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In Memoriam: 'Father Cy'

02.22.2011 | Catholic

A retired University of Dayton chaplain who touched the lives of many has died.

The Rev. Cyril Middendorf, S.M., died Saturday, Feb. 19, at the age of 87.

Visitation is scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday, March 5, in Queen of Apostles Chapel at Mount Saint John, 4435 E. Patterson Rd. in Dayton. Mass of Christian burial is scheduled for 11 a.m. in Queen of Apostles Chapel with a burial to follow immediately at Queen of Heaven Cemetery at Mount Saint John. A luncheon for all guests at Bergamo Center will follow the burial.

"Father Cy was very creative in his ministries," said the Rev. Jerry Chinchar, S.M., University of Dayton campus minister for catechetical programs. "He was a hard worker and founder of many of the service clubs at the University, including the University of Dayton Summer Appalachia Program."

The program gives students opportunity to learn about the people who live in Appalachia and their culture. Students immerse themselves for nine weeks, participating in programs with age groups ranging from kindergarten to seniors.

"Father Cy," as he was affectionately known, worked at the University from 1965 to 1978. He is credited with starting many of the campus service organizations that were precursors to the University's current Center for Social Concern.

"Father Cy had an impact on a lot of people," said the Rev. Chris Wittmann, S.M., University of Dayton director of campus ministry. "When I meet random people in the Dayton area who learn I am a Marianist, Father Cy has been one of the people most often asked about."

Middendorf, a 1944 graduate of the University of Dayton, professed his first vows on Aug. 25, 1942, and his perpetual vows as a Marianist on Aug. 26, 1945. He was ordained a Marianist priest July 12, 1953.

Middendorf had teaching stints in Cleveland; Brooklyn, N.Y.; Philadelphia; and Purcell and Moeller High Schools in Cincinnati before serving as associate pastor at Emmanuel Catholic Church in Dayton from 1963 to 1965.

After leaving the University, Middendorf was a chaplain at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base for nearly 20 years.

Middendorf retired from active ministry in 2003 to the Marianist community at Mercy Siena in Dayton.

"He didn't believe in obstacles. He was always on the move. Nothing got in his way. I don't think he ever said 'no' to anything in his life. If he ever heard anyone had a need, he said it was his responsibility to see if he could answer that need," said the Rev. Norbert Burns, University of Dayton professor emeritus. Burns said he met Middendorf in the 1940s and attended the seminary together; they were friends for 70 years. "No one was like him before and no one will ever be like him again. He was unique."

Middendorf was born on Aug. 12, 1923, in Bromley, Ky., to William and Emma Middendorf. He is survived by brother Gerald Middendorf and sisters Dorothy Byrne, Jean Doellman, Donna McMurrer, Sr. Julianne Middendorf, SND, and Paula Wood. Brothers Robert and Ralph Middendorf preceded him in death.

For more information, contact Campus Ministry at 937-229-3339.