



# *The Baltimore Beacon*

The Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province

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## PROVINCIAL PONDERINGS



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

This November edition of the *Baltimore Beacon* comes on the cusp of Thanksgiving Day and what is hopefully a long holiday weekend for you to enjoy some great food and restful time with family, friends, and community.

Thanksgiving Day draws us together from within the circles of our lives to give thanks for all the blessings we enjoy and for the gift of one another's presence and friendship. As a special holiday it moves our hearts to an attitude of gratitude for the real experiences of blessing in our lives.

As people of faith, we celebrate all our blessings, and especially one another, as gifts from our provident God, to whom we offer our great and joyful thanksgiving. In the words of Scripture, we are a people called to be dedicated to thankfulness (Col3:15) who give thanks in all things (1Thess 5:18).

Thomas Merton speaks eloquently to the deep meaning of a spirit of gratitude in the heart of the person of faith.

*To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything He has given us - and he had given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of His love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense grace from Him. Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God. For the grateful person knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience. And that is what makes all the difference.*

Gratitude and gratefulness ground us in the conviction that all is gift and into the felt spiritual experience that we are graced by God's unconditional love. Saint Paul's reminder to us in 1 Corinthians 4:7, 'What do

you have that you did not receive?' makes giving thanks not just a virtue for a special holiday, but even more, our very way to being more fully alive every day of our lives.

Today, when value is often defined by achievement, self-sufficiency, and productivity, the 'I'm owed, I deserve it, I earned it' mindset can easily dull our sense of gratitude for all the blessings that we have received from God and from others. An attitude of gratitude and the regular practice of giving thanks promotes well-being, good will, and greater prospects for peace and harmony within oneself and with others. May the gift of the holiday deepen our resolve to live gratefully for our own good and for the hope and healing of the world.



Happy Thanksgiving to you and to all you hold close in your heart! Count your blessings and be grateful for the gift that they are to you - on Thanksgiving Day and always! Be assured of our grateful prayer as Redemptorists for the blessing of your presence, friendship, and support for our community and for our ministry to God's people.

Peace, blessings, and many thanks!

**Fr. John Collins, C.Ss.R.**  
**Provincial**

## REDEMPTORIST PARTNERS IN MISSION: 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary St. Martin of Tours



On Saturday, October 14th, the former Redemptorist parish of St. Martin of Tours in Bethpage, NY, came alive with heartfelt joy as it celebrated the opening Mass in commemoration of its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This momentous occasion beautifully echoed the very first Eucharistic celebration on October 14, 1923. Heartfelt gratitude is extended to Fr. Kevin MacDonald for joining us in this meaningful celebration. Bishop Andrzej Zglejszewski presided over the service, with Fr. Christopher Costigan, pastor, Fr. Bright Appiagyei-Boakye, Associate Pastor, Fr. Kevin, Deacon Thomas Hennessy, Redemptorist Oblate and Associate, Deacon Christopher Quinn, and Deacon Ronald Lacsas also sharing in the celebration.

The 100th Anniversary celebrations continued the next day at each Sunday Mass. We were truly blessed to have Fr. Denis Sweeney preside over our noon Mass, which also celebrated the Feast Day of St. Gerard Majella. Following the Sunday noon Mass, our parishioners and friends gathered for a special ritual honoring St. Gerard Majella. This moving ceremony included the blessings of St. Gerard/Our Lady of Perpetual Help medals and prayer cards, as well as individual blessings with a relic for those seeking pregnancy, adoption, or a safe delivery. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Fr. Denis for also bestowing the individual blessings with St. Gerard's relic.

We eagerly look forward to the continuation of these joyous celebrations. The festivities will continue throughout the coming year, culminating in the recognition of the 100th anniversary of the dedication of our church on November 9, 1924. Together, we look to honor our rich history, cherish the present moment, and embrace a future filled with the spirit of the Redeemer and a strong sense of community here at St. Martin's.

*Lucy Burich McNamara  
Lay Missionary of the Most Holy Redeemer,  
Baltimore Province*



## REDEMPTORIST PARTNERS IN MISSION: Dr. Morella Joseph visits New York

We were honored by the presence of Dr. Morella Joseph, a member of the Partners in Mission [PIM] group from St. Lucia, during her visit to New York. She took part in two separate PIM gatherings, one conducted in person with the Brooklyn, NY PIM group, and the other held via Zoom with the Bethpage, NY PIM group.

