

SCALES, Rev. Donald Francis Joseph, 80, of the Order of Saint Benedict (OSB), departed this life on



December 12, 2008, at Mary, Mother of the Church Abbey in Richmond. He entered Belmont Abbey in

North Carolina as a novice in 1948, and attended Belmont Abbey Seminary, being ordained a priest at Belmont Abbey on June 17, 1955. Fr. Donald then was sent to Benedictine High School in Richmond, where he worked for two years and again from 1960-61, before being sent back to Belmont Abbey. After many different assignments and obtaining a Masters' Degree in Guidance and Counseling, Fr. Donald returned to Richmond for the final time in 1980. He had since remained as a monk, serving at Benedictine as a religion teacher until his retirement and as a board member until his death. He served first as associate pastor and then as pastor of St. Benedict Catholic Church, Richmond until 1999. For many years and until his last days, he also served as the beloved Prior of his monastery. Never without a cigar or a smile, Fr. Donald baptized, served first communions, heard confessions, officiated weddings, offered last rites, and given the eulogies of countless numbers of Christians. Through his loving and comforting care, Fr. Donald provided years of spiritual guidance and friendship to anyone he met. Fr. Donald is survived by his monastic brothers; two sisters-in-law, Carol Scales and Martha Scales; his nieces and nephews, Sandra Scales-Siwiek, Cecile Matty, Eric Scales, Maryanne "Sissy" Thomas, Hank Thomas, Randy Thomas, and Paul Thomas; and one cousin, William Colliton. His body will be received in St. Benedict Catholic Church, 300 N. Sheppard St., at 5 p.m. Tuesday, with visitation following until 7 p.m., when a Vigil Mass will be celebrated by The Most Rev. Francis X. DiLorenzo, Bishop of The Catholic Diocese of Richmond. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated 10 a.m. Wednesday at Mary, Mother of the Church Abbey, with burial to follow in the Monastery Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Fr. Donald Memorial Fund at Mary, Mother of the Church Abbey, 12829 River Rd., Richmond, Va. 23238-7206.

The Rev. Donald F.J. Scales dies

Priest had served as St. Benedict pastor, Benedictine teacher

BY JOHN D. CLARKE
Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

The Rev. Donald Francis Joseph Scales served as pastor of St. Benedict Catholic Church in Richmond for five years, the last monk in the Order of Saint Benedict to do so. He retired from the position in 1999 as the Diocese of Richmond assumed responsibility for the church due to a shortage of priests.

Father Scales also had taught at Benedictine High School.

Father Scales died Friday of cancer at Mary, Mother of the Church Abbey in eastern Goochland County, as his brother monks held a vigil around him. He was 80.

Father Scales taught religion as well as other subjects. His standard answer, though, when asked what he taught, was "stu-

dents," said members of his family.

Times-Dispatch Deputy Business Editor Gregory J. Gilligan, a student of Father Scales, said one of the key messages that he included in sermons, talks, weddings and funerals was "Forgive, forgive, forgive."

"Few people can be said to have made groups and classes better with his presence. Father Donald was among them," Benedictine High School's headmaster, John McGinty, said in a message to parents and alumni.

McGinty quoted his son Sean, who had been an altar boy with Father Scales: "He was a very fun person to be around and a great role model and mentor for countless kids. He spoke the language of children and teenagers, which is a most difficult task."

In 1986, when Benedictine High School's 75th-anniversary events were interrupted by a five-alarm fire that destroyed the school's upper floors, Father Scales told a reporter, "I'm just

happy no one was in there. I'm too old to worry about buildings."

Father Scales was born in Oneida, N.Y., in 1928. He attended Belmont Abbey Preparatory School and Belmont Junior College near Charlotte, N.C., when his family relocated to nearby Hickory. He became a novice at the Benedictine Belmont Abbey at age 20, attended its seminary and was ordained a priest there in 1955, according to information provided by his family.

He was posted to Benedictine High School in Richmond twice. He served as associate pastor, then pastor, of St. Benedict Catholic Church. After retiring from teaching, he continued to serve on the high school's board and as prior of Mary, Mother of the Church monastery.

The Rev. Gregory Gresko, current prior at the abbey, said Father Scales was a giving man. "We knew he was a real soldier of God who would be taken out with his boots on," he said.



The Rev. Donald Francis Joseph Scales was "a great role model and mentor for countless kids."

Father Scales earned a master's degree in guidance and counseling from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Visitation will be held Tuesday from 5 to 7 p.m. at St. Benedict Catholic Church, 300 N. Sheppard St., followed by a Vigil Mass celebrated by the Most Rev. Francis X. DiLorenzo, bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond. A Mass of Christian Burial will be said at Mary, Mother of the Church Abbey on Wednesday at 10 a.m. Burial will take place in the monastery's cemetery.

In addition to his colleagues at the abbey, survivors include two sisters-in-law, Carol Scales and Martha Scales; seven nieces and nephews; and a cousin.

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