

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 6

Father John E Boll, Diocesan Archivist

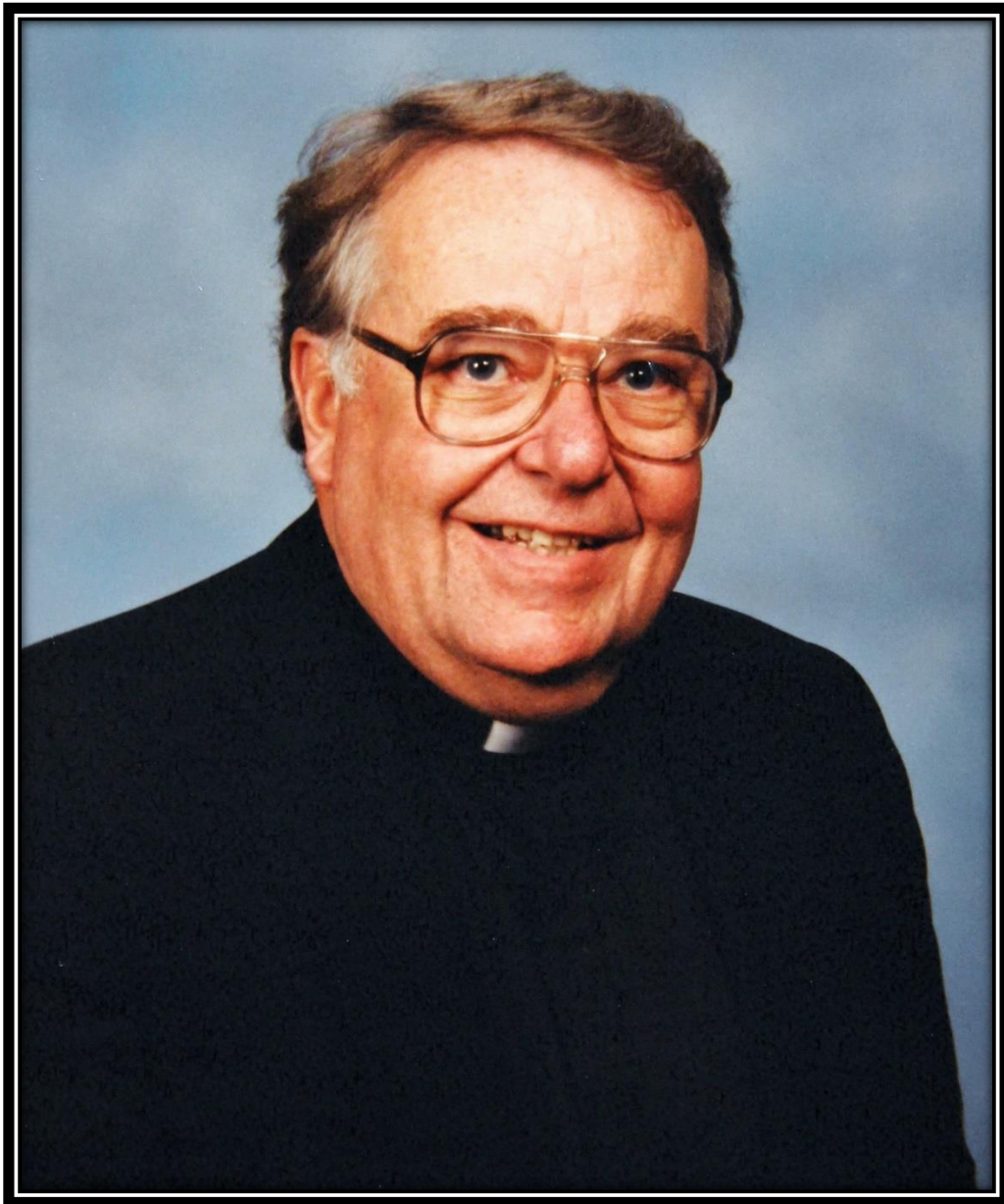
No 13

Father George Lawrence Schuster, SDS

Native of Bakerville, Wisconsin

Priest of the Society of the Divine Savior

October 16, 1925 – November 27, 1992



Lawrence Joseph Schuster was born in Chilton, Wisconsin, on October 16, 1925. His family moved to Bakerville, near Marshfield, when he was young. He graduated from Saint Mary School, Bakerville, in May 1939. In the fall of that year he entered the Salvatorian Seminary in St Nazianz, Wisconsin for high school and the first two years of college.

