

# SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

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Father John E Boll

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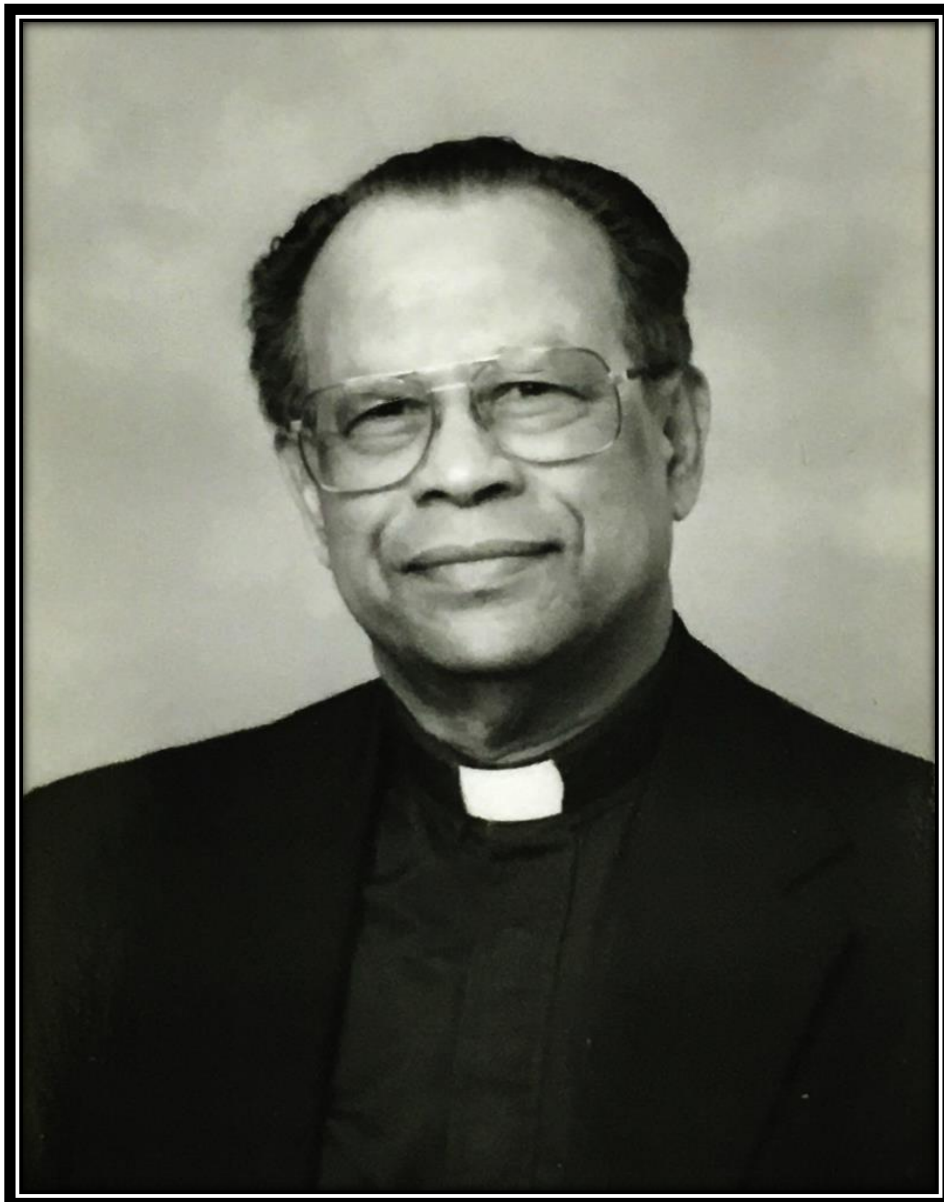
## *Father Januarius Rodrigues*

Native of Aldona, Goa, India

Priest of the Diocese of Sacramento

Pastor Emeritus of Saint Anne Parish, Sacramento

January 3, 1930 - March 6, 2006



Januarius Rodrigues was born on January 3, 1930 in Aldona, Goa, India, the son of Rosario Bernardo Rodriguez and Maria Santana Fernandes. He began his education at the Escola Primaria Oficial, Chora, Goa from June 1936 to March 1940. He then became a student at Saint Joseph High school in Dandewar, India from 1940 to 1947. During his college years, he attended Saint Xavier College, Udipi, India, affiliated to the University of Madras, from 1947 to 1951. He entered Saint Joseph Inter-diocesan Seminary, Mangalore, India from 1951 to 1959.

