

## **Rev. Raymond Corriveau, C.Ss.R**

(The following is the biography prepared by the Provincial Archives. Parts in quotation marks are Ray's commentary to me, Gary Lauenstein, on the night before he died. I had read the biography to him.)

Raymond Corriveau, born in 1936 in St. Joseph's, near Zurich, Ontario, is the middle child of the three children of Willard Corriveau and Marie LaPorte. He has one brother, Gerard (Myrna) and one sister, Sister Elise Corriveau, CND. Baptized in St. Joseph's Church he attended local schools until 18 years old when he entered the Juvenile St. Mary's College in Brockville, ON, for one year. He was in the graduating class of 1955.

"There was a fourth child who died on the day of her birth. I was around five years old. We were sent away and there was a mid-wife there, Della Rieger. Somehow we came home before the child died, but I remember her dying. I remember the white casket and going to the funeral home. I remember my mother crying deep tears. The child was buried in the cemetery, but I never located that. I remember Della baptizing the baby."

"There were other Regiers from St. Joseph who joined the minor seminary. Della was a first-cousin of my mother."

"I was baptized either in St. Joseph's church or St. Boniface in Zurich. I suspect St. Boniface. We went to St. Boniface. St. Joseph was right along the lake (Lake Ontario) and the French-Canadian community was all along Lake Huron. The furthest people went was 50 miles from Zurich."

"It was a German-French community. Brother Edgar Hoffmann lived a mile and a quarter from the Corriveau home and all that family spoke German, as did a number of the families in the area. The priest celebrated Mass in Latin and spoke English."

"We walked to school. In my memory, I have strong memories of going to church in a sleigh and we went to the United Church shed, parked over there, and went to church at St. Boniface. This was especially at Christmas Midnight Mass."

"I attended SS#7, a public school. There was no Catholic school. There was a Catholic school at Blue Water, St. Pierre, but it was too far away."

"Around grades 7 or 8 we had nuns come and teach us for two weeks during the summer."

"I made First Communion at 6 or 7 years old, prepared by Fr. Lucier, the parish priest of St. Boniface. I didn't know any English before I went to school. It seems to me I understood him very easily."

[Corry explained why he was missing one finger. When he was 14 years old, he caught his hand in the thresher while working on the family farm. He did not realize completely what had happened until he removed his glove and saw his finger separated from his hand. He rushed into the house and showed his mother. His father took him to the hospital in Hensell, about seven miles away. Corry remembers all the details vividly. His sister Elize, a year and a half younger, also remembers it well.]

"I went to high school in Exeter, ON, for four years. My basic contact with the Redemptorists was through Fr.Richard Bedard, who would come and play cards at our place. He played cards with other Redemptorists who came there. Fr.Bedard was my mother's first cousin. He ultimately became provincial of the Toronto Province. I watched them play cards and did not join them playing. We were kids, they were adults.

"My parents were very much in favor of my going to Brockville. It was a deeply religious family.

"We used to say rosary at home. Interestingly, meal prayer was not part of the family. We had catechism on Saturday, taught by Fr.Lucier. We would go up to the church for that."

[A family story is that Corry's Grandfather Corriveau, as a boy, had been made lame by the kick of a horse. Brother Andre Bessett later visited their village and anointed the now young adult with St.Joseph's oil. The young man was healed and no longer limped. A picture of Brother hung in the family home ever after.]

"I went to Brockville for my fifth year of high school and graduated there. In the five years at Brockville there were 50 or 60 students. We had Latin taught by Allen MacGregor. I got A's. Fr.Ed Kennedy taught English and was our Socius. Fr.McCormick taught history and on the final exams for the Province of Ontario I got 100%."

In Novitiate at Marianella, L'Abord-a-Plouffe, Quebec, under Novice Master Cornelius McElligott, he made first profession there on September 15, 1956. His did his under graduate studies at St. Alphonsus Seminary in Woodstock (1956-1957), and Assumption University in Windsor (1957-59). He did his theological studies at the newly-opened Holy Redeemer College, Windsor, Ontario (1959-1963). He was ordained on June 17, 1962 at Holy Redeemer College by Auxiliary Bishop Emmett Carter of the London Diocese.