ENTERS SALVATORIAN NOVITIATE

Larry Schuster entered the Salvatorian Novitiate at St Nazianz in 1945 and took the religious name of George. He made his profession of vows on February 24, 1946 and became a member of the Salvatorian community. Brother George continued his studies for the priesthood at Divine Savior Seminary in Lanham, Maryland from 1939 to 1945 and then Catholic University in Washington, D. C., 1948 to 1952.

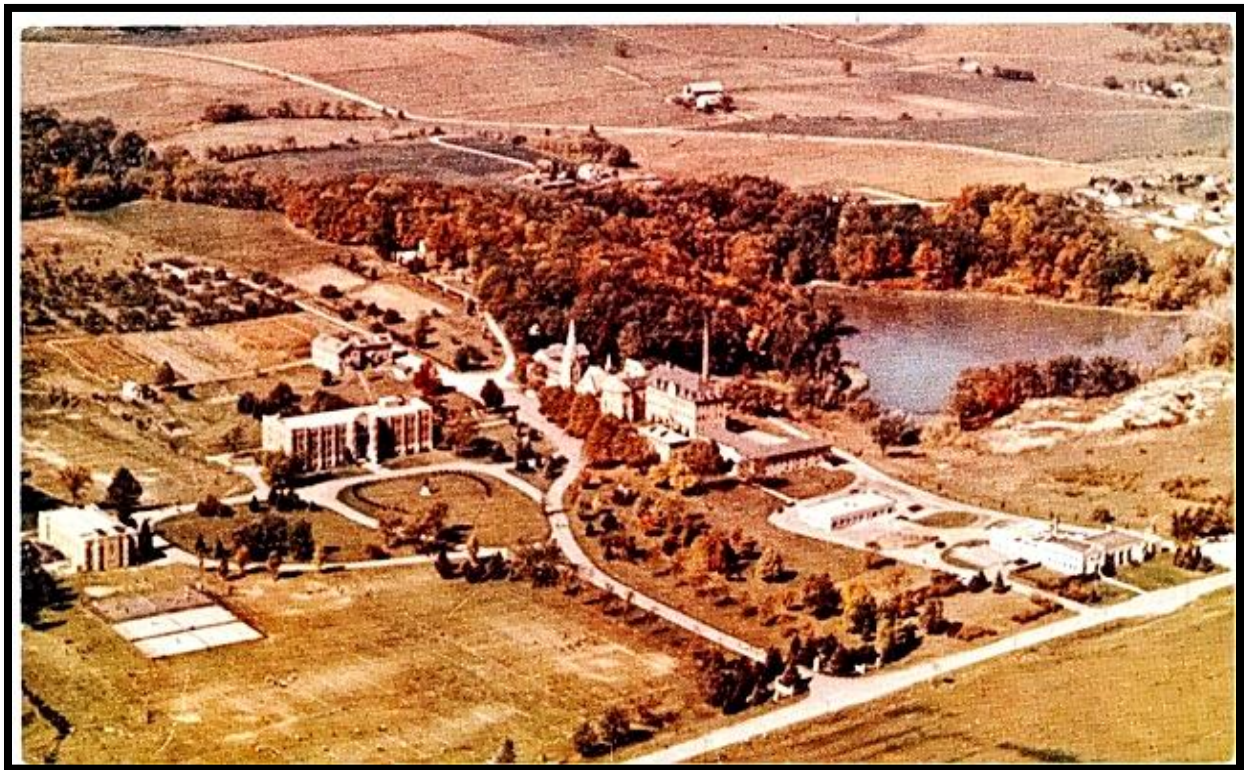


Photo from St Nazianz' Website

Arial View of the Salvatorian Seminary, St Nazianz, Wisconsin

ORDAINED A PRIEST

Father George Schuster was ordained a priest at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. on June 9, 1952.

BEGINS TEACHING CAREER

In the fall of 1952, Father George began his teaching career at Mother of the Savior Seminary in Blackwood, New Jersey until 1954 and then returned to Catholic University as a student 1954-1955.

