

July 24, 2008

Death Notice No. 15 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Province of Madrid, recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **JOSÉ ANTONIO ROMEO HORODISKI**, priest of the community of María Reina Parish, Madrid, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on July 5, 2008 in Madrid, Spain in the 84th year of his age and the 67th year of his religious profession.

José Antonio was born in Madrid on October 8, 1924, to his father, José, a journalist, and Leonor, “Lady Leonor” to everyone, a descendant of Polish nobility. He was baptized on the 27th of the same month in the Parish of Our Lady of the Pillar in Madrid.

He was a student at Colegio Nuestra Señora del Pilar, which was already in its current location, and there he made his First Communion on May 6, 1934, which was received from the hands of the Superior, Servant of God, Fr. Domingo Lázaro. On June 26th he received the sacrament of Confirmation. He spent the days of the Civil War in Madrid, under very difficult circumstances. When the school was closed, his mother did not want him to go to any other place for his studies, so she taught him at home, during which time he developed a life-long love of reading. Since these days, he felt a great attraction to the Eucharist, even to the point that one of his favorite forms of play was to “celebrate” Mass in his home.

He entered the Novitiate in Elorrio in October, 1940. He was one of the first students of the Marianist schools in Spain who wished to become a Marianist. Until this time, most vocations in our schools tended to prefer the diocesan clergy or the “more prestigious” religious orders and congregations. He made his first profession on November 27, 1941 and was orientated towards the priesthood. He did his Scholasticate at Segovia and Carabanchel. José Antonio began his work as a teacher in Vitoria from 1944-1947. He made his Perpetual Profession on August 22, 1946 in Vitoria. Three years later, he finished his graduate degree in Philosophy at Universidad Complutense in Madrid. From 1949 until 1960, he taught at several SM schools in Jerez and Madrid.

Amidst all of this, several important things occurred in his life. These brought out the true nature of his character. Thus, we see someone who was intensely focused on the Marianist Charism and the person of our founder, Fr. Chaminade. This focus was concretely evident in two ways. The first was his personal discovery of the missionary dimension of the Marianist lay religious. That explains his dedication to the Marianist apostolic mission as a lay brother as he delayed for twenty years his sacerdotal ordination. The second was the inspiration, received at the feet of Our Lady of Mercy during the years that he worked in Jerez, around 1950. It was an inspiration similar to that of our Founder, Fr. Chaminade, leading him to found, with the approval of his superiors, the University Congregation of Mary Immaculate (CUMI). In this effort he quickly found support and collaboration from a large group of young Marianist brothers and priests. Thus, he gave rebirth, several years prior to Vatican II, to the Marianist Lay Adult Movement, to which he dedicated his whole life, body and soul, despite the many difficulties encountered along the way. At the time of his death, the Spanish Congregation of Mary Immaculate (CEMI, the new name of the former CUMI), was a community of communities, composed of 25 groups and some 300 members forming Marianist Lay Communities.

His deep intuitions led him to work on the university level in the region of Madrid. At first, he was director of two campuses of Colegio Mayor Pío XII, from 1961 to 1965, in collaboration with other congregations and under the patronage of the *Acción Católica de Propagandistas* of Cardinal Herrera Oria. Later, he continued at Calle Fernández de los Ríos.

In 1969 he became brother-master of the Novitiate located in a house in Madrid. When the Novitiate closed, he continued, until 1972, to be in charge of the scholastics at the same location. At the same time, he began his studies in theology at the Facultad de Comillas in Madrid.

In 1970 the General Administration approved his sacerdotal ordination, which he received at the hands of Bishop José M^a Guix in the Chapel of Colegio Mayor Chaminade in Madrid on December 2, 1972, at the age of 48.

At this stage, and following the difficulties faced by the Province of Madrid in its attempt to live out the renewal of religious life called for by Vatican II, José Antonio was sent to the parish of María Reina de Vallecas (Madrid), where he remained until the day he died. He was pastor of this parish for the better part of 36 years, while at the same time continuing to dedicate the rest of his energies to the care and animation of CEMI, to working on the causes of Marianist martyrs (for whom he was vice-postulator), to teaching religion classes at Colegio de Santa María del Pilar, and to the spiritual and educational animation of Colegio Mayor Chaminade in Madrid.

Some time ago he was afflicted with serious respiratory problems, but he never let them slow him down, sometimes even to a fault. He always said that he had entered religious life to minister to others, not to care for himself. His health problems continued to get worse, yet he did not cease to continue his work and ministry to others. Beginning in 2007, his superiors considered it best for him to take a break from the parish and he spent four months in the community of Santa María del Pilar. Another one of his favorite phrases was the he “wanted to die with his boots on.”

On July 1, 2008, he officially left the parish of María Reina with great sadness. But, with the permission of his Provincial, he wished to remain Chaplain for the children at the parish house of Zarzalejo (Madrid), as he had been for so many years. It was there, on July 5, 2008, that he died, with his boots on, serving the simplest, as if in ending his mission, he had also completed his life.

A prophet, way ahead of his time (importance of the laity, baptismal consecration, new ecclesial communities), with a piety that solidly retained traditional features, in love with the Marianist charism, pastor and shepherd of souls, tenacious and experienced, demanding and clear, José Antonio has been a signpost, even if at times contradictory, but always faithful and radical for all of the Province of Madrid. We pray, now, that he might rest in peace, as much as he did not rest while he lived, and live the life that he faithfully gave to so many others!