



FR. ERIC MEYER, C.P.

**BORN
MARCH 26, 1938**

**PROFESSED
JULY 9, 1959**

**ORDAINED
APRIL 28, 1966**

**DIED
JANUARY 13, 2023**



‘Santa, I was a good kid
all year!’



The changing face of Clarence (Eric) through St. Ita grade school.



Eric’s Mom and Dad on
the back porch of their
home.



Clarence and his brothers, Joseph and James, his sister, Mary....enjoying
a summer day on Magnolia Avenue in Chicago.



Procession into St. Agnes Church,
Louisville, Kentucky,
before the Ordination.



Ordination Day - April 28, 1966.
Classmates: Thomas Rutledge, Daniel
Malain, Eric Meyer, Matt Sullivan,
Ronald Corl, Christopher Mercier.



First Mass - St. Ita Church
Chicago, Illinois,
May 8, 1966.



Receiving the Offertory gifts at
his First Mass.



Fr. Fred Sucher, CP, with Eric
and his Mom.



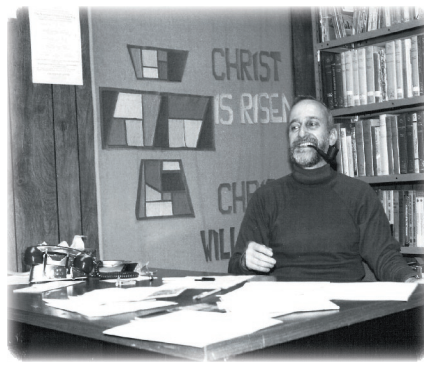
Eric thanking his family and friends at
the 'Breakfast Banquet' after his First
Mass.



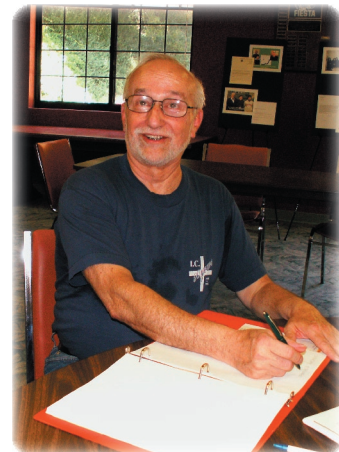
Theological Student
in Munster, Germany.



Eric in Germany.



Eric in his office at Southern Il-
linois in Carbondale, Illinois.



Eric writing his copious
notes and reflections...
to be typed later!



Aug. 19 2013 Bible Study BBO
Eric was both associate and pastor at Immaculate Conception Church.





Eric performaing at the Nights of Stars at IC Parish.



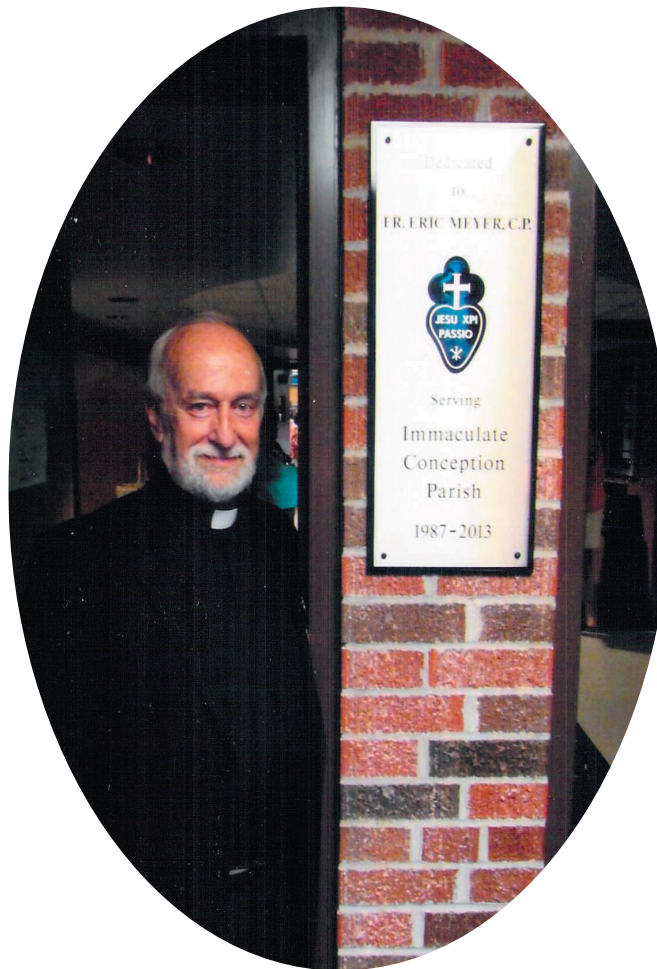
Farewell Cake as Eric leaves IC Parish.



