



Around 2001

FR. FREDERICK SUCHER, C.P.

**BORN
FEBRUARY 4, 1917**

**PROFESSED
JULY 17, 1938**

**ORDAINED
APRIL 26, 1944**

**DIED
MAY 31, 2013**



Fred as seminarian at the Prep in Normandy, Mo.



Fred before his hair disappeared in the 1960's!



Novitiate Class photo.



Fred at the 100th Celebration of Holy Cross Province, in Sierra Madre, CA.



Classmates sharing an informal picture (up) and a more formal one (below)!



Cheers to a long and good life!





Mike and Jackie (relatives) visit Fred at nursing home for his 75th anniversary of profession.



Fred with the CPP Chicago members at the first Convocation in 1999.



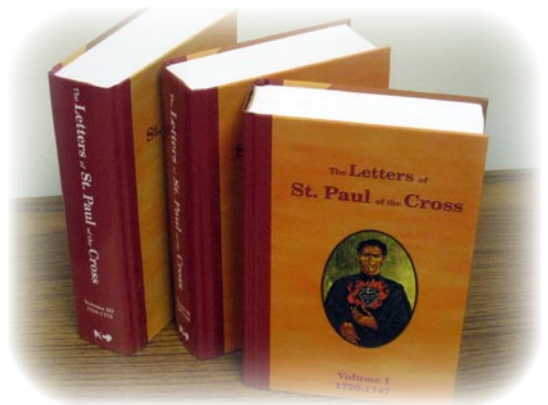
Fred arrives with Tim O'Brien for the Nashville CPP Convocation in 2004



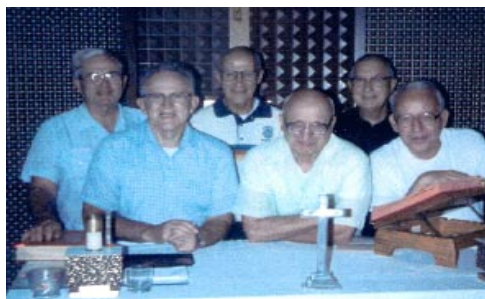
Roger Mercurio and Fred Sucher translated the letters of St Paul of the Cross.



"Moving Day" for the men to Louisville. April 3, 2009.



Fred with Frank Horack visiting at Immaculate Conception Monastery



Celebrating 50 Years of Priesthood (1994) with classmates: Patrick Keeney, Leo Patrick Brady, Regis Ryan, Fred, Emil Womack, Roger Mercurio.



Regis Ryan, Emil Womack, Fred Sucher, Leo Patrick Brady 50 years Profession 1988.

Funeral Homily for Fr. Frederick Sucher, C.P.

June 4, 2013

Sacred Heart Monastery
Louisville, Kentucky

Born: February 4, 1917
Professed: July 17, 1938
Ordained: April 26, 1944
Died: May 31, 2013

Readings

1 Samuel 3: 1-10

Romans 8: 14-23

Matthew 5: 1-12

Very Rev. Fr. Provincial, family and friends of Fr. Fred, and my dear brother Passionists, today is a truly sacred day for us for we are laying to rest one of our most revered brother Passionists, Fr. Frederick Sucher. As sacred as this day is, all of us here are experiencing a variety of emotions, from deep sadness and grief, all the way to a profound sense of fulfillment and even wonder at the person Fr. Fred was and at the remarkable life he has led. Clearly, his loss touches all of us. His family has known him throughout their entire lives. Since Fr. Fred was the oldest member in the Province, all of the Passionists here have known him throughout all of our years of Religious Life. He lived as a Passionist for 75 years and served as a priest for 69 years.

Though we have known him for so long a time, please permit me to give a very brief overview of the various ways Fr. Fred has served as a Passionist and priest. Two years after he was ordained, Fr. Fred began teaching philosophy to our college students. He taught for a total of 19 years. He served as the Province Novice Master for two years and the Formation Director for those in temporary vows for two years. For a total of twelve years he was a Local Superior. For twelve years he served three different Provincials as a Provincial Consultor.

Interspersed among these important educational and leadership roles, Fr. Fred worked for four years in our Retreat Centers and spent three years helping to found and staff the Province House of Prayer. From the mid-1970's until just a few years ago, Fr. Fred was a highly respected presenter and executive priest for Worldwide Marriage Encounter. And, of course, for many years he has been an expert in Paulacrucian Spirituality, a preacher of retreats for priests and sisters, and a cherished spiritual guide to several communities of Passionist Nuns. Along with his classmate, Fr. Roger Mercurio, Fr. Fred did the English-speaking Passionist world a great service by translating into English all the 3,000 plus letters of our Holy Founder, St. Paul of the Cross. By any measure, Fr. Fred was a remarkable man who served the Church, the Congregation and the Province with distinction and grace.