### **ORDAINED A PRIEST IN INDIA AND BEGINS MINISTRY**

Januarius Rodrigues was ordained a priest in 1959 for the Archdiocese of Nagpur, India. He was appointed principal of Saint Joseph I.M. School, Paraghat, India from 1959-1964. He then became the parish priest of Christ the King Church in Amla, India from 1964-1968.

### **MINISTRY TO THE WORLD**

Father Jan took literally the Gospel call to “go forth and teach all nations.” He left his native India and served as parish priest in Parana, Argentina and Cristo Rey, Mexico. In 1973, he came to the Diocese of Sacramento where he served in a number of parishes. His first assignment was as administrator pro-tem of Saint Francis Parish in Burney from 1973-74. He then was appointed assistant at Saint Thomas More Parish in Paradise from 1974-75, followed by an appointment to Holy Rosary Parish, Woodland as an assistant from 1975-76.

His next assignment was to Saint John Vianney Parish in Rancho Cordova as assistant pastor from 1976-77 and then as assistant pastor of Saint Rose Parish, Roseville from 1977-80. Father Jan was incardinate into the Diocese of Sacramento on February 7, 1977, thereby committing himself to service in the Diocese of Sacramento for the rest of his life.

In 1980 he was appointed assistant pastor of Saint Robert Parish in Sacramento followed by a leave of absence. He returned to ministry and became chaplain at the California Medical Facility -South, in Vacaville from 1985-94 with residence at Saint Peter Parish in Dixon.

### **CHAPLAIN AT CALIFORNIA STATE PRISON, SOLANO**



Father Jan’s appointment as Catholic chaplain to California State Prison, Solano, in Vacaville was in his own words, “one of the best experiences of my life.” He served as Catholic chaplain at the prison for eight years, from 1985 to 1993.

At the request of then-Governor George Deukmejian, Father Rodrigues started the Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program which allowed crime victims to have face-to-face encounters with inmates. In 1993, Governor Deukmejian honored Father Rodrigues and five other Californians with the Doris G Tate Award for their work with crime victims and criminals. The award was named in memory of the mother of

actress Sharon Tate. Doris Tate became an advocate for crime victims after her daughter was murdered by members of the Charles Manson family.

Father Rodriguez' program brought together inmates with crime victims and the survivors of crime victims. Victims and their family survivors came to the prison to meet inmates in the hope of sensitizing these inmates to the effects of their crime not only on the victims but on the survivors of the victims. Father Rodriguez said the victims and survivors talked to a group of about 60 prisoners on each visit. "They wanted to sensitize the offenders so they could get out of the denial syndrome," Father Jan said. "The greatest satisfaction for the victim is when the offender realizes that he is responsible for the crime. Only after he accepts responsibility for the crime and understands what his actions have done to others is rehabilitation possible. The program creates a climate that allows the inmate to say, 'I made a mistake' and accepts responsibility – that allows him to reconcile himself to the victim."

Father Rodriguez became an international spokesman on religious issues and victims' advocacy as a presenter for conferences at American University in Washington, DC and the University of Oxford in England.

#### **PASTOR OF SAINT ANNE PARISH, SACRAMENTO**



Photo by John E Boll

**Saint Anne Church, Sacramento**

After Father Rodriguez concluded eight years in prison ministry, he was appointed pastor of Saint Anne Parish in Sacramento in 1994 where he served for the next 10 years. During his tenure as pastor, Father Jan gave his support to building the church's religious education programs in both English and Spanish.

One of the first parishioners Father Jan met at Saint Anne Parish was Mila Green. He asked her if she was willing to assist him as parish secretary. "Father Rodriguez was like a second father to me," she said, "a very straight-forward man who had a big heart. The last time I saw him, he was tired but all he wanted to talk about was how my family was getting on."