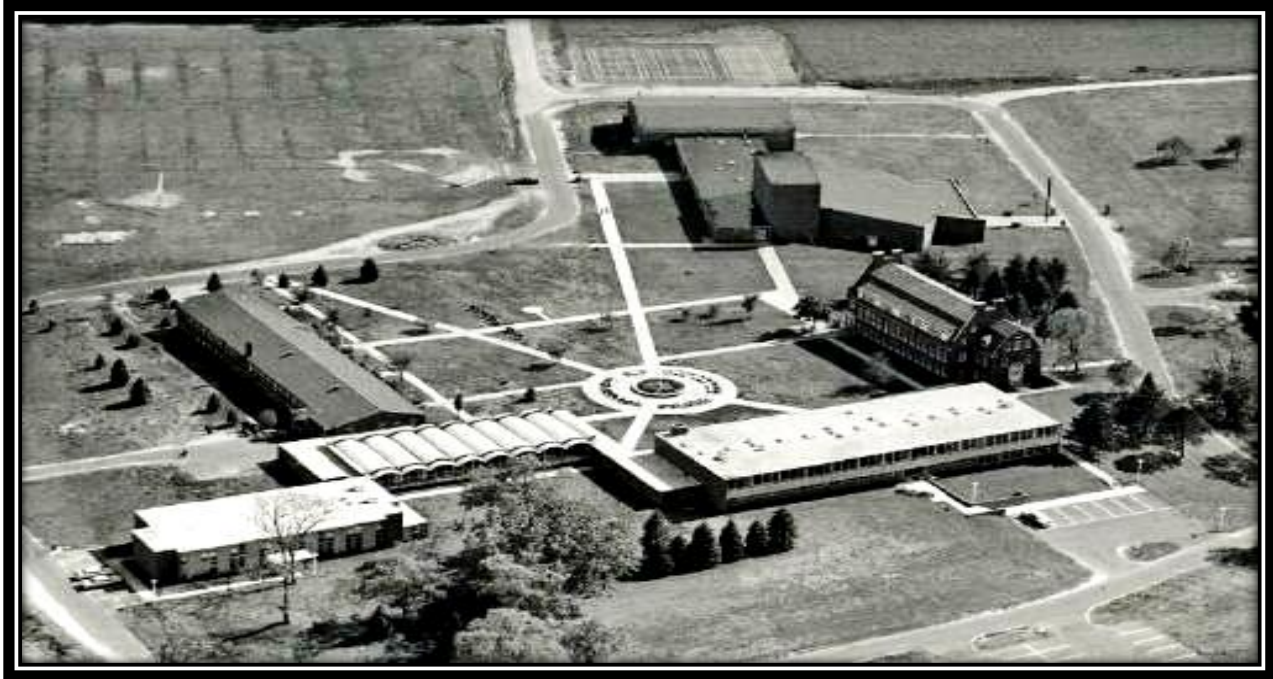


Photo from the web

Mother of the Savior Seminary, Blackwood, New Jersey

SAVATORIANS STAFF SAINT PIUS X SEMINARY

In 1955, the Diocese of Sacramento established its own minor seminary in Rio Dell, California. The small town of Rio Dell is located in Humboldt County and the facility secured by the diocese was a loggers' hotel close to the Eel River. The Salvatorian Fathers from Wisconsin made an offer to Bishop Robert J Armstrong to staff the new seminary and Bishop Armstrong accepted their offer and invited the Salvatorian priests to teach and administer Saint Pius X Seminary.