During our time together, Dr. Morella graced us with her beautiful voice, singing the hymn “How Great Thou Art,” as we considered “in awesome wonder” how our

developed under the guidance of Fr. John Olenick in March 2022 and formally launched a Tutoring Program with the goal of offering educational support, mentorship, and guidance to underprivileged children to empower them to overcome obstacles and achieve academic success. This program has since garnered attention from their Education Minister.

St. Lucia’s transition became effective at the end of July 2023, prompting meaningful discussions about how to



shared Redemptorist charism instantly gave us a sense of belonging to our one missionary family. Beyond the music, we took the opportunity to share our unique stories from our different parts of the world, engage in heartfelt conversations on topics of Redemptorist spirituality, and unite in prayer. This experience of unity and shared mission filled us with joy and inspiration.

Bethpage, NY PIM and St. Lucia PIM have had the shared experience of the Redemptorists returning our parishes to the pastoral care of our respective Dioceses. Following their transition, Bethpage PIM organized a PIM group as a way to ensure a post-transition relationship and involvement with the Redemptorists. St. Lucia PIM

navigate the St. Lucia PIM journey as impacted by this change. Dr. Morella is dedicated to continuing forward the Tutoring Program for the benefit of the children. Our charism and shared mission bind us together, underscoring how the strength of our Redemptorist Family’s unity transcends any limitations. Grace finds many ways to be present, regardless of circumstances. “When I in awesome wonder Consider all The works Thy Hand hath made... Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee, How great Thou art!”

*Lucy Burich McNamara  
Lay Missionary of the Most Holy Redeemer,  
Baltimore Province*

## ALL SOULS DAY: November 2, 2023

At St. Alphonsus Villa in New Smyrna Beach, Florida the morning mass ended around 9:10am. The members of the community, under the watchful care of Fr. Ray Collins, C.Ss.R., and the Villa staff, loaded up their new van and several cars, and headed down US 1 to the Edgewater Cemetery. There we gathered in celebration and prayer remembering the lives of Redemptorists and Oblates who rest there.

The staff of the Villa, former and present, were in attendance and joyfully shared stories of the good men and women who sleep there. Before the actual service, many of us walked among the headstones of our beloved dead and counted up to 32 of our members - 31 professed Redemptorists and one oblate (Ms. Maggie Lovelace.) The identity of these Redemptorists represented almost every possible ministry, position, and service of the Congregation.

This little-known cemetery in the Redemptorist world contains the remains of former Vice Provincials (Richmond), Rectors and Professors of Formation communities, rural mission preachers, members who ministered in different (Vice) Provinces, regions, and missions. Many of them served in the foreign missions (Brazil, Paraguay, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean) and returned to the States serving in the Province of Baltimore and the Former Vice Province of Richmond. Their witness of faith and hope changed and blessed the lives of thousands and they are not forgotten.



Every year we gather to celebrate them, and in a special way we celebrate the women and men who still care for our missionaries here at the Villa, who have served in the same way. In the cemetery, under Fr. Ray's direction, we prayed and sang and remembered with hearts full of thanksgiving. Their stories brought smiles to our faces and tears to our grateful eyes. Redemptorists who served all over the world and in our Province, who made a difference in the lives of countless people and proclaimed the goods new that "With Him there is Plentiful Redemption." May these Sons and Daughter of St. Alphonsus rest in peace!

## VOCATION NEWS: “Come & See” Weekend

October 26-29 • St. Alphonsus Formation House • Bronx, New York

“Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” As part of our Redemptorist Vocation ministry, on the last weekend of October (26-29), eleven men joined us at our pre-novitiate formation house, Bronx, NY, to participate in our yearly “Come and See” program. We had five men come from our Denver province and six men from our Baltimore province.



Prior to all of us gathering in the Bronx for Mass at 4:30pm on Thursday, October 26, as Vocation Directors, Fr. Peter and I participated in the Vocation Fair that was sponsored by the Vincentians on the campus of St. John’s University. The program went from 10:00 – 3:00 p.m. and with other religious orders we set up our vocation booth on one of the main campus walkways. A good flow of student traffic. The weather was perfect and it was a great opportunity to witness with other religious orders, men and women, to the presence of the consecrated life in the church. Our students attending St. John’s were able between classes to stop by the booth and also to bring fellow classmates to hear a little bit more about the Redemptorists, our charism and mission.

