

# Fr. Leonard Elder, SCJ

## 1941-2018

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Fr. Leonard Elder, SCJ, died March 6, 2018, following complications from a heart attack. He was 76.

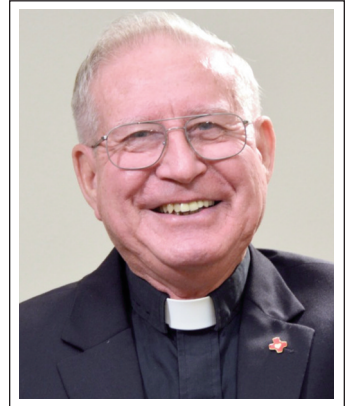
Raised in Kentucky, Fr. Leonard went to Divine Heart Seminary in Donaldson, IN, and entered the novitiate with the intention of pursuing ordained ministry.

But instead of professing his first vows, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. In some ways, his time of military service was an extended period of discernment. After four years with the Air Force he said, "I asked to return to the community as a religious brother." He professed his first vows in 1967.

As a brother, he served in formation, and then for nine years as a missionary in Zaire (now, the Democratic Republic of Congo). Fr. Leonard said that what he enjoyed most about his years in Africa "were the challenges; learning new cultures, languages, and the daily struggles to overcome the lack of almost everything I was accustomed to using. However, joined with those challenges was discovering a people eager to celebrate God's love and to share in their lives and struggles."

It was in Africa that he once again felt the call to ordained ministry. "God, through the voices of many people where I served, called me to pursue studies for the priesthood," he said.

He returned to the States and earned his M.Div. at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in 1996. He was ordained shortly after. Following ordination, Fr. Leonard served in pastoral ministry at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and Christ the Redeemer parishes in Houston, and at St. Joseph's parish in Mississippi, where he continued to live in retirement while doing part-time parish ministry.



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