and doing some gardening work. I also began to reflect on spiritual notes that I took a few years ago. This is how I reconnect myself. Even though I cannot work in my office, I try to contact my friends, clients and family members and ask them if they are doing okay. Of course, they all are in my prayers. Like Father of Great Faith, Abraham, I need to try my best, and believe that God will take care of the rest. Thank the Risen Lord who reveals himself and bring his peace, joy and love in the struggles that I am facing. Keep life moving!



(Epworth) SSpS Sisters Yustina Intan, Margaret Kissani, Carol Welp, & Aprilia Untarto make face masks for those in need.

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# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ON QUARANTINE

St. Catherine Labouré Parish

Written By: Sr. Nadiya Levchenko, SSpS

It's been a month since we entered into a totally unknown and new situation for all of us. When I think about it everything feels like an unreal dream and I am waiting to wake up. It was Friday, everything was prepared for Saturday Confirmation celebration for our 86 students and 800 guests, excited to receive this Sacrament from the bishop's hands. All classes, service projects, and important milestones such as retreat, reconciliation, and presentations for parents were accomplished. Paperwork done and submitted, food for reception was prepared, volunteers were ready to serve, and in just a couple of hours... everything was changed: quarantine! Calls and emails from parents, catechists, and volunteers with the many questions. Questions without answers. Students disappointed because they've been preparing for Confirmation, Reconciliation, Eucharist so diligently. Parents canceling receptions and flights.

Chaos, anger, sadness, fear. Those emotions accompanied all of us until we started to understand our new reality. I think our feelings were very similar to those from disciples after Jesus' death. Christ died, was buried, and resurrected, but the apostles didn't know it yet. Our Resurrected King came to visit us through online Liturgy, willingness of the catechists to learn new platforms and continue serving our 184 children online, through patience and adjusting the expectations with limitations. Instead of the usual 90 minutes for all RE students, catechists are having classes with every grade in different hours, to make sure that if the family has one device only, all children from the family can have their class. This is why the meetings are from 9 am to 3 pm. I am so blessed knowing so many good people, coping with their own anxiety, but willing to help others to find God during such uncertain times. Experiencing this, I can proclaim with Mary Magdalen: He is alive!



## FINDING PURPOSE

Written By: Sr. Monica Darrichon, SSpS

Who would have thought that buying a 2020 Calendar would be the most useless purchase we would make? In my case, I began to fill its first months with many activities. I had taken on responsibilities that involved hours of preparation. Suddenly, everything was cut short. It was time to stop and change things. It was time to close the doors of the house but open the doors of the mind and the heart. It was time to realize everything I have and what I have are so many blessings that in our daily routines we do not always perceive. I realized that I was alone in the house, a well-known reality, but when we dedicate ourselves to the ministry we do not become aware of that kind of loneliness.

I had to decide what I was going to do, I was no longer going to be surrounded by people, and it was time to be more creative. Contact with people was different and what I have decided to do is give myself the time to look internally from God's perspective, and that perspective is God's mercy. Yes, mercy on myself. The days go by and none of them are the same. I find challenges but at the same time I find much calmness. These days when most people are deprived of the daily Eucharist, I have it as my greatest blessing in this time of the pandemic. I do not wonder what the source of my inner peace is, because I know where it comes from.

Buying a 2020 calendar may have been the most useless purchase of 2019; however, its empty pages will help me remember one of the most important steps of God's Mercy for my life.

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# POSITIVELY LIVING

Written By: Sr. Rosa Da Costa, SSps

Our lives have all been affected by the fear, isolation and uncertainty in society due to the corona virus. We have been trying to live with this as positively as we can. Human beings tend to turn to prayer in a time of crisis. Unfortunately, churches are being closed. During Holy Week, some of our students from HSLLC Rogers Park, called me saying “we lost our jobs, we cannot go to Church”. People may turn hopeless: “Oh God, where do we go now?” Despite that, I think God is our constant. Without a proper routine, my thoughts are scattered and I am easily irritated. I am constantly reminded that I need to keep calm by pushing negative thoughts away and not letting my emotions overcome me. In this isolation, there’s a great feeling of desolation, but I’ve found consolation in God. It gives a sense that we are not alone in this; that other people are having the same worries too.

Our “Staying Home” calls us to look into the future and build bridges between our resources such as planning SPC activities, the fall term program, keeping in touch with our clients, volunteers and donors via telephone, mailing letters and emails to make sure we are stronger than before. Through the simple act of staying home, we can save many people, even many thousands of people from contracting the virus. Every day that we practice social distancing during the pandemic, we are doing someone else a great kindness. So, if you can, stay home. It is one of the easiest acts of heroism you will ever do. As we continue to bear this cross, may we persevere in prayer, and do good works of mercy to those in need around us.



Sr. Lidia Kunze, SSps (Left) helping Sr. Rosa Da Costa Menezes, SSps (Right) make face masks for those in need.



## WHAT HAS STAYING AT HOME MEANT TO ME?

Written By: Sr. Leonette Kaluzny, SSps

First of all, living at the Province Center where there is a Nursing facility, Administration Staff, Food Staff, Cleaning Staff, Nursing Staff, etc. and we are about 30-40 Sisters living here, it is very difficult for me to say that I am “staying at home” with a mask on all the time. Being very much involved with my two contemplative Groups from outside in the Convent, the “lockdown” was at first very shocking to me but now we continue our sharing and praying together electronically and I am enjoying this very much. Because of my health and age limitations, my mask became a health hazard emotionally and physically, so my large bedroom became my “Stay at home” place. To keep my focus on God I put aside the things that distract me from God and I feel truly blessed now. The connection of our hearts is beyond time, space, and distance. We are always in Community.

