

Fr. Henry J. PLANINSEK 78 USA
* March 1, 1924 Forest City, PA

+ November 11, 2002
Houston, Texas

Fr. Planinsek was born on March 1, 1924, in Forest City, PA. He attended public elementary and high schools in Forest City until he joined the U.S. Navy in 1942. After World War II he entered the Spiritan's Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA from 1946 until 1951 where he earned an undergraduate degree in Science. He joined the Congregation of the Holy Ghost after completing his philosophy studies at St. Mary's Seminary (Ferndale) in Norwalk, CT, with his profession of vows on August 22, 1952 at the Holy Ghost Novitiate in Ridgefield, CT. After completing his theological studies at Ferndale, he was ordained to the Priesthood there on June 4, 1957. He then completed advanced studies, earning a M.A. in Science Education at Duquesne University in 1959.

Fr. Planinsek's first appointment was to the newly established Notre Dame High School in Riverside, CA, as a teacher of Chemistry, Physics and Math Science. During this time, from 1959 until 1970, he also spent much of his energy as plant supervisor and athletic director. Even though funds were quite scarce, state of the art science laboratories, a rustic computer center and a magnificent gymnasium were built under his direction. He was always known and admired for his "no-nonsense approach" in getting things done! During this time Fr. Henry (or as the students endearingly called him "Hank the Plank") ministered by giving pastoral assistance in area parishes and military bases while serving the large Spiritan community as bursar. He also pioneered and developed early Advanced Placement programs between Notre Dame High School and the University of California at Riverside. A solid College Prep curriculum, unique in the entire Diocese of San Diego, was established at Notre Dame High School. Acknowledging his many attributes, especially in giving good example as a religious, the Provincial asked him to serve as novice master for the young Western Province of the Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers in Glenwood Springs, CO. He held this post from 1971 until 1976 until ill health prompted his relocation to San Antonio, TX where he continued to contribute to the formation program of the Province as associate director of the Spiritan Theologate. In 1981 Fr. Planinsek entered into the administration of the Province, serving as Province Secretary and eventually as Provincial Bursar. Perhaps due to his own health limitations, he developed a real sensitivity to the needs of his sick, infirm and aged confreres, and in 1990 he was assigned to the Holy Ghost Fathers' Casa

Laval in Hemet where he oversaw the daily needs of the growing retired community, and eventually the construction of a new residence. Once completed, he offered to move on to Maison Brottier at Natchitoches, LA in 1994 to care for the retired confreres there. In 1997 he was appointed to assist in the parish community at St. Bridget in Milford, UT and then in 1999 moved on to St. George, UT where he served the faithful at St. George Church. His health began to deteriorate and in 2001 he was transferred back to Houston, TX. After a courageous battle with cancer he died on November 10, 2002 at St. Dominic's Nursing Home in Houston where both his natural and religious family visited him frequently. As one successful student wrote, "Regarding 'Fr. Hank', many legends abound . . . a more dedicated Holy Ghost Father will never be found!"