

Fr. John C. TOMALA 67 U.S.A. PR
* June 22, 1929 Torrington CT

December 9, 1996 Orocovis PR

Of Slovak extraction, he attended primary and secondary schools in his hometown until in 1947 he went to Cornwells, PA, for two years of college studies. On August 22, 1950 he made his formal commitment to the Congregation at Ridgefield, CT. Having earned a B.A. at Ferndale, the senior seminary in Norwalk, CT, he was ordained there on October 28, 1955.

The following year his wish to serve in Puerto Rico was granted. "He will be a good missionary," was the prediction of the seminary staff and the future proved that they had rightly evaluated the potential of the young man: "short and thin, but strong, zealous, unassuming, industrious and dependable, mentally a bit slow, but a good organizer." He was destined to spend forty years of unremitting hard work in Puerto Rico.

After two years each at San Felipe parish in Arecibo and N.S. del Carmen in Rio Grande, he was posted to Sacrado Corazon de Jesus in Arecibo. This was a new parish, created in 1961 when San Felipe became the cathedral parish of the new diocese of Arecibo. San Felipe had been the starting point of the Congregation's mission in Puerto Rico in 1931 and thirty years of hard work had transformed the area to such an extent that it became a diocese.

When in 1965 the parish of Sacrado Corazon also was handed over to the diocesan clergy, Father was transferred to Hato Rey. He worked there for many years at Espiritu Santo parish. It, too, was a new parish, entrusted to the Congregation in 1941. Aside from his parish ministry, he also taught at its secondary school, gaining the undying gratitude of its students. Some of them did so well that they became professional men as physicians, lawyers, etc. and one even became mayor of San Juan.

His final assignment was to N.S. de Fatima in Orocovis. He served there as pastor for a dozen years and was held in so great esteem by his parishioners that

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they spontaneously offered to take care of him during his declining years. They did so until his death. Interment took place in his hometown in Connecticut.

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