

Fr. Jerome Edward STEGMAN 90 USA PR

* July 11, 1902 Sharpsburg, PA + August 9, 1992 Pittsburgh

An uncle of Fr. Vincent Stegman, he grew up in the Spiritan parish of St. Mary in his hometown, where he attended grade and high school. Thus it was natural that, when he desired to become a priest, he was attracted to the Congregation. After four years in Cornwell's junior seminary (1918–22), he entered the novitiate at Ridgefield, CT, where he pronounced his first vows, August 15, 1923. For his senior studies he went to Ferndale, CT, where he was also ordained August 27, 1927.

About 28 years of this active life would be spent in work among African Americans, both in the South and in big cities of the North. His first assignment took him to St. Emma Academy, VA, in 1928 as one of the two priests stationed there as chaplains. But one year later the Benedictines took over this school—the Spiritans would take it back again in 1947—and he was appointed assistant at St. Edward's, New Iberia, LA. In 1933 he became pastor of St. Cyprians's, Helena, AR.

After serving briefly at Sacred Heart, Tarentum, PA, he became an assistant at St. Anthony's, Millvale, PA for seven years, and then at Sacred Heart, Emsworth, PA. The following year he became pastor protem of St. Augustine's, Muskogee, OK, whose pastor was on leave of absence as a military chaplain. When the war ended, St. Edward's, New Iberia, LA, saw him as its pastor for three years. He did a good job there and had the pleasure of seeing its Delcambre mission become a new parish entrusted to the Congregation.

In 1948 we find him again up North, in the Pittsburgh area, first as assistant to Fr. Schenning in Emsworth and then at St. Anthony's, Millvale. In 1949 he became pastor of St. Benedict the Moor, Pittsburgh. He served there for seven years, earning high praise for this attachment to the Congregation and his selfless dedication to this difficult parish. In 1956 he was transferred to Sacred Heart, Detroit, as its pastor. It was again an inner city slum neighborhood, where it was a struggle to keep the church open. Father labored there for 12 years. When in 1968 the Congregation gave up this parish, Cardinal John Dearden wrote him a personal letter of gratitude for his faithful service and the good work done.

At his own request, Father then received an assignment to Puerto Rico, where he worked till 1972. By then he was seventy years old, however, he accepted an appointment as pastor of St. Stanislaus, Pittsburgh another inner city ethnic parish that had lost most of its congregation through urban renewal. Still in good health, he remained active for another ten years there. He could celebrate his golden jubilee there in 1977 and lead a two week pilgrimage of people to the Holy Land the following year.

At the age of 80 he retired, still active, residing at St. Stanislaus, Dorseyville and, as his infirmities increased, from 1990 in the Vincentian Home. He died there of cancer. Interment took place in the community cemetery of St. Mary's, Sharpsburg.

Throughout his life he remained an irreproachable priest, who was at his best when he could work as a pastor. In his own way, he remained very attached to the Congregation and demonstrated it also by securing substantial bequests for its works from relatives and friends.

USA-East Newsletter, Aug. 1992 Archives 29B-81