

## Rev. Fr. Donal McCarthy, SS.CC. 1940-2022

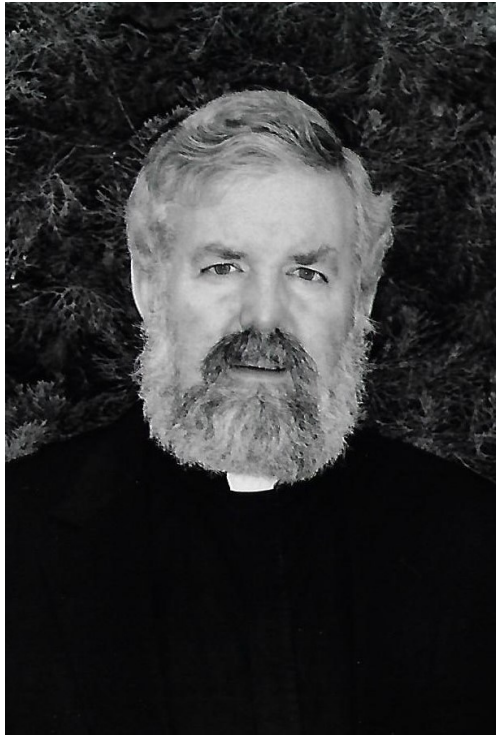
Father Donal A McCarthy, SS.CC. died peacefully at the priests' residence at Damien High School on March 10, 2022. He was 81.

He had been hospitalized for two weeks before returning home the day before his death.

Father Donal was born in Rathdrum County Wicklow, Ireland on June 21, 1940, the son of Christopher McCarthy and Agnes McCarthy O'Neill. Fr. Donal grew up in Blanchardstown County Dublin. He entered the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts in August 1958, in Cootehill County Cavan. After completing his Novitiate he was professed in 1959 and came to the United States to study philosophy and theology at the Sacred Hearts Seminary in Jaffrey New Hampshire.

Ordained in 1965, Father McCarthy's first assignment was at Bishop Amat High School, La Puente, California where he served from 1965 to 1971. He subsequently became a teacher and counselor at Damien High School from 1972 to 1974 before going on to fill similar roles at St. Paul's High School in Santa Fe Springs from 1974 to 1979. Fr. Mac, as he was commonly called, returned to Damien in 1979 and continued in the role of teacher and counselor there until 1987. He then became principal at Aquinas High School in San Bernardino until 1989 when he once again returned to Damien.

Father McCarthy received a BA in philosophy from the University of New Hampshire in 1960. He subsequently received Masters Degrees in Education from Loyola Marymount and in Theology from St. Mary's Moraga. Within the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts Fr. McCarthy served in several leadership roles, most prominently as Provincial from 2005 to 2011.



Among his confreres, he is best remembered for the warm welcome he extended to all of his brothers, most particularly those who had gone on to other professions. Reflecting on his life, one of his brothers, the novelist Jim Beirne, writes:

Today we mourn the passing of—our friend, brother and classmate—Donal McCarthy known affectionately as Big Mac. Although tall in stature, in reality he was a "gentle giant." Above all Mac was an ordinary man who made his way quietly through life. This Quiet Man avoided the limelight and was ok with letting others take the credit. This

ordinary man was comfortable in his own skin and seemed to enjoy flying under the radar. This ordinary man wasn't complicated, wasn't trying to get ahead at someone else's expense, wasn't trying to steal a march on anyone, wasn't a threat to anyone. In short he got along, he was an "everyman," but in his ordinariness there was quiet dignity and nobility.

A few years ago at a banquet in Holy Name of Mary Parish in a moment of self reflection about the ups and downs of his life, he concluded by saying with a smile on his face, "All in all, I'm a very happy man." That's the way I will remember him. (Those words were spoken in the 50th anniversary of priesthood)

Grateful that our paths crossed, and hearts touched, be in peace.

*May the love which is stronger than death, in which binds us together, in the unity of life, energize our spirits, to live our life more freely, fully, and faithfully.*