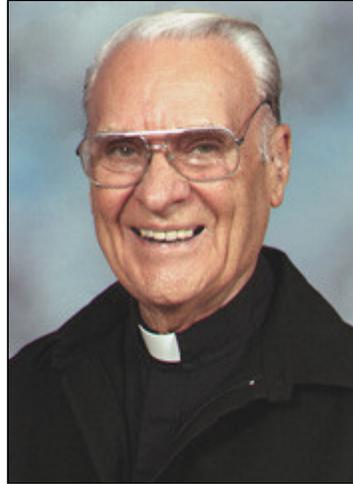


Father Joe Dean

CINCINNATI—When Glenmary Father Joe Dean was asked why a church needed to be built in Hazlehurst, Ga., in 1973 when there were only a handful of Catholics attending Mass and the county's population was predominately non-Catholic, he replied: "Once the local people see we are putting down our roots in the soil, that we won't drive out of town with our trailer flying behind us, they will soon fill the church." And they did! Six months later, there was a waiting-room only at Midnight Mass.



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as his total commitment to Glenmary's mission—establishing Catholic presence in counties where none existed—and to the people he served in his over 50 years of mission priesthood that made Father Dean so successful in his mission assignments and so loved. Father Dean, 86, died Feb. 14, 2007, in Mt. Pleasant, Texas, of an apparent heart attack.

of two children of Washington and Mary Dean, Father Dean, a native of Chicago, was baptized Joseph Washington Dyniewicz, Jr. When he joined Glenmary in 1943, he was asked by Glenmary's founder, Father William Howard Bishop, to change his last name to Dean. Father Bishop explained that it was difficult enough in the South to be Catholic without having such an unfamiliar—and hard-to-pronounce—last name. To make it easier for Father Dean, his parents also changed their last name to Dean. After his ordination in 1945, his first assignment took him to Norton, Va., where he ministered to, among others, Polish coal miners!

He attended Quigley Preparatory Seminary and St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Chicago. He was first introduced to Glenmary when Father Bishop spoke at St. Mary of the Lake in 1941. In 1997, he was honored by Quigley Prep as a recipient of the Archbishop James E. Quigley Distinguished Alumnus Award for his exemplary 50 years of priestly ministry.

His missions assignments include pastoring 10 missions in Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Mississippi, Georgia, Texas and Oklahoma. Of those 10, he founded four: Norton, Va.; Murphy, N.C.; West Point, Miss.; and Pittsburg-Mt. Vernon, Texas. Each one of those new missions also represented the first Glenmary missions established in those states. Glenmary's mission presence grew in all four of these states with many

missions eventually developing into thriving parishes. Over the years, parishioners of Father Dean's former missions have repeated the same quote: "It's hard to imagine the success of our church if Father Dean hadn't been here."

Sandwiched in between founding new missions he pastored Glenmary's established missions at Sunfish, Ky.; Morehead, Ky.; McRae, Ga.; New Albany, Miss.; Mt. Pleasant, Texas; and Antlers, Okla. He also founded two hospitals (St. Mary's Hospital, Norton, Va.; Providence Hospital, Murphy, N.C.) and numerous outreach centers and programs. In the 1950s, he worked in Glenmary's vocation and promotion department and taught at Glenmary's seminary.

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r Dean arrived in Mississippi in 1965 in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement. He began, very slowly, working to integrate the West Point community, collaborating with other local ministers and the leaders in the community—both black and white. Father Dean's lifelong ministry in the African-American community was fueled by the fact, he said, that "for so long members of a community were cut off from so many normal benefits of civil life and, in some cases, of human living, that there was a need for Christian leadership." A 1968 *Glenmary Challenge* article about Father Dean's work in West Point concluded that perhaps it was his presence in the community that prevented the outbreak of riots like those plaguing the rest of the United States during that time.

l of his mission pastorates, he successfully used columns in the local newspaper and radio messages to educate and, in many cases, attract locals to Catholicism—even ordained Baptist preacher in one mission county.

ge part of Father Joe Dean's magic was that each person he talked to was, at that moment, the most important person in the world," said Father Dan Dorsey, president of Glenmary.

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"He was a champion of the underdog," Father Dorsey said.

In the mid-1980s, Father Dean recognized a growing Spanish-speaking population in Glenmary's missions in the South. At 65 he began learning Spanish and reaching out to the immigrant population. He continued his study of Spanish and was constantly learning. "You don't grow old," he said, "you become old by not growing."

When he retired from assigned ministry in 1995, he immediately began working as an assistant in Glenmary's mission in Idabel, Okla. From 2000 to the present he lived in

Glenmary's former mission in Mt. Pleasant, Texas, making himself available to fill in for pastors in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas.

