

October 7, 2011

## **Benedictine Father Severin Messick was pastor in Greenfield**

By Mary Ann Garber



Benedictine Father Severin Messick, a monk and priest of Saint Meinrad Archabbey and longtime pastor of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, died of cancer on Sept. 28 at Hancock Regional Hospital in Greenfield. He was 57.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Oct. 4 at Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church in St. Meinrad. Benedictine Archabbot Justin Du Vall was the principal celebrant and homilist. Burial followed at the Archabbey Cemetery.

A memorial Mass will be celebrated at St. Michael Church in Greenfield at a later date.

Benedictine Father Prior Kurt Stasiak of Saint Meinrad said Father Severin spent most of his monastic life serving God and the Church in parish ministry in three dioceses, and was proud to be

a monk of the archabbey.

Father Prior Kurt said Father Severin was “a caring and loving pastor, [who] was quick to share his love of the priesthood with the young people in his parish.”

He accepted his cancer diagnosis “with a spirit that could only have been of, and sustained by, God,” Father Prior Kurt said. “When he was diagnosed in January 2011, he knew that long-term survival would be a long shot. Yet, no matter the odds and the painful twists and turns, Father Severin fought the good fight and ran the good race. Whenever he reported on his worsening condition, he did so with a calm voice and a trusting heart in God’s unsearchable ways. ... He was ready to meet the Lord.”

Not long after Father Severin became ill, students at St. Michael School presented their pastor with a prayer and a promise, Father Prior Kurt said, to pray it for him “everywhere, every day.”

Father Severin “always had a smile on his face,” he said, loved the Latin language and enjoyed reading.

Msgr. Anthony Volz, pastor of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis and a longtime friend, remembered Father Severin as a scholarly priest who related extraordinarily well with his parishioners.

“He was my closest friend,” Msgr. Volz said. “He was a very holy man, and certainly a man of prayer. He loved Saint Meinrad, ... and he loved parish work, too. And he did some high school teaching. He was always enthusiastic. He was very, very smart and well-read. I could go to him with any question and he could always answer it.”

Msgr. Volz said Father Severin enjoyed ministering to the people at St. Michael Parish for 13 years.

“He loved all of his assignments, but I know, being there for 13 years, he was very proud that he got to stay there that long,” Msgr. Volz said. “He loved the people there and I know they loved

him. ... He will be missed, but we can pray to him, and I know that he will pray for us."

Father Stephen Jarrell, pastor of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis and a longtime friend, said people referred to Father Severin, Msgr. Volz and himself as "The Three Amigos" because they enjoyed spending time together and went on annual vacations in July.

"He had an encyclopedic type of mind and quite varied interests," Father Jarrell said. "He had a gift to communicate rather complex information into language that people could understand. People really learned a lot about their Catholic faith through him. He really knew Church history and the sacred liturgy."

Mark Stephen Messick was born on July 12, 1954, in Indianapolis to Henry and Anna (McGuire) Messick.

He attended Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Indianapolis, graduated from Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis and earned a bachelor's degree in classics from the former Saint Meinrad College in St. Meinrad in 1973.

Four years later, he was invested as a Benedictine novice. He professed his simple vows on Aug. 6, 1978, and was ordained to the priesthood by the late Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara on May 2, 1982.

He completed graduate studies in Latin and classical literature at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

In 1983, Father Severin began his first ministry assignment as associate pastor of St. Mary-of-the-Woods Parish in Whitesville, Ky., in the Diocese of Owensboro, and a teacher at Trinity High School there.

Two years later, he was named associate pastor of St. Ann Parish in Morganfield, Ky., and an advocate of the Metropolitan Tribunal

in the Diocese of Owensboro.

In 1986, Father Severin was called to service in the Diocese of Evansville, where he ministered as associate pastor of St. Mary Parish in Huntingburg, Ind., for six years.

In 1992, he returned to St. Ann Parish in Morganfield as pastor.

In 1996, Father Severin served as administrator of the Church of the Immaculate in Owensboro, Ky., then began his parish ministry in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis as co-pastor of St. Paul Parish in Tell City, St. Michael Parish in Cannelton and St. Piux V Parish in Troy.

The following year, he was appointed administrator of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis.

In 1998, Father Severin was named pastor of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, his longest ministry assignment, where he cared for the spiritual needs of parishioners until his death.

For nearly seven years, Father Severin also served as a judge of the archdiocesan Metropolitan Tribunal.

In 2010, he was appointed temporary administrator of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Rushville while continuing as pastor of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield.

Surviving are his mother, Anna Messick of Greenfield; a sister-in-law, Suzanna Messick of Indianapolis; two nieces, Michelle Johnson of Carmel, Ind., and Cynthia Lee of Indianapolis; two great-nieces and a great-nephew; and one great-great niece.

Memorial gifts may be sent to St. Michael Parish, 519 Jefferson Blvd., Greenfield IN 46140 or Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577. †