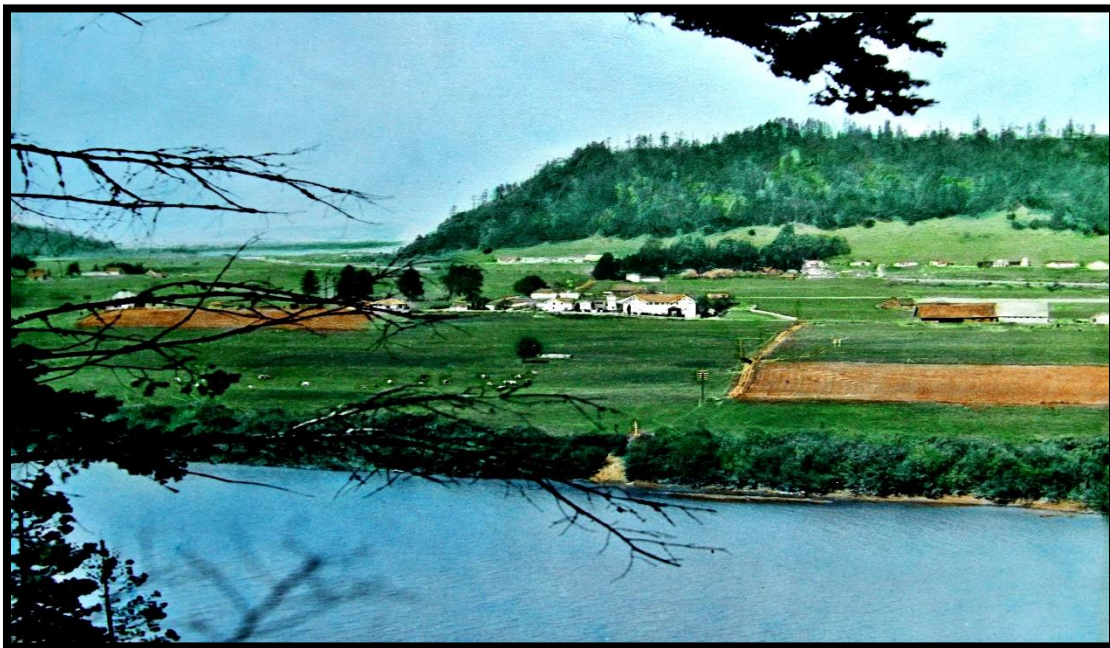


Photo by John E Boll 1958

Saint Pius X Seminary, Rio Dell, near the Eel River

FATHER GEORGE ASSIGNED TO RIO DELL

In June 1955, Father George Schuster was one of the five Salvatorian priests who arrived in the Diocese of Sacramento to begin teaching at Saint Pius X Seminary in Rio Dell. Father George served as an instructor, dean of students, director and principal of the minor seminary until June 1974.



Photo courtesy of Fr Michael Cloney

Saint Pius X Seminary Staff in Rio Dell, 1958

Front Row, Fathers David Christel, Ernest Walters, Daniel Carroll, Timothy Lickteig, Cletus LaMere & George Schuster

Back Row: Brothers Paschal, Bonfiliius, Aloysius & Quentin

HUNTER AND FISHERMAN

Rio Dell was the perfect place for Father George who loved to hunt and fish. Living in the redwood country of Northern California allowed him a place to pursue his hobby of hunting and fishing. Father George shot his first Pacific coast buck in Humboldt County in 1956 and the seminary community enjoyed eating the venison he provided.

