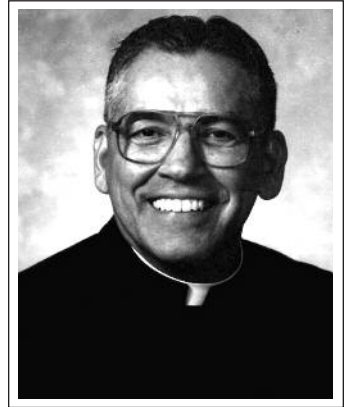


Fr. George Balderrama, SCJ

1927-2008

Born in Baltimore and raised in Colombia (his immigrant parents returned to South America when he was nine) Fr. George Balderrama, SCJ, served in both the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force before beginning his studies with the community at 37. He attended Marquette University and Sacred Heart School of Theology, receiving degrees in Spanish and theology. He professed his first vows in 1967 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1973.



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With fluency in Spanish, he quickly jumped into Hispanic ministry, doing his deacon internship at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Raymondville, Texas. He remained at OLG until 1977 and then moved to Louisiana, where he hosted a daily spiritual show on a New Orleans radio station (by then, many members of his family had settled in New Orleans). He also celebrated Mass on television and was a guest on several local television and radio talk shows.

In 1978, he moved to East Chicago, Ind., where he served at Our Lady of Guadalupe until 1986. From 1987 to 1989 he was based in the Milwaukee area and ministered at St. Patrick's in Racine and St. Clement's in Sheboygan. During this time he also did fill-in ministry as a chaplain with the U.S. Army in Germany.

From 1989 to 1990 he was at Holy Name parish in Houston and then he was back in Milwaukee, where he served at St. Joseph's in Waukesha.

Fr. George eventually retired from full-time ministry but he rarely sat still. Asked by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee to consider doing prison ministry in the early 1990s, he served as a volunteer chaplain for many years at the Waupun and Dodge correctional institutions. In 2001, the Dodge County Correctional Institution publically honored him for his years of service.

A member of the Villa Maria community in Franklin, Wis., Fr. George was diagnosed with advanced pancreatic cancer just weeks before his death on September 28, 2008.

September 28, 2008