

Life History - Francis Greff, CSSp.

Born March 14, 1920 in Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania where his father worked in the coal mines. He entered the junior seminary after primary school; made his first profession in the congregation of the Holy Ghost on August 15, 1942 and ordained to the priesthood on June 3, 1947.

On September 2, 1948 he sailed on a cargo ship to East Africa where he arrived two months later in the Kilimanjaro vicariate. After a teaching assignment to St. James Seminary in Kilema Chini, he started his pastoral ministry at Useri in 1951 and then at Mkuu - Rombo where he stayed for ten years and was dean of Rombo district. He built a large Church there and three primary schools. He was also pastor in Kishimundu and Narumu before being made pastor at Mbosho Parish in 1967. He served here for twenty five years; built four churches and opened a new parish near the Kilimanjaro International Airport.

At Mbosho he took care of about thirty homeless boys who lived in his residence. In November 1991 robbers attacked the place. They shot one of the boys through the head, killing him instantly and crippled Father Greff with a shot through both legs. It took him six months before the hospital in Moshi discharge him with special braces that enabled him to walk and work again.

He graciously and obediently accepted a transfer to Spiritan House Arusha; and in 1993 he was appointed pastor of Holy Family Parish Njiro Hill. While in Arusha area he continue to expand his help in the education of young people of all tribes and religions.

Father Greff's simple life style, dedication to ministry and priestly life, the way he looked after the sick, the poor, and the orphans has been an inspiration to many of us over the years. Frank, how many boys have you educated and cared for at Mbosho, in Moshi and in Arusha? We spiritans are most grateful for the way you carried your personal cross and your missionary zeal.

We believe you are sharing in the peace and joy of the Risen Lord of whom you loved and served so well by caring for the many Tanzanians from Moshi and Arusha.

Father Greff died of liver cancer on 17 May. His funeral was at Usa River Seminary on 21st May, 2001. Present at his funeral were three Bishops, 65 priest and 900 to 1000 people, including many, many of the young people that father Greff took care of and helped to educate. Everyone was surprised at this wonderful turnout considering Frank was out the active parish ministry for eight years.