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Father Anthony Zimmerman, 89

Oct. 30, 1917 - May 19, 2006

NAGOYA, JAPAN — Anthony Francis Zimmerman was born in Westphalia Oct. 30, 1917, the fourth son of Emil and Josephine Posch Zimmerman. He received his early education at St. Boniface School in Westphalia. Upon completion of high school, he entered the Society of the Divine Word in Techny, IL. He was ordained in August of 1946, and was assigned to the mission fields of Japan.

Father Tony arrived in that devastated country early in 1948, bringing with him trunks and barrels of food and clothing for the German SVD missionaries who had survived the war. In addition to doing pastoral work in the mission parishes, Father was assigned to teach English at Nanzan Language School. In time, he was sent to Catholic University in Washington, D.C. where he received a doctorate in Moral Theology.

Upon his return to Japan, he became Professor of Moral Theology at Nanzan University in Nagoya and also acted in various administrative capacities for the SVD. In response to the legalization of abortion in Japan, Father Zimmerman began to focus on over-population issues and studies of natural family planning. He attended the first World Population Conference in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1965; thus beginning the years of international travel. He began writing and publishing during those years. During a Vatican conference on Natural Family Planning, Father "Zim" was assigned a desk near Mother Theresa and became acquainted with her. Thus the seed was nurtured that ultimately brought her to Japan for her first visit.

Father Zimmerman became director of the Japan Family Life Association in 1977, a position he held for many years. In 1996, Father celebrated his fifty years of priesthood at a celebration in St. Boniface Parish in Westphalia.

Father Zimmerman is the author of 10 books and numerous published articles in the Catholic periodicals. In recent years, he focused on the Gospels, especially those of Matthew, writing a series of dissertations called: Catholic Mind. He died May 19, 2006, at his retirement home in Nagoya, Japan.

Father Zimmerman was preceded in death by his parents and his brothers and sister, Roman, Joseph "Jack," Father Al Zimmerman, SVD and Marie. Survivors include his brothers and sisters, Bernard Zimmerman (Valeria) of Westphalia; Lawrence Zimmerman (Therese) of New Richmond, WI; Betty (Vern) Gaul of Earling; Ann (John) Gaul of Omaha, NE, Sister Irene Zimmerman, SSSF of Milwaukee, WI; nieces and nephews and other relatives.

A Memorial Mass was celebrated June 3, 2006, at St. Boniface Catholic Church in Westphalia with Rev. John Dorton celebrant. Burial was in Nagoya, Japan. Pauley Jones Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

