

# Remembering saint-like priest

How does St. Aloysius Schwartz sound to you? Who, you may ask, is Aloysius Schwartz?

Monsignor Aloysius Schwartz walked among us. While he was born in Washington in 1930, he went St. Charles College (now Charlestown) in 1944 as a freshman in the minor seminary high school. His illustrious classmates include Bishop Joe Gossman and Dr. Mike Eder, a famed educator.

From an early age, Al felt called to the missions. He studied at Maryknoll College and completed his theology in Louvain, Belgium.

His sister, Dolores Vita, a parishioner at St. John Neumann Mission in Annapolis, told me that Maryknoll wanted him to teach, but Al wanted to go to the missions. So he was actually ordained as a diocesan priest on June 29, 1957, and was assigned in Busan, South Korea.

In the seminary, at Louvain, Al would spend his summer vacations working at the rag pickers' camps for derelicts of French society. Al visited Banneux, where the Virgin of the Poor appeared, and dedicated his priesthood to the service of the poor.

The law of attraction surely worked for Father Al. His love for the poor brought the poor to his door. Orphans would show up at his rectory. Realizing he needed support in caring for the poor, he founded the Religious Congregation of the Sisters of Mary in 1964, and the Brothers of Christ in 1981.

He established Boystowns and Girlstowns to care for and educate the orphan and abandoned children, and children from poor families.

Father Al was involved in pro-life activities of every kind, building hospitals and sanatoriums for the indigent, hospices for the homeless and handicapped men, women and children.

In 1985 he started similar programs in the Philippines. Sadly, in 1989, he was diagnosed with ALS - Lou Gehrig's Disease. He accepted the progressively

paralyzing disease with a sense of joy and serenity, seeing it somehow as a gift from God.

Even in failing health, Monsignor Al would continue his evangelizing outreach, ultimately establishing a Boystown and Girlstown in Mexico. He died on March 16, 1992 at Girlstown in Manila, and was buried at the Boystown in Cavite, Philippines.

The Sisters of Mary and the Brothers of Christ continue his ministry of serving the poorest of the poor in Korea, Philippines, Mexico, Guatemala and Brazil.

If you would like more details of Monsignor Al's life, you can contact his sister, Dolores Vita, at 410-571-7774.

In this Year of the Priest, we need to see the goodness of so many priests who have labored anonymously. The media loves to advertise our scandals and to bury our saints. As a church we need to atone for our scandals and raise up our saints. As I've said so often: "Sin is what we sometimes do. Good is who we really are." We are made in God's image and likeness. We only sin when we forget that.

In this time of welcoming so many new immigrants to the United States, hopefully many members of the Korean, Philippine and Hispanic communities can help to push forward Monsignor Al's canonization. They have come from there to here. He went from here to there. Blessings flow both ways in life.

Finally, may we all join in a prayer that bears the imprimatur of Jaime Cardinal Sin of the Philippines:

"Almighty, ever-living God, giver of all good gifts, you have filled Monsignor Al with an ardent love for You and for souls. You have inspired him to dedicate his life to relieve the suffering of the orphans, abandoned, the sick and the poor, especially the youth which he did with all humility and courage until the end of his life.

"May his holy life of love and service to the poor be recognized by the Church through his beatification and canonization and be my inspiration to strive for perfection in the love of God and service to others. We ask this through the merits of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the prayers of Mary, the Virgin of the Poor.

“Amen.”