"Fr.McElligott was kind of strict. His basic theme was 'perseverance'. He wrote a book on Perseverance. The Socius was O'Donnell. We started off with 24 in the Novitiate and ended up with 17. Besides Toronto Province novices, Edmonton

novices took part. Some of my fellow novices were Leo Feehan, Peter Healy and Pierre Payer.

"I made my profession in 1956. Then I went to Woodstock one year before they closed the seminary. They wanted to start up to be part of the university system, which is when we went to Windsor and built that large seminary, Holy Redeemer."

Academic studies followed with a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Windsor (1963), STL/ MA at St. Paul's University, Ottawa (1963-1964); S.T.D./ Moral Theology Accademia Alfonsiana, Rome (1964-1967). He taught moral theology at the Redemptorist's Scholasticat in Alymer, Quebec (1967-1968).

"I got my doctorate at the Alphonsianum. I had Haring, Hitz (for one semester) and Vereecke as teachers. All the classes were in Latin, except for classes taught by Fr.Koch and by Fr.Humbert, in French. I wrote my dissertation in English on the Ethics of St.Paul in his letters to the communities.

"Haring was especially involved in the Second Vatican Council at the time, in the document on the Church in the Modern World. He would talk about it in class quite a bit. He was very hopeful. It was a high time.

"I taught moral theology at Alymer for a year. Marciano Vidal had been a classmate of mine at the Alphonsianum."

In September 1968, Fr. Corriveau was one of three young Redemptorists, who initiated the Lakeshore Experimental Project in the Montreal suburb of Pointe Claire. It was a new pastoral initiative to try to discover first-hand, the problems facing un churched Catholics in five English-speaking parishes of the Montreal suburbs between Dorval and Senneville.

"We had a large shopping mall, the Dorval, where we had Mass, especially at Christmas. The other two with me were Fathers Mickey Kenny and Paul Curtin. I did it for three years. It continued after me. People would talk with us in the shopping mall. They would come to see us at the house. We would engage with them in their own home. We went door to door. I can't remember a lot of hostility. People were pretty welcoming. They were surprised to see priests in the shopping mall or coming to their home. The goal was to have them connect to their own parish." [Ray had told me previously that the idea for the experiment came from reading Harvey Cox's popular book *The Secular City*. Mary Kaye May told me that when the three priests strung up a banner at Christmas with the words: "Peace on Earth. Bang, bang, bang", the officials of the shopping mall were not amused and demanded that the banner be removed.]

At the age of 36, he was appointed as Novice Master (1972-1980) at Gerard House, first located in the Toronto's east end on Coxwell Avenue (1972-1974)

and then on Howland Avenue, close to the University of Toronto. Two of his novices were Superior General Michael Brehl and Archbishop Gerard Pettipas of Grouard-McLennan. During this time, he was also a professor of Christian Ethics, St. Augustine's Seminary, Toronto School of Theology (1972-1980). In 1980, he traveled to Dundalk, Ireland to make arrangements for Toronto Province novices to study there.

"I had the novices taking formal courses at the University. For instance, I taught biblical spirituality. I tried to direct it somewhat to them. They were very, very busy years."

[On several occasions, Ray spoke to me about an incident involving Fr. John Ruef, a canon law professor who became a General Consultor. While novice director, Ray operated on the principle that where the novice master is, there is the novitiate. He asked Fr. Amaral, Superior General, if he could make such an assumption, and Father Joseph Pfab, a canon lawyer. Both agreed it was okay. Ray would take the novices with him on trips. When Fr. Ruef became Consultor General and heard about the novices' trips, he said such a principle does not exist, and proceeded to get a "sanatio" for all Ray's novices. Ray would chuckle over the incident.]