I can easily say without any exaggeration that not only has Fr. Fred lived a long and productive life, he has earned the respect, trust and reverence of his fellow religious and the many lay people he has ministered to and with over the years.

I first met Fr. Fred in 1963. I was in the novitiate that year and in the spring of 1963 Fr. Roch Adamek, our novice master, was diagnosed with an extremely fast moving and deadly form of cancer. He went to the doctor for a check-up in April and never came home. He died in July.

In late May or early June, the Provincial sent Fr. Fred to the novitiate in St. Paul, Kansas, to complete Fr. Roch's work with our class as we were scheduled to take our first vows in July. Now we were a very large class, some 24 of us completed the novitiate and took first vows. Most of us were 19 or 20 years old. We had lots of energy

and had already developed something of a reputation as a difficult group to keep under control. When Fr. Fred was about to arrive, one of our class, Pat St. George, in a conversation with the Vice Master, wondered whether Fr. Fred was going to be able to deal with us. The day after Fr. Fred arrived, Pat went back to the Vice Master and commented, “he won’t have any trouble keeping us in line!” It didn’t take Fr. Fred very long to let us know who was running things! I must acknowledge that Fr. Fred corrected me more in six weeks than Fr. Roch had done during the previous nine months! During those final six weeks of novitiate, I spent a lot of time on my knees listening to Fr. Fred point out my many mistakes and great need for adjustments to my attitude!

A couple of years later, when Fr. Fred was assigned to us as the Formation Director during our college years in Chicago, we students developed an affectionate nickname for him, “Kamikaze Sucher.” I suspect that anyone who had ever played any sports with Fr. Fred, baseball, football, handball or tennis, would understand full well how that nickname emerged. In any sports contest, on every play, whether at the beginning of the game, in its middle, or at the very end, Fr. Fred literally threw himself into the action. Relentless, powerful, totally focused, fearless and dangerous...and quite frightening! Fr. Fred had only one speed and that was full speed ahead!

I mention this because it wasn’t only in sports that Fr. Fred always went full bore. It was in every aspect of his life: spiritual, intellectual, relational or physical. He always lived every day of his life with an intensity that few of us could sustain.

In our Gospel today we hear Jesus say “Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.” Fred had the purest heart of anyone I’ve ever known. Another way of talking about purity of heart is “singleness of heart or mind.” Jesus is telling us that those who put God at the very center of their lives, who seek him with all of their mind, heart and soul, i.e., “the pure of heart,” will surely see God. And God was always at the very center of Fr. Fred’s life.

Few of us manage to be so single minded. We find our attention captured by our jobs, or another person, or our fears, or our compulsions, or our ambition or greed, or any of a myriad of other attractions that can seduce us and capture our imaginations and energies. Sometimes it takes us a lifetime to free ourselves of these false gods so we can welcome the true God into our lives. It is the human condition, one that we know well. I suspect Fr. Fred struggled with many of these things but because of the discipline and commitment of his life, he managed to keep his eye unwaveringly on God.

In fact, he was so single minded in the way he lived his life, he could be a bit intimidating for his fellow religious. He kept the observance perfectly in prayer, study, community life and ministry. Not many of us manage to do it all so well. We didn’t always understand where Fr. Fred’s intensity and unswerving commitment to fidelity came from.

I believe it came from his deep gratitude for his life as a priest and religious and his ever-growing awareness of God’s love for him. You see, Fred always marveled at the richness of his life and the extravagant love that God had for him and for all of us. Fr. Fred had vivid memories of the series of tragedies that formed the early years of his life. The death of his father in an automobile accident when he was 10, the debilitating struggle of his mother with mental illness, the loss of his family and home when he and his sister had to go to the German St. Vincent Orphan Home. He arrived there battered by loss, confused and helpless, and more than a little angry. He was aware that people were afraid that he wouldn’t be able to conform to life at the orphanage and he was determined to prove them wrong. He channeled his anger into his studies and he excelled from the very beginning.

And, it was at St. Vincent’s that he met the Passionists. He admired these men who served as chaplains at St. Vincent’s and he wanted to be like them. So, when he finished grade school he asked to enter the Prep

School. Apparently, there was some debate at the orphanage about whether he could possibly make it there. But, ultimately the Passionists and the Orphanage Board approved his request. The Board even voted to pay his expenses.

So, at fourteen he began his pursuit of Passionist Religious life. He often recalled that in those early years many of his classmates and some of the formation directors and senior professed fully expected him to give up and leave. But, we know the rest of the story. He did not leave but Kamikaze Sucher threw himself wholeheartedly into every aspect of the life: the studies, the prayer, the spirituality, and the community life. He held back nothing and continued to give more than 100% of himself.