I would say that the main grace of such a Vocation Fair Day is to show a presence and a witness to the students, however active/ inactive they are in their faith life. To witness to the consecrated life as religious sisters, brothers and priests. It is also a grace moment for ourselves as religious to witness to one another our living and sharing this consecrated life.

As mentioned, we all made our way to the Bronx on Thursday, the 26th as our men from the Baltimore province came from Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, DC and Florida. From Denver province, four men came from Seattle and one from New York.

Fr. Peter Sousa, one of the formators for our pre-novitiate program presided at the opening Thursday Mass with Vocation Directors Fr. Chuong Cao, Fr. Peter Linh Nguyen and Fr. Denis Sweeney concelebrating. Following our dinner meal, we again gathered at 7:00 p.m. in community chapel for Holy Hour. For the overnights during these days, because of our numbers, our Denver candidates stayed at the Bronx house with Fr. Chuong Cao and our Baltimore candidates stayed in the Brooklyn Guest House with Fr. Peter and Fr. Denis.

Friday had us gathering for Morning Prayer at 7:00 a.m. before heading back to St. John’s campus so the candidates could sit in on one of the classes our students are attending. Because of our numbers our students were able to get them into three different classes that all ran from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.. Again, the day brought beautiful weather to tour some of the campus before getting back to the Bronx for lunch. The afternoon was set up so that our eleven candidates could sit down with the two Redemptorist formators who are in charge of this stage of formation. Information was passed along about day-to-day life in the formation house, prayer schedule, house jobs responsibilities and a general sense of the human, spiritual, community, pastoral and academic dimensions that embody the Redemptorist formation program at this early stage and indeed for all of our life as Redemptorists.

*Continued on pg.7*

## VOCATION NEWS: “Come & See” Weekend, continued

Following Mass and dinner, we took to the New York City subway system so we could visit St. Patrick’s Cathedral and then later Times Square. It is truly a city that never sleeps and the lights of Broadway do bring an energy and excitement as you take it all in. Thanks be to God we got back safely to the Bronx and Brooklyn and offered thanks to God for the blessings of the day.

Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> took us to our San Alfonso Retreat House on the Atlantic Ocean. Again, picture perfect weather as we arrived for our Retreat Day. Our students in the Bronx come here on a Saturday each month to leave the hustle and bustle of the Bronx, the noise of the city, and take in this “oasis” for quiet space, for the magnificence of the ocean and to walk with God along the shore. We were delighted to have Fr. Anthony Michalik, C.Ss.R. for our two conferences. Fr. Anthony is newly assigned here. In his conferences he shared his vocation story and it struck a chord with many of the men as his story was one of his many, many years search in coming to follow Jesus as a Redemptorist and as a priest. The day certainly offered to our candidates blessed moments of quiet reflection in their discernment time and to hear the voice of God in the beauty of such a place.

Sunday brought us Mass at 7:30 a.m in the Retreat House chapel with Fr. Denis presiding and Fr. Peter Linh preaching. His message was opening ourselves to the voice of God and not to be afraid to “Come and Follow” in the footsteps of Jesus. After a good Sunday breakfast, the time came for departures. For our students it was back to the Bronx. For others a ride to the airport or to the train station or a car ride back home.

As Vocation Directors we give thanks and praise to God for this time of accompaniment in these men’s lives. We have allowed them to experience life with Redemptorists and to afford them this time in their life to walk with God and to talk with God and to see if this Redemptorist vocation brings peace and a sense of belonging to the consecrated life. Of course, we will continue to accompany them, to be helpful in their discernment any way we can, and to pray the powerful intercession of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, of our founder St. Alphonsus, of St. John Neumann and all of our Redemptorists Saints, Blessed and Martyrs to intercede for them.

For all of you reading this, pray daily for Vocations to the religious life and to the priesthood, to the Redemptorists. Pray each day especially for Vocations. And say a word of encouragement to those you see in family life, in parish life that you feel have a religious vocation within them. Say a word of encouragement to them!!