Parish appointments followed as pastor at St. Alphonsus, Peterborough, Ontario (1981-1984); pastor as St. Teresa's, St. John's, Newfoundland (1984-1990); and superior for the Redemptorist community at St. Patrick's, Toronto (1990-1993). He continued teaching part-time (1981-1984, 1991-1994) at the Toronto School of Theology.

"I adapted well to parish work. I never had difficulty adapting. I just settled in.

"As superior of St. Patrick's, I took care of the older men, though not as many as we have now. I also taught one course at the Toronto School of Theology. I helped out in the parish.

"I was on the panel with the CBC during the pope's visit to Newfoundland. It was September of 1984."

He was Vicar Provincial of the Toronto Province (1990-1993) and elected provincial superior (1993-1996). He was instrumental in negotiating the reuniting of the Edmonton and Toronto Provinces. At the creation of the Edmonton-Toronto Province, he was elected as its first provincial superior (1996-1999) and re-elected for a second term (1999-2002). During this period time had to give considerable time to the updating the corporate structure of the English Redemptorists in Canada and to the difficult decisions of closing several foundations and leaving the ministry in parishes founded by the Redemptorists. .

"I gave up teaching in 1994 because of being provincial.

"I think there was inevitability to merging the two provinces. The Edmonton Province was very small. We were the larger group. Bill Bernard was the provincial of Edmonton at the time. We had a lot of meetings leading up to the merger. Bill and I were very much on the same page. I don't recall a lot of division in the province over the issue. By 1996 it was clear that they were ready to merge.

"By the end of my second term, I was pretty worn out (2002). I went to Hawkstone (England) at the invitation of Dennis McBride. It was a good time. I took courses from Dennis. He was the only one I took courses from.

"The apostolic nuncio called me into his office in Ottawa. He asked me to be the bishop of the Diocese of Renfrewe (Ontario). It was a surprise. This was before going to Hawkstone. I was tired. Basically, I explained this to the Nuncio and he let me off. Only later on I discovered it was pretty unusual that they would let you out of it. If I had become bishop, I would have done none of the work I did later in Redemptorist spirituality. I would have had to have withdrawn from it all."

Fr. Corriveau was assigned to Holy Redeemer parish in Sudbury, Ontario (2003-2004) and continued to care for the League of St. Gerard. In 2004, he was assigned to his present appointment as Associate Novice Master of the North American Redemptorist Novitiate in Glenview, Illinois. In 2007 during a medical exam spots of cancer were found in his lungs. He underwent a regime of cancer treatments. He returned to Toronto in the spring of 2010 to ready the old monastery for the arrival of 9 Novices which he welcomed in August.

"In the summer of 2003, I became associate at Holy Redeemer in Sudbury. I don't know if I had any major difficulty in moving from one position to the next. The parish did not provide French ministry, but there were a lot of French-speaking people, so that there was something of dealing with them in French.

He wrote continuously on modern moral themes and dilemmas and was published in academic journals like *Studia Moralia* and *Spicilegium*. Since 1990 he was chair of the Spirituality Commission and guided several volumes on Redemptorist saints and their spirituality to press.

"My recollection was basically that once I became Associate Novice Director in Glenview I did the supplement to the Sacramentary, a lot of work on this. Subsequent to that I did the selections on Redemption. Then one on St.Clement, which was my main work. I started working on the Dictionary. I did one on Redemptorist perspectives. I had done other articles on the Passion of Christ and St.Alphonsus and Moral Theology. Some articles appeared in *Spiritus Patris*. But I was happiest with the Supplement to the Sacramentary. I don't believe there was a single mistake in it.

"I gave a lot of retreats: Sri Lanka, Thailand, Ireland, the retreat on St.Clement in Toronto and Quebec. It was during this time that I got sick and others were appointed to read my papers in Tucson and San Alfonso.

"I was a busy person. What was is what was. No regrets for being so busy. It's probably why it's so hard not have all that to do now."