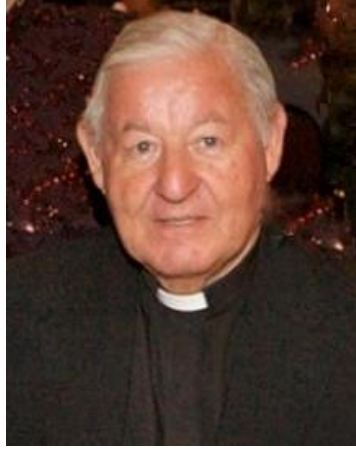


Rev. Fr. Michael Maher, ss.cc.

1937-2023



*Always fall in love with what you are asked to accept
Take what is given and make it over your way...
The best way is through” ~ Robert Frost*

On August 4, 1956, Fr. Michael Maher, along with Fr. Pat Crowley, took the first steps “through” as they entered Sacred Hearts Novitiate in Cootehill, Ireland. Those steps led him to Jaffrey, New Hampshire to study and then to serve in La Verne, San Dimas, Chino Hills, and Cathedral City, California. Wherever he resided Fr. Maher entered the hearts of those God called him to serve.

Born on December 27, 1937 in Dublin, Ireland, Mike was the oldest of seven children. His mom and dad, Patrick Maher and Margaret Mary Lawler, laid a solid foundation of faith, and throughout his 85 years of life, he always went home to be renewed. He never forgot where and who he came from.

Returning to California, after his 1963 ordination in Ireland, he was assigned to an all-boys school, Damien High, to teach Latin and religion. Fr Maher continued there until 1974. His next assignment was as the associate pastor at Holy Name of Mary Parish where he was asked in 1981 to be the pastor.

In January 1986, he was approached by the provincial to consider starting a new parish in Chino Hills. He did not agree to the request immediately. When he decided to look at the place where he was being asked to build the future parish he exclaimed upon arrival, “You want me to give up Holy Name of Mary for this empty piece of land?” Eventually, after prayerful consideration, he said yes and fell in love, through his act of acceptance, and the community soon became part of his extended family.

As the grounds for the church were prepared for the buildings, the buildings were prepared for the people, and the people were prepared to become the community of St. Paul the Apostle of Chino Hills. He later stated, “It was the best experience of my life.” Fr. Mike had an uncanny

way of finding the talents and treasures that lie deep within people and bringing them out for the good of all. In the beginning of St. Paul the Apostle Parish, there were only 200 people attending Mass. Today there are over 8,000. After 15 years at St. Paul the Apostle, Fr. Maher was transferred to St. Louis in Cathedral City, where he was pastor for ten years only stepping down due to illness.

Fr. Maher once stated, in regards to being a pastor, "I love the parish, have come to know the people, and would like to "spend myself" as their pastor." This spending of oneself was one of the cornerstones of his calling. On June 23, 2023, he and Fr. Pat Crowley celebrated 60 years of priesthood. Throughout his years as a priest, he continued "spending" himself until there was nothing left to spend. Fr. Maher was empty, but he was ready to be filled for a new journey to the kingdom prepared for him by the God he came to know, love, and serve.

We are all grateful for the ways he took what God gave him and how he made it, as only he could, into something better. He did not become what people wanted him to be, rather he became what they needed him to be.

Fr. Mike, was faithful to God, his family, his SS.CC. community, his extended family, and to himself. He, like all men and women, may not have done everything right, but doing what he did, with the love that enabled him to share God's love with those sent to him, allowed him to be loved and for others to find a deeper more loving relationship with God.

To quote Fr. Maher, " I love being a member of our Congregation. I love being a priest. I love it all

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give Him thanks.