Breakfast at Sacred Heart Monastery!



Eric doing what he loved best... preaching a homily!



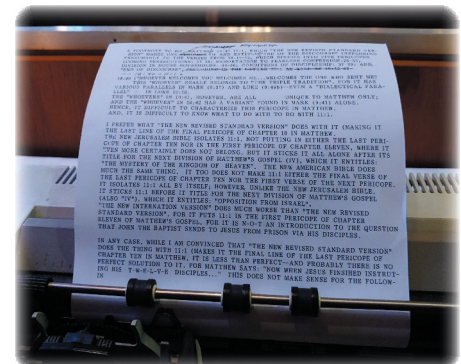
Ronan Newbold and Eric Meyer at Grouondbreaking for the Eric Meyer Parish Center.



Eric Meyer and Bob Weiss at the front door of Sacred Heart Monastery in Louisville.



David Colhoun giving the final blessing for Eric at Funeral Mass.



Eric died while typing his last Scripture talk... unfinished last word.

FUNERAL HOMILY
FR. ERIC MEYER, C.P.
Immaculate Conception Church
Chicago, Illinois
January 21, 2023
Fr. Robert Weiss, C.P.

There was a sky jumper who fell 2,000 feet to his death because he forgot to put his parachute on! Not to remember can cause a lot of trouble! The opposite, to forget, is to remember. Fr Eric himself picked this beautiful prayer on the lips of an evil doer, *a criminal*.

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong. Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:39-43)

"Jesus, remember me" was said at the most explosive moment of God's love for us. To remember is to put into ourselves the mind and heart of Jesus at the moment of His visceral love that He has for us in His greatest suffering! I think it is one of the most beautiful prayers in the New Testament, and that, on the lips of a repenting criminal!

This Sacred Scripture text is at the heart of the Passionist Charism. "May the compassion of Christ be always in our hearts!" Eric was a very good priest and Passionist! He picked the right Sacred Scripture passage.

I first meet Fr. Eric in September 1952, in Normandy, Missouri, 71 years ago. He and his mother were greatly impressed by Fr. Kyran O'Connor, C.P., who spoke German with his mother. When he visited the monastery parlor with mother and father, a Passionist explained about the three Passionists who were killed in China who gave all to Christ! His mother was upset, and, after the Passionist left the room. she said, "Let's get out of here!" Well, Eric did not listen to his mother.

The Prep high school was a wonderful experience and a tremendous education. All our teachers were Passionist priests. Eric was there for six years. Four years of high school and two years of college. His first Director was Fr. Rock Adamek and then Fr. Leo Patrick Brady; both were wonderful men! Leaving home was a big sacrifice for his Mom and Dad! The Prep was 300 miles from home. The Prep was closed around 1969 - about 53 years ago. Our former students still have reunions some 60 plus years later! We still have precious memories of our teachers and companions of so many years ago.

After Ordination, Fr. Eric spent five years of study to get his doctorate in theology in Germany under some of the best theologians in the world. Eric was not only a good scholar but

also, in the tradition of the Passionists, a dedicated preacher, even in German during his studies in Europe! He regularly preached at United States military posts and churches in German.