*May it be so!*  
**Fr. Denis Sweeney**

**Redemptorist “Come & See” Vocation Discernment Evening**

Toronto, Canada - Tuesday, Nov. 28 - 4:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Register at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/come\\_and\\_see\\_evenings](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/come_and_see_evenings)

*(location and event details confirmed after registration)*

## REDEMPTORISTS OF NORTH AMERICA “RACIAL EQUITY” SERIES: PART 2

The North American Redemptorists Committee for Racial Equity wrapped its Fall Series Tuesday, Nov. 14, with its second part of “[American Prisons: Slavery by Another Name](#)”. The first part of this series took place on Tuesday, Nov. 7. Both parts were preceded by Part 1: “Food Deserts & Hunger”, held in October.

Lively Zoom discussion from participants focused particularly on the PBS documentary “Slavery by Another Name”, and discussed the following three forms of slavery:

1. Neo-slavery – institutional slavery that continues to occur in present-day society;
2. Convict leasing – convicted criminals being leased by the state to private individuals/companies to work for free; and,
3. Peonage – a system where an employer compels a worker to pay off a debt without work.

The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 might have officially abolished slavery, but the three types above

ensured the practice was still alive and thriving. Most common in the deep South, convict leasing came to fruition when prisons realized they could “hire” out prisoners. The prisons made money, the convicts, most of whom were black, did not.

Participants were unanimous in agreeing that, despite progress, change is still needed to truly abolish all forms of slavery. It was noted that black Americans only account for 2% of the nation’s wealth, and that our societal system continues to force blacks and other minorities to work significantly harder than their white counterparts. For-profit prisons and the bail structure were discussed, noting that until these are addressed, change will be a long time coming. Laws, education, policing – all need systemic reform.

The Racial Equity Series will regroup next year, potentially with a series in both the winter and spring. When details are finalized, they will be published here and on the [Redemptorists website](#), where you can see the Fall program materials.

## REDEMPTORIST CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA

Ongoing Formation for Lay Missionaries of the Most Holy Redeemer

### You’re Invited!

DATE	TOPIC	FACILITATOR
November 26, 2023 7:00 p.m. EDT	<a href="#">Care for Our Common Home as a Dimension of Redemptorist Life and Mission Today</a>	AJ Riviere, C.Ss.R.
January 14, 2024 7:00 p.m. EDT	<a href="#">The Apostlate of the Pen as a Dimension of Redemptorist Life and Mission</a>	Wendy Barnes and Bryon Miller, C.Ss.R.
February 4, 2024 11:00 a.m. EDT	<a href="#">The Redemptorist Family: Hopes and Vision for Shared Mission</a>	Rogério Gomes, C.Ss.R.
March 3, 2024 7:00 p.m. EDT	<a href="#">Outreach to the Poor (particularly through the Welcome Home) as a Dimension of Redemptorist Life and Mission</a>	Larry Konda, C.Ss.R., and Eumir Bautista, C.Ss.R.
April 7, 2024 7:00 p.m. EDT	<a href="#">The Hallmarks of an Effective Redemptorist Preacher: What does St. Alphonsus Have to Say?</a>	James Wallace, C.Ss.R.
May 5, 2024 11:00 a.m. EDT	<a href="#">Communications Ministry as a Dimension of Redemptorist Life and Mission Today</a>	Grzegorz Ruszaj, C.Ss.R., and Sanjay Tirkey, C.Ss.R.
June 2, 2024 7:00 p.m. EDT	<a href="#">Shrine Ministry (particularly the Shrine of Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky) as a Dimension of Redemptorist Life and Mission</a>	Lesia Sianchuk and John Sianchuk, C.Ss.R.

***Click on the Topic to Register!***



## HOPE WALK: Immaculate Conception of Mary, New York

The Bronx is a difficult neighborhood to live in. While it is still technically New York city, it is an entirely different world compared to the streets painted with lights of Time Square. However, we do have the Yankee Stadium where thousands of baseball fans would come every year, bringing exuberance to an otherwise tired part of New York. Our church, Immaculate Conception of Mary, is located near what I call the ‘square’, an intersection between 3rd Avenue and 149th street, where people would congregate day and night whether it is to preach, sell or just to watch the sun go down. This constant noise is on top of trash, feces and needles lining the streets and sidewalks, adding to a very distinct, unique and unforgettable smell of cannabis and urine. For many first year students, the personality of Bronx is always on top of their mind and often is one of the first things that they would complain about. It was certainly the case for me last year, but that was before I got to be on the Hope Walk.



