



## ORDER OF CARMELITES

### Carmelite Communications Center

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#### CARMELITE FATHER ROBERT EMMETT LEE DIES

(May 1, 2003; Darien, IL) The Order of Carmelites of the Most Pure Heart of Mary under the direction of the Very Reverend John F. Russell Prior Provincial is saddened to report that Carmelite Father, The Rev. Robert Emmett Lee, died on Wednesday, April 30, 2003 at the age of 75.

Visitation for Father Lee, who is known for his many years of ministry with the Lay Carmelites, will be held on Saturday, May 3, 2003, from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at the National Shrine of St. Therese, 8501 Bailey Road, Darien, Illinois. A wake service will follow the visitation at 8:00 p.m.

The Mass of Christian Burial will take place at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 4, 2003 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 8404 Cass Ave., Darien, Illinois. The Very Reverend, John F. Russell, O. Carm., S.T.D., Prior Provincial will be the celebrant. The Reverend Gavin Quinn, O. Carm., Pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Darien, Illinois will be the homilist.

Father Lee was born in Chicago, Illinois on April 6, 1928. Robert was the eldest of three sons, William and the late James and two daughters, Geraldine (O'Donnell) and Mary Helen (Waters) of the late, Robert Edward Lee and Jeannette (Lowe) Lee of Chicago. He received the name Robert Emmett when he was baptized at Holy Cross Church in Chicago, where he grew up and attended St. Clara's Carmelite School. He was a member of the singing group at the National Shrine of St. Therese there, and then attended Mt. Carmel High School nearby. Graduating high school in 1946, Father Lee attended Loyola University in Chicago. Feeling a call to priesthood in the Carmelite Order, Robert enrolled at Mount Carmel College in Niagara Falls, Ontario Canada, (a former Carmelite seminary) to begin studies.

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He attended the Carmelite Novitiate in New Baltimore, Pennsylvania, and on September 1, 1951 Father Lee professed his simple vows as a Carmelite and was given the name, Ronan. He then returned to Mt. Carmel to complete his studies and receive his bachelor's degree from St. Bonaventure University in Olean, New York. He then went to Whitefriars Hall in Washington, D.C., where he studied Carmelite theology. He professed his solemn vows there on September 15, 1954. After three years of theology studies, Father Lee was ordained to the priesthood at the Cathedral of St. Raymond in Joliet, Illinois, on May 30, 1955.

Father Lee's first assignment as a Carmelite priest was to the faculty of DeSales High School in Louisville, Kentucky, where he taught for seven years beginning in 1956. He also served as the schools athletic director. In 1963, Father Lee became a member of the faculty of his *alma mater*, Mt. Carmel High School in Chicago. In addition to teaching, he coached the school's golf team. "*Lord knows*", Father Lee once wrote, "*someone has to have a good influence on young men interested in the ancient Scottish game*". During this time he also received his master's degree in Religious Studies at Mundelein College in Chicago.

Father Lee was assigned as parochial vicar at Mount Carmel parish in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1988. The following year he was assigned to the Lay Carmelite ministry at Aylesford Priory in Darien, Illinois.

"*He never had a bad day,*" is how Father Al Sieracki, O. Carm., would describe Father Lee in one sentence. Father Sieracki, who was Director of the Lay Carmelites for several years when Father Bob Lee also worked this ministry, commented that he enjoyed working with Father Bob. "*We called him, 'The General'. He had this ability to always smile and be happy,*" Father Sieracki said.

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Father Lee enjoyed traveling throughout the province visiting with Lay Carmelite's in each state. *"He traveled from Illinois to California, and Florida, literally all over the nation. We got him a new car each year because he drove over 40,000 miles making his visits. Though his efforts in visiting the Lay Carmelite groups around the country, the Lay movement received a great impetus in growth, community, and a great spirit of cooperation with the Lay Carmelite office in Darien, Illinois",* Sieracki said.

His brother William Lee, in remembering some of the highlights of his brothers' life, recalls his joy when being invited to play at Augusta National Golf Course. *"As a priest",* said Lee, (my brother Bob) *"did an awful lot of good work".* William Lee talked about how the family kept his brother Bob busy. *"He was there for the family, baptizing twenty of his great nieces and nephews and attending many of the family gatherings,"* said his brother, William. *"The thing I remember most,"* said Bill, *"is that Bob and I never had an argument or disagreement—unless of course you count the years before I was ten".*

Carmelite Father Robert Emmett Lee, will be laid to rest on Monday, May 5, 2003 at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Chicago. May He rest in peace!

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