

## **EULOGY FOR ELDON REICHERT, S.M.**

**ELDON GEORGE REICHERT WAS BORN ON AUGUST 22, 1922 – NEAR THE UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON – IN THE AREA THAT SOME WOULD NOW AFFECTIONATELY CALL THE “GHETTO”. HE WAS THE YOUNGEST OF EIGHT CHILDREN OF JOSEPH AND MAUDE (STUHL) REICHERT.**

**GROWING UP IN A FAMILY OF TEN DURING THE DEPRESSION ELDON WAS UNABLE TO EVEN ATTEND THE PRIVATE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL – CHAMINADE.....SO IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT ELDON IDENTIFIED SO CLOSELY WITH THE POOR THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE.....NOW WE CALL IT SOLIDARITY WITH POOR AND A PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR -**

**FOR ELDON, IT WAS NOT AN OPTION. EVIDENTLY, ONE INFLUENCE ON ELDON’S VOCATION TO THE SOCIETY OF MARY WAS WORKING WITH BRO. ANDY ORSHELL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON STADIUM. ELDON’S INITIAL FORMATION AS A PROFESSED COINCIDES VERY CLOSELY WITH WORLD WAR II SINCE HE PROFESSED FIRST VOWS AT BEACON, N.Y. ON SEPTEMBER 19, 1941, ONLY A FEW MONTHS BEFORE PEARL HARBOR AND PERPETUAL VOWS ON AUGUST 26, 1945, AT THE UNIVESITY OF DAYTON, THE MONTH THE WAR ENDED.**

**IN 1944 HE EARNED A BACHELOR’S DEGREE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON AND IN 1947 HE EARNED A MASTER’S DEGREE IN GUIDANCE FROM NEW YORK UNIVERSITY - WHILE HE WAS ALSO TEACHING HISTORY AND RELIGION AT MOST HOLY TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL IN BROOKLYN, NY.**

**HE THEN TAUGHT TWO YEARS AT CHAMINADE HIGH SCHOOL IN MINEOLA, N.Y., BEFORE GOING TO THE SEMINARY AT FRIBOURG, SWITZERLAND, WHERE HE WAS ORDAINED ON JULY 20, 1952.**

**FATHER ELDON RETURNED FROM EUROPE IN 1953 AND SPENT EIGHT YEARS AT CLEVELAND ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL AS A TEACHER AND**

**GUIDANCE COUNSELOR.**

**BEGINNING IN 1961 ELDON SPENT TWELVE YEARS IN EASTERN AFRICA – INCLUDING MANGU HIGH SCHOOL IN MANGU, KENYA, AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL IN NAIROBI AND CHAMINADE SECONDARY SCHOOL IN KARONGA, MALAWI....**

**THE NATIVES NAMED HIM SAWA-SAWA OR “OKAY” – HE WAS VERY PROUD OF THAT RECOGNITION .....THEY EVIDENTLY RECOGNIZED THAT HIS ROOTS WERE SIMILAR TO THEIRS....**

**IN 1973 ELDON RETURNED TO ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL WHERE HE WORKED FOR TEN YEARS AS A COUNSELOR AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL BEFORE SPENDING THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS AS A RETREAT CHAPLAIN AT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER ON THE PROPERTY ADJOINING ST. JOE’S IN CLEVELAND.**

**IN 1990 HE MOVED HIS MINISTRY TO ST. ALOYSIUS PARISH IN CLEVELAND WHERE HE OVERSAW THE ST. ALOYSIUS HUNGER CENTER – WHICH IN A SENSE MEANT THAT HIS LIFE HAD, AS WE SAY, COME FULL CIRCLE - ELDON HAD RETURNED TO HIS POOR AND SIMPLE BEGINNINGS.**

**IN 2001 AT THE AGE OF 78, HE WAS HONORED WITH THE EDMOND V. WORLEY MEMORIAL AWARD AS THE PERSON WHO BEST EXEMPLIFIED THE WORK OF ED WORLEY, FOUNDING MEMBER AND FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FOOD BANK IN CLEVELAND....**

**VERY FITTINGLY, ELDON WAS REMEMBERED AT A MEMORIAL MASS ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7 AT ST. ALOYSIUS.....ALMOST 250 PEOPLE ATTENDED, INCLUDING TWO BISHOPS.....AND A RABBI**

**ELDON IDENTIFIED WITH THE MARGINALIZED.....I IMAGINE BECAUSE OF HIS OWN BACKGROUND.....BUT ALSO BECAUSE HE LIVED ON A PROGRESSIVE EDGE HIMSELF....**

**IN 2003 HE CAME MERCY SIENA HERE IN DAYTON AFTER SUFFERING A STROKE WHICH SEVERELY LIMITED HIM THE REST OF HIS LIFE.....**

**BUT HE SUFFERED THOSE YEARS WITH COURAGE AND GRACE.....  
AND HE WAS ESPECIALLY LOVED BY THE STAFF, THE NURSES AND  
AIDES AT MERCY SIENA....ONE SAID, "HE WILL BE GREATLY MISSED  
AND WAS A VERY SPECIAL PERSON"....ANOTHER, "IT WAS AN  
HONOR TO TAKE CARE OF FR. ELDON".....**

**THE HOSPICE NURSE REPORTED THAT WHEN HE FOUND OUT ELDON  
WAS A PRIEST AND THIS WAS THE FIRST PRIEST HE WORKED WITH,  
HE KNELT DOWN AND PRAYED TO GOD TO HELP HIM AND ELDON  
REACHED OUT TOOK HIS HAND AND LIFTED HIM UP....**

**WE GIVE THANKS FOR THE CARE GIVERS AT MERCY SIENA IN A  
SPECIAL WAY....**

**ALSO TO KIM EVANS AND JUDY MOEHL FOR THEIR LOVING CARE OF  
ELDON AND TO THE MARIANIST COMMUNITY AT MERCY SIENA FOR  
THEIR LOVE AND SUPPORT OF ELDON....**

**AND ALSO TO THOSE WHO VISITED AND PRAYED WITH ELDON  
DURING HIS LAST DAYS AND HOURS....**

**MAY HE REST IN THE PEACE AND JOY OF THE RISEN CHRIST....**