

The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **CHARLES BERGEDICK**, priest, of the Mercy Siena Community, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 22, 2008, in Dayton, Ohio, in the 81<sup>st</sup> year of his age and the 63<sup>rd</sup> year of his religious profession.

Charles was born in Hamilton, Ohio, on January 5, 1928, the first child and only son of Theodore and Charlotte (Weber) Bergedick. He and his three sisters enjoyed a childhood filled with many friends and family gatherings.

As a young boy, he worked at Paxton's Shoe Hospital after school and on Saturdays. With World War II in full swing, shoe repair had become an important job. He also participated in Boy Scouts.

Fr. Charles attended Hamilton Catholic High School, where he first met the Marianist brothers. He was active in a group called "Catholic Action Cell." As a junior in high school he began to question his future. A quote from Scripture haunted him: "What does it profit a person to gain the whole world and lose his soul? It profits nothing." His reflections led him to enter the novitiate of the Society of Mary at Beacon, New York, in 1945. Fr. Charles professed first vows in 1946 at Beacon and perpetual vows in 1952 in Dayton.

In 1949, Fr. Charles received a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Dayton and began his first teaching assignment at Chaminade High School in Dayton. He taught religion, English and Latin. In 1954, he set sail on the Andrea Doria for seminary studies in Fribourg, Switzerland, and was ordained in 1957.

His return trip to the U.S. was made on the Queen Mary, and in 1959, he began a two-year assignment as counselor, teacher, and admissions officer at St. John's Home for Boys in Rockaway Park, New York. The next three years of his career (1961-1964) were spent in Ohio at St. Joseph High School in Cleveland and his alma mater Hamilton High School. While at Hamilton, the Marianist provincial asked Fr. Charles to serve as a missionary in Nigeria, Africa. He left immediately.

Fr. Charles spent the next decade ministering as a chaplain at St. Patrick's College in Nigeria, and at Nkhata Bay Secondary School and Mzuzu Technical School in Malawi. At Nkhata, the Marianists started from scratch, building the school, housing and chapel brick by brick.

In 1974, Fr. Charles was home again in Ohio, teaching religion and serving as chaplain at Chaminade Julianne Catholic High School in Dayton and then at North Catholic High School in Pittsburgh.

His career changed in 1978, when he began what would become almost 30 years of parish ministry as a pastor, associate pastor, priest coordinator and guest celebrant. Fr. Charles ministered at Emmanuel Catholic Church and Queen of Apostles Church in Dayton, St. Catherine of Siena Church in Portage, Michigan, St. Francis de Sales Parish

in Cincinnati, St. John Bosco Parish in Mattawan, Michigan, and St. Peter Church in Huber Heights, Ohio.

At St. Peter's Church, Fr. Charles was known as the pastor with a great devotion to Mary who invited parishioners to "sing, really sing" at Mass. At Emmanuel Church he would often conduct the congregation in song by waving his hands.

Fr. Charles also served as a part-time chaplain at the Allegheny County Jail and at several nursing homes in Pittsburgh. He said that he modeled his ministry after St. John Vianney, who, as the Curé of Ars, directed souls to heaven. "In Marianist school ministry and parish ministry I have always tried to do this," he said. "I hope I have been a good, clear, legible sign of faith to others."

He loved photography and was often seen with a camera around his neck.

Fr. Tom Schroer, who lived in community with Fr. Charles, described him as a positive and affable man. "He was devoted to bringing joy to people's lives," said Fr. Tom.

May he rest in peace.