And God not only matched Fred's self-gift but rendered to him the hundred-fold. Because of his talents and personal drive, Fred succeeded in everything he did. But more importantly, God revealed to Fred the great mystery of God's love for him. Those of us who have had the privilege of living with Fred over the years couldn't help but notice that while in the first half of Fred's religious life he depended on his drive, his strength, his self-discipline, his extraordinary intelligence and erudition, his tireless commitment to our life, in the last thirty years or so, he had become more patient, compassionate, gentle and understanding, and more open to nourishing friendships. Many of us found in Fr. Fred a wise and gentle spiritual guide and a good and supportive friend. Even into his final years, Fr. Fred could spiel out a formidable theological and historical sermon but when he spoke of God's love, compassion, patience, understanding and forgiveness, he moved out of his head and into his heart, away from the theory and erudition and into his own experience. Then, he was truly eloquent and clearly was speaking from his heart of his personal experience of God.

Young Samuel, in the story from our first reading, once he discovered, through the advice of his mentor, Eli, who was calling him, responded, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Young William Charles Sucher, in spite of being battered by loss during his early years, also responded to the Lord at a very young age. When the Lord called, Fr. Fred responded, "Here I am, Lord, send me." The Lord took him at his word and for 75 years Fr. Fred followed Christ with a pure heart. The Lord was faithful to him as well and Fr. Fred came to see God more and more clearly as he lived his life. Today we thank God for sharing with us his beloved servant, Fr. Frederick Sucher, a man of long life, many accomplishments, deep friendships but most especially a man who passionately loved God and followed Christ Crucified with a pure heart.

May Fr. Fred mentor all of us into a deep and faithful love of God and show us the way to living with a pure heart. May he rest in peace.

Michael Higgins, C.P.

FATHER FREDERICK SUCHER, C.P.
February 4, 1917 – May 31, 2013

Fr. Frederick Sucher, a member of the Passionist Community for 75 years, died at Mercy Sacred Heart Home, Louisville, Kentucky on May 31, 2013.

William Charles Sucher was born to William Charles Sucher and Hilda Thekla Scherer on February 4, 1917 in St. Louis, Missouri. He was baptized on February 18, 1917 at Sts. Mary and Joseph Church and received Confirmation on November 13, 1927 at St. Andrew's Church. He attended St. Francis de Sales School from 1921 to 1927. After his father was killed in an auto accident, William entered the St. Vincent German Orphanage in 1928. He remained there until his entry into the Passionist Prep Seminary in Normandy, Missouri on September 1, 1931.

William was received into the Passionist novitiate on July 16, 1937, professed vows on July 17, 1938, and was now known as Frederick of the Sacred Heart. He spent novitiate in St. Paul, Kansas, and the philosophy years in Detroit, Michigan. After final vows in 1941 he moved to Chicago for two years to study dogmatic theology after which Fred moved to Louisville, Kentucky to finish studying before ordination. He was ordained to the priesthood along with: William Hogan, Carl Schmitz, Roger Mercurio, Cronan Malloy, Emil Womack, Leo Patrick Brady on April 26, 1944 at Assumption Cathedral, Louisville, Kentucky???. Another classmate was Br. Regis Ryan.

In 1948 Fred attended the Institut d'Etudes for post graduate studies in philosophy in Montreal, Canada. After his return in 1949 he spent many years as lector in the Passionist seminary teaching philosophy. Fr. Fred served his fellow Passionists as novice master, formation director, local superior, provincial council member and treasurer. His wisdom and service reached out to the broader community as retreat preacher, presenter and executive priest for the Worldwide Marriage Encounter, founder and staff of the Passionist House of Prayer, and confessor. He was a great retreat preacher for many clergy and sister retreats, spiritual companion to countless men and women and in a special way friend and spiritual guide for the Passionist Nuns both in Kentucky and Missouri.

One of Fr. Fred's everlasting gifts to all who encounter St. Paul of the Cross is the translating of over 3,000 letters of the Holy Founder from Italian into English. This translation resulted into a three-volume set of books, The Letters of St. Paul of the Cross. In the last few years of his life, after moving to Louisville, Fred was translating footnotes of a new Italian version of Paul's letter and a recent Italian volume of Passionist Saints and Blessed.

Fr. Fred was an avid sportsman in his younger years, very competitive and aggressive, with determination and focus to win...to do the very best.

His entire life was lived with the same determination and focus...to always do the call of God in his life, in his ministry, in his service to others. Fred was truly an outstanding and admirable follower of Paul of the Cross.

The last month or so of Fr. Fred's life was spent at the Mercy Sacred Heart Home in Louisville, where his health declined rather quickly. He was ever gracious to those who ministered to him. He died peacefully on May 31, 2013 shortly after 5a.m. with eager anticipation to see his God face to face.

The wake service and funeral was held at the Sacred Heart Monastery, Louisville, on June 3-4, 2013. Burial was in the Passionist cemetery next to the monastery.