Contemplative living in my response to God’s call is a radical choice for me. It focuses on silence, solitude, and stillness in our world today that overvalues mindless distractions, fluidity, change and even chaos. My “stay at home” place is a place of empowerment and energies now, to develop my resilience and bounce back from all these challenges and tragedies.



# Longing for Communion

*The SSps Experience of Pandemic in Jamaica*



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Sr. Yuliana Meno, SSps and Sr. Barbara Miensopust, SSps

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Life in Jamaica has changed since March 13, 2020 due to COVID-19 PANDEMIC. Common places where crowd gather such as schools and churches have been closed since then. This has affected our daily ministries nearly shut down until present time. Necessary works relate to school matters Sr. Yuliana mostly has done from home. Meanwhile, Sr. Barbara still assisting persons who are in need, but remains keeping herself distant. As we all learned that the COVID-19 PANDEMIC has caused crisis in life; for instance financial crisis. Our Church in St. Thomas like many other churches have never had collection collected since the closure of the church gathering. Yet, salaries and other bills still need to be paid. The same issue happens with the school. Most of the parents will not be able to pay school fees for their children since they are not able to continue their businesses/works in regular basis. It will be affecting students' learning process and an inability to pay teachers' salaries.

In addition, COVID -19 has spoiled persons for being patient and grateful. A wonderful conversation took place among our neighbor's relatives. This neighbor lives by two brothers. Both are young. Since the Pandemic break through their jobs have slowed down and earn nothing. The youngest one started to cry, complained about money. One of the evenings, two of their relatives visited them. The relatives said "stop crying, stop complaining. You should be thankful that you still have LIFE, MAN." The relatives promised the young men to be back the next day with some money. We think this is a wonderful message for young people in this time of crisis. There are many good things which we take as learnings. Few of our church members who are coming from far away, calling from the gate (while the gate is locked) asking about Mass. They are longing for EUCHARISTIC celebration, and yet, they have to go back home because the gathering at the church is limited.

Some of them are longing for a communion service in their homes, yet still cannot have one. Like Bro. Gordon, who misses so much receiving communion, asked Sr. Barbara if he would be given Holy Communion when Sr. Barbara was delivering some food for him. Bro. Gordon and the members of the church accepted the reality with a broken heart. It is really a pain for us that we just cannot do it at this time. However, we believe that since we are longing for a closeness or a communion with the Lord, yes indeed we are with the Lord.

Let me end our story with "TOGETHER." Together we surrender, together we will be saved. Together we strive, together we will survive. Together we are one, together we are Missionary Servants of the Holy Spirit.

## Prayer Request

*We continue to join the prayers of "people of good will" for the end of the Covid-19 pandemic, for those who suffer and for those who alleviate the suffering.*

*We pray with gratitude for our Employees who generously have supported us with their collaboration through this challenging time.*

*Sr. Vincent Wolff, SSps is hospitalized for tests and treatment at Evanston Hospital in Illinois.*

*Our elderly Sisters who have to put up with the many changes at the Convent as a consequence of Covid-19.*



# UPCOMING EVENTS

*OUR PLANS ARE IN YOUR HANDS O' LORD!*

**May 2, 2020**

PLT meeting.

**June 6, 2020**

PLT meeting.

**June 7, 2020**

Trinity Sunday – Jubilees.

**June 15-21, 2020**

Preached retreat by Fr. Dennis Callan, SVD at the Convent of the Holy Spirit.

**August 8-14, 2020**

Contemplative Retreat / ongoing formation on our Constitutions by Srs. Margaret Anne Norris and Carol Welp at the Convent of the Holy Spirit.

**August 15, 2020**

SSpS Sr. Rebecca Chann David's Final Vows.

*As we approach these events and many more on our calendar, please keep everyone attending in your thoughts and prayers.*



Through the incarnation of the Son in Jesus Christ, God communicated God's utmost commitment to humanity. To communicate to the person, speak the same language and be understood, God becomes one of us "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14). Jesus, the Divine Word, through the incarnation, becomes the Communicator of the Father-Mother.

In His human experience, Jesus establishes the bridge of rapprochement with God and reveals that God is the Father of love, kindness, and compassion. His passion

for the Father makes Him the brother of all people, especially those who are most despised and deprived of their dignity. To reveal the love of the Father, He heals the sick, gives sight to the blind, welcomes the children, and shares the bread. He proclaims in parables with a language that everyone can understand, uses images and symbols, and gives Himself in the Eucharist.

Jesus communicates what He is and gives Himself in the totality of His love, giving His own life. Thus, Jesus becomes the model of every communicator. He embodies within Himself the message of God and lives it to its ultimate consequences.

In these unprecedented times these words could not ring any clearer and full of truth. We can clearly hear as a congregation of believers that it is paramount that we do all that we can to prayerfully communicate God's message of love, grace, mercy, and salvation to all people in the hope of gathering as many back to himself as possible. Wherever we find ourselves individually in this effort, may we do as the Word of God commands and "Redeem the Time!"



## IN MEMORIAM

*For all victims of Covid-19, particularly for friends and relatives of our Sisters and Employees. We would like all of you to know that the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters across the world make mention of you in our thoughts and prayers during this tragic time in your lives.*

*April 8, 2020 Fr. Chester Smith, SVD (age 60) died of a heart attack.*