



Brother Boniface Scheerer

September 25, 1920 - July 22, 2010

Brother Boniface Scheerer, a Discalced Carmelite friar for 63 years, was Born to Eternal Life on Thursday, July 22, 2010 in Redlands, CA. He was 89 years old. Frederick Dominic Scheerer was born September 25, 1920, in Philadelphia, one of 10 children. His father, Louis, was a Philadelphia police officer and his mother Gertrude was named "Catholic Mother of the Year" in 1945. Scheerer entered the Carmelite Order in 1949, taking the name Boniface, and was part of the order at the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians at Holy Hill in Hubertus. He transferred to the California Carmelites and joined El Carmelo when it opened for retreats in 1954.

He lived at El Carmelo Retreat House in Redlands for 56 years, and coached youth baseball and basketball. Brother Boni, as he was known to all, ran the retreat house's kitchen, managed the orange groves, built the dining room and founded the annual fiesta, a Redlands tradition for decades. "Wherever we would go, restaurants, people would stop us, everyone would recognize him," said niece Brenda Scheerer, who called Brother Boniface her "second dad."

Rev. Adam Gonzales, superior of the Discalced Carmelites at El Carmelo, called Scheerer the "heart and soul" of the Catholic retreat complex. "I don't think it would have its place in Redlands and the Catholic community. He was amazing - he built buildings, built brick walls, he was a landscaper and

gardener. He got in there and did the work, he was all self-taught," Gonzales said.

Brenda Scheerer said that in an article on the history of El Carmelo, Scheerer, whom most called "Brother Boni," was quoted saying, "When I came here, Redlands was the largest navel (orange) growing center in the world. I firmly believe God sent me here. My whole life has been dedicated to improving the retreat house."

Gonzales said Scheerer declined to leave Redlands when his family offered to move him closer to them toward the end of his life. "He said no, he wanted to stay here because that is where his friends and family were now," Gonzales said.

In the 1950s, Scheerer helped build a new dining room on the back of the El Carmelo villa. The room was used until the new dining room and kitchen were built in 1968. "Fifty to 70 people come every weekend and we have to feed them - that was his primary mission as a Carmelite brother," Gonzales said.

Scheerer also helped cook breakfast at Redlands Baseball for Youth's opening day and the firefighters' car show and barbecue sandwiches at Sylvan Park on the Fourth of July, longtime friend Herb Buyak said. He coached youth basketball and baseball, starting a fundraising group, the Arazaba Club, for those who could not afford registration fees for baseball, Buyak said.

"It was always about the kids," said RBY volunteer Chuck Millett. Scheerer coached the 5-year-old T-ball team, the Padres. "He liked that name because it was like 'the fathers' in Spanish. He was very kind man, he liked to coach the little kids."

He organized golf tournaments, "Saints vs. Sinners" and "Adam and Eve," at the Calimesa Country Club to benefit El Carmelo, Brenda Scheerer said. They tracked college basketball's "March Madness" tournament every year together.

"He was an athlete, golf was his passion, and sports, he loved coaching, but the brotherhood was his vocation." Gonzales said. "He had given his life to God and God's church and everything he did here in Redlands was to bring people closer to God."

Brenda Scheerer said he was a doting uncle, and spoke with him every day on the phone after she moved to Holland, Ohio. "He was always laughing, (he had) the best sense of humor," she said.

"He had daily visitors, people came to pray with him, brought communion, and he loved it," Gonzales said. "He'd talk your ear off."

In 2003, Gerald Barnes, bishop of the Diocese of San Bernardino, conferred on Scheerer the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice award, granted by the pope for service to the faithful, especially the youth, of the diocese, according to Brenda Scheerer. He was a member of the local Elks Lodge and Knights of Columbus.

Memorial donations may be made to El Carmelo Retreat House, P.O. Box 446, Redlands, CA 92373.

Visitation will be held Saturday, July 31 from 9 AM – 9:30 AM in the Shrine Chapel at The Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians at Holy Hill. Mass of Christian Burial will follow at 9:30 AM at Holy Hill. Interment will follow in the Carmelite Cemetery on the Holy Hill grounds.

The Berndt-Ledesma Funeral Home is serving the Order of Discalced Carmelites at Holy Hill.

Tribute Wall

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“ *I worked at El Carmelo for several years, and I will never forget brother Boniface and patty.*

Enrique - September 19, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CC

“ *Brother Boniface is my, Godfather. I named him, "Dardy" and that is what I called him for my entire life. He was my grandmothers (Pat Troyer) best friend. My grandmother passed away this year also on April 5th and I know it was very hard for Dardy to know she was gone. My heart is broken but I know Dardy and her are together in a loving place and will take care of each other. I always felt so loved by Dardy and know one can ever fill his shoes. He was such a good man and loved by all. He will be missed!*

Cathy Carrillo - August 07, 2010 at 12:00 AM