

Fr. Joseph Desmond BOYD 84 USA P.R.

* Nov. 27, 1899 Belfast Ireland + Oct. 3, 1984 Arecibo P.R.

His family migrated to the USA in 1916 and settled first at Port Huron, MI, and then at Swissvale, PA. Later they moved to Canada. By then Joseph had already finished his schooling in Pittsburgh. After one year in Cornwells, 1923-24, he could go to the Ridgefield novitiate. He pronounced his first vows Aug. 15, 1925. For his senior studies he went to Ferndale, where he was ordained Aug. 3, 1929.

His first appointment took him to Puerto Rico, where a new mission had just been entrusted to the Congregation. Together with the Fathers Christopher Plunkett, Regis Guthrie and William Duffy, he arrived there in January 1931 when the four pioneers took over the San Felipe parish of Arecibo. Extending over the town and some 25 barrios in the country, some 60,000 people were entrusted to their care. The labor was hard and uphill, but the pioneers showed their mettle. In 1946 he became pastor of the parish.

After he had spent some 25 years there, Provincial Fr. Francis McGlynn wrote him a very eulogistic letter and transferred him to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Bakersfield, CA, as assistant to the pastor there. A deluge of telegrams and letters inundated his office, begging him to leave Fr. Boyd in Puerto Rico. None of these, however, had been instigated by Fr. Boyd, who accepted his transfer "as a good soldier," even though he had lost his heart to Puerto Rico.

The new appointment did not last very long. Two years later, Fr. Boyd was back in his beloved island.

He lived long enough to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Colegio di San Felipe which he had founded. Having celebrated his own golden

jubilee as a priest in 1979, he died after spending 52 of his 54 years as a priest in Puerto Rico-the last of the four pioneers who had started the mission there. During his lifetime he had seen the original parish become a regular diocese in 1960, as well as the beginning of a Spiritan foundation, the first stage of a developing new native Puerto-Rican province.

In 1949 the grateful island had declared him an adopted son and in 1975 he had been enshrined in the Arecibo Hall of Fame. Interment took place at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Arecibo.

USA-East Newsletter Nov. 1984

Archives 10A-62A