



Select Page



McManus, Father John Paul

1986, June 21

Date of Birth: 1913, August 31



Please remember before the Lord

JOHN PAUL McMANUS

priest of Saint Sulpice

born in Youngstown, OH,

August 31, 1913

ordained priest in Baltimore,

May 14, 1940

for the Diocese of Cleveland

admitted to Saint Sulpice in 1942

Faculty appointments:

St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore,

1941-43

St. Joseph's High School,

Mountain View, CA, 1943-45

St. Edward's Seminary, Kenmore, WA,

1945-54, 1958-68

St. John's Provincial Seminary,

Plymouth, MI, 1954-58

Theological College, Washington,

DC, 1973-78

Formation Director, USA Province,

1968-73

Chaplain, Christian Brothers, Rome,

1978-79

Associate pastor, St. John Vianney,

Bothell, WA, 1979-82

Retired, 1982

died at Marianwood Healthcare Center,

June 21, 1986

buried Calvary Cemetery, Seattle, WA

June 26, 1986

Lord, hear the prayer that we offer
for John your servant and priest. He
faithfully fulfilled his ministry to
your church. May he rejoice forever
in the fellowship of your saints.

Amen.

July 17, 1986

Dear Confrere:

Four months of wracking pain from cancer, partially eased by drug therapy, closed with a peaceful death on June 21, 1986, for our brother, John Paul McManus, at Marianwood Healthcare Center in Issaquah, Washington. Although formally retired since 1982, he had, since then, given frequent pastoral assistance to the parish of Our Lady of the Lake in Seattle, continuing a parish ministry he had taken up at St. John Vianney Parish in Bothell in 1979. Parishioners and priests in both places by their final tributes demonstrated their great love and admiration for his priestly zeal and a caring concern that close friends had more than matched during his final illness.

John had an enormous love of the Pacific Northwest which began almost as soon as he was first assigned there. Other assignments he fulfilled with great faithfulness, but they never brought him the same gratification as ministry near the mountains and lakes of Washington State, where he spent almost half of his priesthood. He asked that he be buried there, also.

Born in Youngstown, Ohio, on August 31, 1913, to James V. and Mary (nee Gribbon) McManus, he was the second of their three sons and one daughter. A business opportunity took the family to Lorain, Ohio, when John was ten. At fifteen, he entered the high school of St. Charles College, Catonsville, being drawn toward the priesthood. An attraction to the community life of the Sulpicians and their seminary teaching mission led to his being accepted as a candidate for their Society and he stayed in Baltimore to complete his studies at St. Mary's Seminary. Those were years of devastating economic depression and they were very hard ones for his family. The business failed, his mother was in ill-health, and his older brother, Daniel, was killed in an automobile accident. John, probably influenced deeply by family suffering, grew up somewhat shy, timid, and reserved, but also in love with books and the beauty of nature. He also sought stability and security, which were not easily attained in his early years as a priest when, because of personnel shortages, he found himself re-assigned several times and given a variety of courses to teach. He hoped to teach theology, especially ascetics and liturgy, but that opportunity never

came except in a very limited way. His mother, unable to attend his ordination, died a few weeks later.

After being ordained a priest in Baltimore for the Diocese of Cleveland on May 14, 1940, Father McManus spent the next two summers assisting at a parish in Maine and working at a boys' camp. Having earned a B.A. and S.T.L. degrees in the seminary, he spent the first school year after ordination at The Catholic University getting a degree in library science, which he found preferable to zoology which he had tried in vain to get interested in for two summers at Johns Hopkins University. The year of Sulpician formation followed at old St. Mary's Seminary on Paca Street under the direction of the rector, Father Lloyd P. McDonald, the first time it had been given there. Admitted to the Society, Father McManus stayed on another year for his first teaching assignment, a course in education, and to reorganize the library. Barely under way, he was asked to be one of several Sulpicians the following year to go to Mountain View, California, to help staff the high school of St. Joseph's College, and to teach English, Latin, history, religion and speech.