Coming back to America, he spent some time teaching at Catholic Theological Union and about seven years at Case Western University in Cleveland. He more than taught theology there; he also witnessed for Christ not only to students but also to faculty. He continued his ministry for six years at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois, and lived at our Passionist house there.

Fr. Eric was then stationed here at Immaculate Conception Church for 26 years as both associate and pastor. Only our Good Lord knows how many Masses, sermons, confessions and counseling sessions he did here in this parish! Many parishioners have fond and grateful memories of this very dedicated and zealous priest.

After a long ministry in Chicago, Eric came to spend his last years at our Sacred Heart Monastery in Louisville, Kentucky. Louisville is a blessed place to live, with the loving care of those who serve and minister there. It is also great to live with men who are not at their best physically but are spiritually at their best! It is a privilege to be with men who have been companions with Jesus a long time and tend to be pretty humble as they have made more mistakes than they care to remember.

Those of us who were privileged to live with Eric knew the hours he spent at his old typewriter preparing his lessons and sermons. I think his death at his typewriter is a moving symbol of his energetic zeal. The last complete sentence he typed was a quote from Scripture: "Jesus finished teaching His disciples!"

I think my reflections on the life of Fr. Eric is what Jesus Himself said: "Well done, good and faithful servant..." (Mt. 25: 21, 23).

BIOGRAPHY FOR FR. ERIC MEYER, C.P.

HOLY CROSS PROVINCE

March 26, 1938 – January 13, 2023

Fr. Eric C. Meyer, C.P., was born in Chicago at old St. Joseph's Hospital, March 3, 1938. He was baptized with the name Clarence Michael Meyer, third child of Clarence Francis Meyer and Anna Stockinger. His older sister Mary (Magruder) and older brother Joseph, both preceded Eric in death. Still living is his younger brother James. Clarence was baptized at Holy Name Cathedral in downtown Chicago. With three children, the father decided to move to Edgewater when Clarence was three years old. There he attended St. Ita's School and Church in Edgewater (northeastern part of the city along the lake). He had a few nicknames in his early years: "Ted" by family and earliest friends, "Weasel" by classmates in high school. At profession of vows he took the name "Eric".

His parents moved to Chicago from Wisconsin. Both spoke German and mastered English without an accent. The children did not learn German from their folks because of the War. It was only when Eric came back from Germany, after his post-graduate studies there, that he spoke to his mother in German. As far as the family menu, it was mostly Italian. His father was manager at the Creamettes factory in Chicago. "We had every kind of Creamettes there were. But I still love pasta." He was a paperboy, and later, when he was home from the seminary for the summers, he delivered liquor for a local store and worked at the parish as a part-time janitor.

Eric's introduction to the Passionists came in 1952. While in eighth grade, when Fr. Simon Herbers visited St. Ita's grade school to talk to the students about the Passionist spirituality and the Passionist high school seminary. With permission of his parents and recommendation from his pastor, Eric applied to the Passionist high school in Normandy, Missouri, outside St. Louis. This was an inevitable transition for Eric, who as a little kid was attracted to the Passion of Jesus. He had a great attraction to Good Friday liturgy. And then there was the huge crucifix on one of the pillars that fascinated him whenever he entered St. Ita's church.

In 1952 Eric traveled to Normandy to begin his studies at the Passionist Mother of Good Council Seminary. In 1956 the high school students graduated but remained for two years of college classes at the new seminary in Warrenton, Missouri. After these two years, his class went to St. Paul, Kansas, to begin novitiate in July 1958. He took first vows as a Passionist on July 9, 1959. To continue their studies, the class was moved to Immaculate Conception Monastery in Chicago, where he completed his college studies in 1962 and professed final vows on July 9, 1962. From 1962 to 1965, he began theological studies in Louisville at Sacred Heart Monastery. His final year, 1965-66, of theology was at St. Meinrad Abbey (Benedictine school) in Indiana. Eric was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Charles Maloney at St. Agnes Passionist Parish in Louisville, Kentucky, on April 28, 1966. His classmates were Matthew Sullivan, Daniel Malain, Ronald Corl, Thomas Rutledge, and Christopher Mercier. Eric was able to celebrate his First Mass at his home parish, St. Ita, on May 8, 1966.

