

Fr. M. Patrick Cremer, SCJ

1916-2001

Originally from Aachen, Germany, Fr. M. Patrick Cremer, SCJ, left his homeland in 1935 to avoid induction into Adolf Hitler's elite corps of body guards. At 6'8", the young Cremer was an intimidating presence with athletic skills to match. If he had stayed in Germany, many believe that he would have represented his country at the 1936 Olympics.

But, World War II changed those plans. Fr. Cremer was a student at the minor seminary in the Netherlands when he was recruited by representatives from the Nazis.

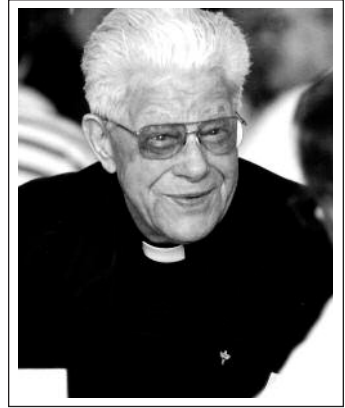
The young Cremer asked his school rector for advice. The rector introduced him to the provincial superior of the U.S. Province, who happened to be visiting at the time. The provincial told him that if he could get to New York, the U.S. Province would get him to Hales Corners and he could continue his studies there.

He arrived in New York in December, 1935. Soon after, he entered the novitiate and professed vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart in 1937. Fr. Cremer became an American citizen in 1941 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1944.

Although Fr. Cremer had hopes of becoming a missionary, he spent the majority of his religious life as an educator. Knowing more languages than the average United Nations interpreter, he often "moonlighted" as a translator and served as a facilitator for many international religious gatherings. At Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology he taught Hebrew, Greek and Latin, as well as dogmatic theology.

"After 37 years at the seminary — longer than any other faculty member in the history of SHSST — he retired from full-time teaching in 1985.

Fr. Cremer was 85 when he died.



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