

## **Joel Schevers, O.Carm.**

1918-2009

By Jorge Mora

The Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, Order of Carmelites, mourns the death of the Reverend Joel Schevers, O.Carm., who died at the age of 91 on December 14, 2009, in Venice, Florida.

Visitation for Father Schevers was held on Sunday, December 20, 2009, and on Monday, December 21, 2009, at Epiphany Cathedral in Venice, Florida. Following the visitation on Monday, the Mass of Christian Burial took place. Burial immediately followed at Venice Memorial Gardens.

James Schevers was born to (the late) James Bernard Schevers and (the late) Agnes (Reiter) Schevers on January 6, 1918, in Chicago, Illinois. He is survived by his brother Richard and by his sisters Dorothy Cooper and Betty Hamer.

James attended Saint Martin and Saint Dorothy Grammar Schools, and Saint Kilian Grade School in Chicago, Illinois. Afterwards he attended Mount Carmel Preparatory Seminary in Niagara Falls, Ontario. On August 14, 1935, James received the Carmelite habit. On August 15, 1936, he professed simple vows, taking the religious name "Joel." He then attended Mount Carmel College in Niagara Falls, Ontario. On August 15, 1939, Joel made his solemn profession with the Carmelites, and afterwards attended the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, from where he received a Masters Degree in Sociology. On May 23, 1942, he was ordained a priest. Father Joel also received a Masters Degree in Pastoral Counseling from Saint John's University in Jamaica, New York, in 1973; a Masters Degree in Theology in Ecumenism from Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey, in 1975; and a Masters Degree in Divinity from Immaculate Conception Seminary in Darlington, New Jersey, in 1977.

Father Joel began his ministry in 1943 as Associate Pastor of Saint Mary's Church in Joliet, Illinois, while also teaching part-time at Joliet Catholic High School (boys) and Providence High School (girls), and serving as Vocation Director for the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary (PCM). In 1947 he joined the teaching staff at Mount Carmel Preparatory Seminary in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and was named Prior of the Seminary in 1948. In 1951, Father Joel was appointed First Definitor for a year for the PCM Province. In 1952, he became the founding Pastor of Mount Carmel Parish in Houston, Texas. In 1955 he became co-founder and Associate Pastor of Saint Basil's Parish in Ottawa, Canada. From 1956-1957 he was a member of the original core group of the International Carmelite Contemplative Hermitage in Austria. From 1957-1960 he was a member of the Carmelite retreat and mission band working out of Chicago. In 1960 Father Joel became the first director of the Carmelite Chapel at Northshore Shopping Center in Peabody, Massachusetts. From 1968-1969 he was given an exploratory

ecumenical assignment at Niagara Falls, Ontario. From 1969-1978 he served as Pastor of Saint Anastasia Church in Teaneck, New Jersey. During this time (1969-1972) he was elected Second Councilor for the PCM Province, and from 1975-1978 he served as Dean for the area of south central Bergen County in the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey. While in Teaneck, Father Joel was a member of several Township and County Boards: The Urban League of Bergen County, Quigley Court Senior Citizens Housing, Teaneck Together, The Senior Services Center for Teaneck and the Community Mental Health Organization. In 1974, he was designated Teaneck *Man of the Year*, and in 1978 he was honored by the Teaneck City Club, giving him its Distinguished Citizen Award for his service in the areas of ecumenical relations, senior citizens' activities and many other community activities.

From 1978-1979, Father Joel served as Parish Coordinator of Saint Mary Parish in Closter, New Jersey. From 1978-1981 he was elected First Councilor for the PCM Province. From 1979-1986 he served at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Tenafly, New Jersey, first as Associate Pastor and then as Co-Pastor. From 1984-1987 he was elected Second Councilor for the PCM Province.

In 1986 Father Joel became Associate Pastor at the Cathedral of the Epiphany in Venice, Florida, a position he held until 2003. In 1986, the Washington Theological Union honored Father Joel by establishing a scholarship in his name for a student for ministry in the Church. From 1988-2006, he served as Defender of the Bond for the Marriage Tribunal of the Diocese of Venice, Florida. From 1992-2006 he was also a Tribunal Member of the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs of the Diocese of Venice. In 1992, he was honored by the State of New Jersey Senate on the occasion of his 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

In 2003, Father Joel retired to the Carmelite Retirement House at Mission Valley in Nokomis, Florida. During his retirement he assisted part-time at weekend Masses in the Cathedral of the Epiphany. He remained at Mission Valley until his death.

May he rest in peace.

Memorials in honor of Father Joel Schevers can be made to the Society of the Little Flower, 1313 Frontage Road, Darien, IL 60561; or to the Carmelite Missions, 8501 Bailey Road, Darien, IL 60561.