Whatever challenges we have to face living in this part of town, they are the same challenges that everyone else has to face as well. It is only by living among the poor and walking by their side that we may know how to help the poor. The Hope Walk was started out of a real need for outreach to the myriads of homeless individuals around the neighborhood, most of whom are drug addicted and abandoned. Organized by Marty Roger, a longtime resident of the Bronx, the essence of the walk is simply to give food, drinks and, at times, socks and clothes to those in need. The more important purpose of the walk, however, is to pray for those we meet: calling out their name in the prayers, reminding them that they are a beloved child of God and a valuable member of the community. The children from our Catholic school would often join us on the

walk, helping to give out food and offer prayers on top of providing a certain innocence to those we meet on the street are not used to. I have seen, many times, men who were preparing to or are in the process of injecting their body with drugs would abruptly stop at the sight of the approaching children, very apologetic and remorseful of something we know that they can't quite control. The Hope Walk is much more than just giving away food, it is both a learning experience for us and the school children while also providing something special to the poor—revealing to each other the love of God.

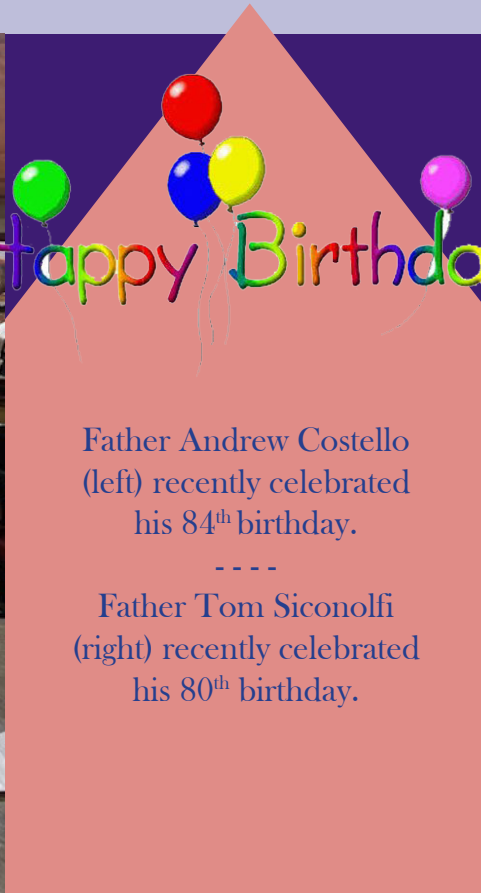
Not every person we meet on the walk is homeless. Not everyone we meet on the walk wants the things we give away, however, while some deny the food, most would often pray with us if not offering the prayer themselves. For us, for the Hope Walk, hope is more important than any food, drink or clothes—God is more important than anything. This is what I wanted to capture in my pictures, the emotions in the forgotten faces of those abandoned by society, our neighbors. Everyone we meet is always incredibly thankful for everything: their joy so genuine, their happiness so pure. There is a certain innocence that is apparent every time they see us, an innocence that mirrors the innocence of the school children they shy away from. I hope everyone can pay more attention to the faces we often see on the street, to see their needs and realize your value in their lives. So much can happen with a simple “hey, do you want a sandwich?”