After ordination, his assignments were coordinated with his educational goals. He was soon on a plane to Germany, where he would begin his doctorate degree in theology in Münster, studying under theologian Father Johannes Metz. While working on his studies, he assisted as chaplain to the US Army in Friedberg and assisted at parishes in the Münster diocese. Eric returned to the United States in 1971 and began his teaching career at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, where the Passionists had a formation community. He was awarded his Doctor of Theology degree in July 1972. In the summer of that year, Eric was invited to be assistant professor in the Religion Department of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. He served in that position until 1975 when he became the first appointee to the Archbishop Paul J. Hellinan Chair of Catholic Studies from 1975 to 1980. The Provincial asked

Eric to serve as chaplain at the Newman Center of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Illinois. Holy Cross Province was continuing a new community in an attempt to have a presence at a college or university. He also served as director of young men who were interested in learning about the Passionist spirituality, as director of the Loyola University Extension Program in Carbondale, and sometime instructor with the Religion Department.

In 1987 Eric was asked to return to Chicago and become the associate pastor at Immaculate Conception parish, next to the Passionist Immaculate Conception Monastery and Provincial Office. The parish did not have its own rectory, so the pastor and associate lived at the monastery. He became pastor in 2005 until 2014. He was strong in his preaching, dedicated to his sacramental ministry, loyal in visiting the sick at hospitals and homes, and hated parish debts. He committed himself to spearheading the building of a parish center, borrowing money from the archdiocese. He was proud of the parish's capacity to pay off the parish debt and interest in a short period of time.

The parishioners remember Eric not only as a dedicated priest and pastor, but also as a walker, canoeist, and bicyclist. Exercise for Eric was taking long walks. Long walks began during his college days at Immaculate Conception Monastery. "There were essentially two forms of outdoor recreation. Softball and the less popular of the two was that of taking long walks together." From four-mile-an-hour long, long hikes to places like the lakefront and back or to Techny Towers (Divine Word Missionaries) and back. In fact, Eric did not have a driver's license. He walked to meetings at other nearby parishes and for hospital and home visits. He did have a few parish "chauffeurs" to drive him as needed for longer distances or in bad weather.

Eric was a zealous canoeist and bicyclist. He did 10-hour canoe trips as well as canoeing down the Mississippi River from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, to Venice, Louisiana. "I like big rivers and the Mississippi is king!" Eric also canoed the entire length of the Ohio River from Pittsburg to Cape Girardeau. On a free afternoon, he would bike around different forest preserves or local bike paths in the area. With more time, he would take the bike path from Chicago to Kenosha, Wisconsin.

From his earliest years, Eric was a Chicago Cubs baseball fan, an enthusiastic yet frustrated fan! Since 1908 the team let down its fans. Not until 2016, when Eric was 78, was he able to celebrate a World Series victory, ending the longest drought in professional sports.

In 2014, Eric was assigned to the Sacred Heart Passionist Community in Louisville. He responded to the many needs from parishes in the archdiocese for weekend assistance, covering parishes when pastors went on vacation, and other ministry requests.

Another particular characteristic of Eric was he never dealt with computers or word processors. He was often at his typewriter, preparing for preaching assignments or, as he was doing at the time of his death, teaching a course on the Gospels to a group at St. Agnes.

A few weeks before his 85 birthday, Eric died on January 13, 2023. Eric was not complaining of any health issues. He did not come down for supper; someone went to check on him and found he had passed away. Eric had died at his typewriter in mid-word with no sign of distress or struggle.

A Memorial Mass was celebrated at St. Agnes Church in Louisville on Thursday morning, January 19. On Saturday, January 21, the Funeral Mass was celebrated at Immaculate Conception Church in Chicago. Fr. David Colhour, C.P., was main celebrant, and Fr. Bob Weiss was the homilist. Fr. Eric requested to be cremated and buried at the Passionist section of All Saints Cemetery in Des Plaines, Illinois.