#### **PARISH ADMINISTRATOR OF SAINT ELIZABETH PARISH**

Just months before he retired, Father Rodriguez was assigned as parish administrator of Saint Elizabeth Church in Sacramento. Mary Jo Lee, parish secretary, lector and Eucharistic minister at the parish, will not soon forget "Father Jan." He seldom stopped by her office without his pal "Patton," a poodle mix dog who made himself at home on top of her desk.

"Father Jan gave his all to Saint Elizabeth parish community," Ms Lee said. "He had a lot of wisdom to share with people and was always ready to discuss any topic a parishioner raised. He always knew the right words to say." Father Jan retired on January 1, 2005 with the title of Pastor Emeritus of Saint Anne Parish, Sacramento.



Photo by John E Boll

**Saint Elizabeth Church, Sacramento**

### **FATHER JAN DIES FROM CANCER**

On March 6, 2006 at the age of 76, Father Rodrigues died from cancer at the home of his niece, Philomena Silveira, in Daly City, CA. Bishop Richard Garcia, auxiliary bishop of Sacramento, was the main celebrant at the Funeral Mass on March 11 at Saint Anne Church in Sacramento. Burial was at Holy Cross Cemetery in Colma near Daley City on the San Francisco peninsula.

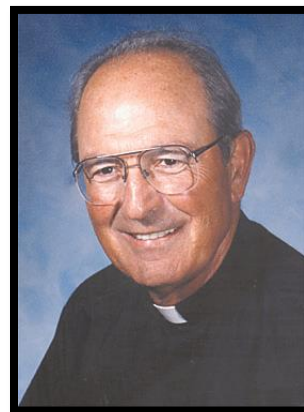
### **THE FAMILY REFLECTS ON THE LIFE OF FATHER JANUARIUS**

Father Rodrigues' niece, Philomena Silveira of Daly City said, "When Father Jan celebrated his first Mass, I was the first one to kiss his hands." She offered a reflection on the life of her uncle Father Jan at his funeral Mass, saying, "When he was dying, I was the last to kiss his hands."

Philomena, who was a full-time caregiver for her husband Joe, invited her uncle Father Jan into her home six months before his death when he learned his illness was terminal. She said her uncle accepted the news with grace, feeling he had accomplished what needed to be done. "He was very fatherly, a very caring man. I learned from him to be generous," she said. "He taught me to never be angry or jealous, that when you forgive and forget, you can fly, and when you do a good act, you never tell because you lose the grace. That was the legacy he passed on."

### **FATHER MAIO'S REFLECTION**

Father Anthony Maio, who knew Father Jan since the two served Holy Rosary Parish in Woodland in the 1970s, visited his friend and blessed him just hours before his death. He described Father Rodrigues as "a fine man, strong willed, intelligent, and fluent in five languages. His great strength was his connection with Spanish-speaking people wherever he went."



### **FATHER JAN'S SURVIVING FAMILY**

At the time of his death, Father Rodrigues was survived by his niece Philomena and her husband, Joseph Silveira, of Daly City; grandnephew Kevin Silveira, of Serramonte; grandniece Michelle Iniguez, and her husband José Iniguez of Burlingame; great-grandnephew Angelo Iniguez and great-grandniece America Iniguez, and aunt, Barbina Lopes, of Millbrae.

### **IN MEMORIAM**

Like countless numbers of priests before him, Father Jan left his native land and crossed the seas of the world to become a herald of the Gospel as did Saint Thomas the Apostle and Saint Francis Xavier who came to India as heralds of the Gospel of Christ.

Sacramento is blessed by Father Jan's ministry here for 33 years. He touched the lives of many people, especially through his work of reconciling inmates and victims and their families. Thank you, Father Jan, for journeying with us for three decades. You accomplished your mission and God has called you home. May you now abide with God in joy and peace!



*Eternal rest grant to Father Jan,  
O Lord;  
May he enjoy peace in your Presence.  
May his soul and the souls of all the  
faithful departed through the mercy  
of God rest in peace.*

*Amen*