*Dang Nguyen, Seminarian  
Immaculate Conception Church, Bronx, NY*



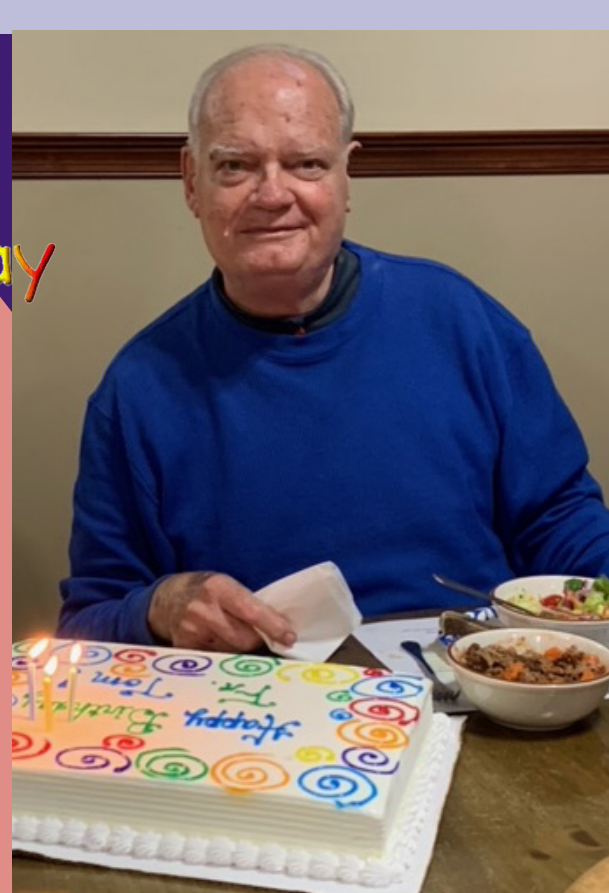
*On Sunday, Nov. 11, Father Michael Cunningham, C.Ss.R., (center) was installed as the new pastor for St. Peter the Apostle in Philadelphia. The celebrant of the Mass was Father Philip Bochanski, C.Ss.R., (second from left), the Moderator of the Curia for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Father Frank Mulvaney, C.Ss.R., (fourth from left), proclaimed the Gospel. They were joined on the altar by Fathers Jerry Knapp, C.Ss.R., (first from left), and Father Gerry Chylko, C.Ss.R., (far right).*

***Congratulations Father Cunningham!***



Father Andrew Costello (left) recently celebrated his 84<sup>th</sup> birthday.

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Father Tom Siconolfi (right) recently celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.



## IN MEMORIAM

### Brother Harold Spacht, C.Ss.R.

Rev. Harold ('Padre Andres') Spacht, C.Ss.R., formerly of North East, Pennsylvania, died on November 7, 2023, in San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico.

Born on August 30, 1934, Father Spacht grew up in Saint Gregory's Parish in North East and studied there at the Redemptorist minor seminary of Saint Mary's before professing his religious vows as a Redemptorist on August 2, 1956. Ordained to the priesthood on June 18, 1961, Father spent sixty years of his religious life and priesthood as a Redemptorist missionary to the people of Puerto Rico in the Vice Province and Province of San Jaun. His ministry touched countless people in the many parishes where he served with intense dedication, great zeal, and gracious care of every person he encountered throughout his life of service.

Father Harold was predeceased by his dear parents, Charles and Elizabeth (Porter) Spacht, and his brothers John, Merle, Robert, and Carl.

He is survived by his two sisters, Jean Gulley of Stratford, Connecticut, and Sister Irene Spacht, OSB, of Erie, along with several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services for Father Harold Spacht will take place on Thursday, November 16, 2023. Family and friends are invited to call at Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus Church in North East for a viewing and visitation beginning at 9:00 AM followed by a concelebrated Mass of Christian Burial at 11:00 AM. Burial will follow the Liturgy at Saint Gregory's Cemetery.

Faith, family, community, and education were at the heart of Father Harold's missionary life as a vowed Redemptorist for 67 years and as a Redemptorist priest for over 62 years. Always concerned that God's people be well fed and well nourished with God's Word and the celebration of the sacraments, he was a prayerful pastor who sought to inspire people to draw close to Jesus as friend and Redeemer. As a confrere to his brother Redemptorists, he was kind, thoughtful, and generous – a brother who cherished time at table with good food and great conversation when the community gathered together. An avid sports fan, he loved to play – especially golf—and while he loved to win, Father Harold was always even more grateful for the opportunity that playing sports provided to make friends and enjoy the good company of others.



The Redemptorist Community and the family of Reverend Harold Andrew (Andrés) Spacht, C.Ss.R. thank God for the gift of his life and the blessing of his ministry to God's people. May he now rest in peace with Jesus, our most holy Redeemer, and all the saints in glory.

Memorials in Father Spacht's memory may be made to St. Gregory Thaumaturgus Church or to St. Gregory School, 136 West Main Street, North East, PA 16428 or to Misioneros Redentoristas, Oficina provincial, P.O. Box 1, Aguas Buenas, PR. 00703-0001 in memory of Fr. Harold Spacht, C.Ss.R.

Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the William D. Elkin Funeral Home, 65 South Lake Street North East. Please send condolences to [elkinfh.com](http://elkinfh.com).



**The Redemptorists**  
— Baltimore Province

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Holy Redeemer  
3112 7th St NE  
Washington, DC 20017