Two years later, he received an appointment to St. Edward's Seminary in Seattle, where over a nine-year period he really developed his skills as a teacher of English and Latin literature and as a spiritual director. Years later, one of his students from those days wrote of how Father McManus had opened for him "whole new worlds of beauty and excitement," sharing as a director "his own vision and struggles," and "setting such high standards for himself and inviting me to follow, insisting on quality in everything, . . . having an impact that led me to consider the Society as a channel for my own ministry." During those years he also developed his love of camping and hiking and found his health stronger, which had been a problem as a youth with a heart condition that provoked a number of crises in later life.

That phase of his ministry ended abruptly with an appointment in 1954 to Michigan to take charge of the move and development of the library of St. John's Provincial Seminary in the former chapel, since a new chapel had just been completed. It was here that he had a chance to develop his earlier interest in teaching liturgy and courses in sermon composition. Whatever appeal library work might once have held had been lost over the years, however, and Father McManus appealed for a transfer

back to Seattle, which was granted in 1958. In the meantime, he had begun to develop the art of directing retreats for women religious, which later extended to men religious, especially the Irish Christian Brothers, and to diocesan priests.

In Seattle, the library at St. Edward's Seminary fell to his direction again when his predecessor felt it necessary to give full time to the new library at nearby St. Thomas Seminary. During the summers he found time to deepen his relationships with southern California relatives, where he usually also found an opportunity to work in a nearby parish. But these were also increasingly troublesome years for seminaries, and Father McManus found himself growing more frustrated by the problems of younger seminarians.

An invitation from the provincial council in 1968 to become the province's first director of formation and recruitment he found appealing, if somewhat unnerving. The next five years based in Baltimore he worked through uncharted waters in developing programs that would serve greatly different needs and expectations of aspirants to Sulpician ministry. In 1973, Father McManus joined the faculty of the Theological College in Washington, D.C., where he brought a rare depth of experience to the formation team. Although health problems were beginning to trouble him more frequently, he continued his retreat work, particularly with the Christian Brothers, which led to an invitation to be chaplain of their tertianship program in Rome. That had to be postponed until 1978, when, with very mixed feelings, he left seminary work and took the chaplaincy as his sabbatical program for a year. Tempted to continue it at the Brothers' request, he found his heart problems and other ailments making Roman life more difficult than anticipated. Thus, when an opportunity was offered to become associate pastor of the Sulpician parish, St. John Vianney, back to Seattle, he found it too attractive to turn down, despite his long absence from the area. It was to prove a happy outlet for his zeal, and it capped his surprisingly diverse ministry that eventually extended over forty-five years. That appointment was interrupted by open-heart surgery in the fall of 1980, but he was back on the job in remarkably short time.

Father McManus had a strong aversion to anything that focused attention on himself. He would accept no recognition at the time of his formal retirement, forbade the placing of any picture of himself on a memorial card, and to the end

found it difficult to believe that anyone would find reason to praise his contributions to people's faith and religious life. The outpouring of appreciation at the time of his death proved that his self-evaluation was in error. In the words of the homilist at his funeral, the Rev. William S. Morris, S.S., his life and the people present to honor and pray for him were a powerful eulogy that no words could equal.

Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen was principal celebrant of the Mass of Christian Burial in St. John Vianney Church on the evening of June 24. The retired Archbishop Thomas A. Connolly was also present, as were William McManus of Lorain and Mary Demarest of Alameda, California, brother and sister of Father McManus, and David Heffernan, S.J., his nephew. A vigil service prepared by the parish staff of Our Lady of the Lake Parish was held on June 23 and led by the Rev. William J. Lee, S.S., representing the provincial superior who was out of the country. The Rev. J. Michael Strange, S.S., led the graveside service in Calvary Cemetery on June 26.

May Father John Paul McManus live forever in the joy of the Resurrection.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

William J. Lee, S.S.

Provincial Secretary

[Return to Sulpician Necrology Page](#)

Phone: 1+410-323-5070
Fax: 1+410-433-6524
Email: info@sulpicians.org

Copyright © 2017-2022, All Rights Reserved [Members Login](#)
Society of St. Sulpice, Province of the United States