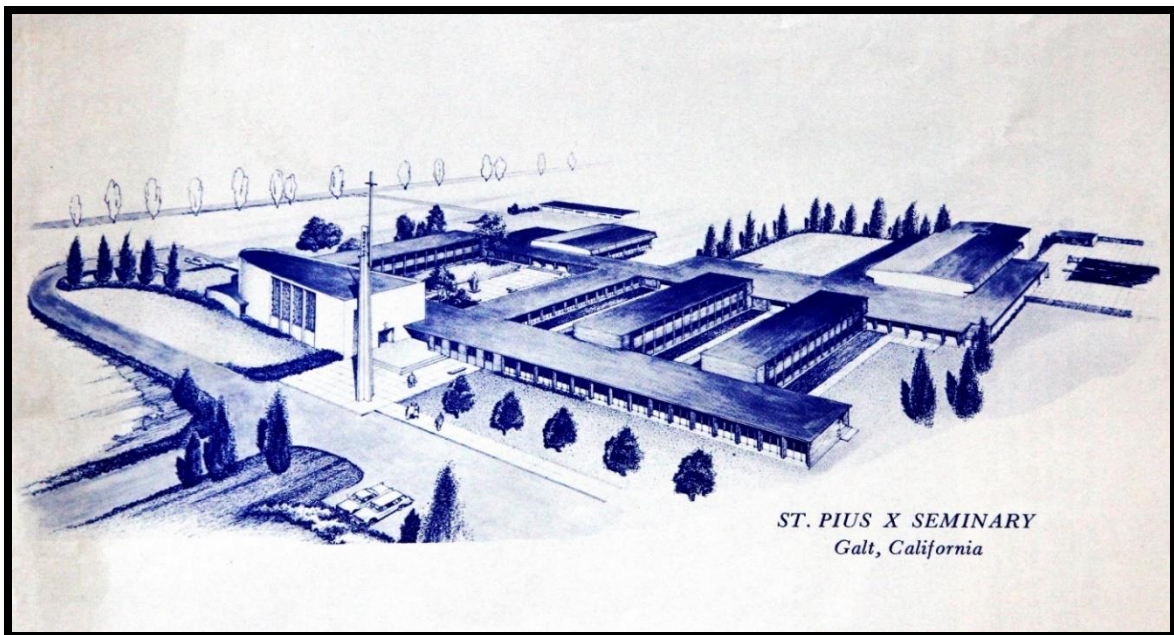


Photo courtesy of Fr Michael Cloney

Father George Schuster bags his first deer in Humboldt County in 1956

SEMINARY STUDENT BODY INCREASES

In the late 1950s, the increase of students wanting to enter the seminary increased to the point that Bishop Joseph McGucken, bishop of Sacramento, decided to do a diocesan-wide fund drive to build a new seminary on land in the Galt area donated by Mr Henry J Need.



The New Seminary Campus near Galt, California 1962

SAINT PIUS X SEMINARY MOVES TO GALT

The seminary community in Rio Dell moved to the new Galt campus during the Easter break in 1961. After moving to Galt campus, the student body continued to increase and another dormitory wing and classrooms were built to accommodate the growing enrollment. However, this was the rise in enrollment before its fall a few years later.



Photo by John E Boll 2014

Saint Pius X Seminary Chapel on the Galt Campus

SAINT PIUS X SEMINARY CLOSES

After the close of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, life in the Catholic Church began to change in dramatic ways to meet the new vision of the church and so too did seminary life. The numbers of applicants to the seminary began to fall. In an attempt to keep the seminary facility in operation, the Diocese of Sacramento changed the focus of the Galt seminary to an all-boys boarding high school. Perhaps it was the times, the location of the school twenty-five mile south of Sacramento, or other reasons, but the enrollment of Saint Pius X continued to fall until the diocese was forced to close it in 1978.

NEW ROLES FOR FATHER GEORGE

With the closure of the seminary, most of the Salvatorian priests and brothers returned to Wisconsin for new assignments. Father George remained in the Diocese of Sacramento and became Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools in Sacramento for three years. Then in

1979, he was appointed pastor of Holy Cross parish in West Sacramento, succeeding Father Robert Casper, SDS, and served there for six years.



Photo by John E Boll 2014

Holy Cross Church, West Sacramento

EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC HERALD

Father George served as financial administrator of Saint Francis High School from 1974 to 1992. In 1985, He was appointed editor of the *Catholic Herald*, the Sacramento diocesan newspaper, and continued in that role until his sudden death on November 27, 1992. Although he had suffered from cancer for more than a year, he died from an apparent heart attack as he was driving home after a dinner with friends in Sacramento. He was 67 years of age when he died.

FATHER GEORGE SCHUSTER, SDS, LAID TO REST IN WISCONSIN

At his request, Father George's body was cremated and a Funeral Mass was celebrated for him at Holy Cross Church in West Sacramento where he had served as pastor. The large church was filled with priests, parishioners, former students from Saint Pius X Seminary and his many friends. His ashes were then taken to Wisconsin for burial at the Salvatorian community cemetery at St Nazianz where he began his journey to the priesthood.

ARCHIVIST'S MEMORY OF FATHER GEORGE SCHUSTER

Father George was a strong and husky man. No one pushed him beyond a certain point because there would be consequences.

I remember an incident at the seminary in Rio Dell. After lights out, Father George walked the halls to make sure everyone was in bed and all was quiet. Personal radios were not allowed and he warned us that if he heard a radio playing, he would confiscate it permanently.

One night, Dennis Ruzir was quietly listening to his radio in bed after lights out. Father George happened to hear the radio, went into the room, grabbed the radio and smashed it against the wall. All the seminarians got the message: if one played his radio after lights out, this is what would happen. That took care of the radio problem from that day forward.

The Salvatorian Archives stated Father George's character in these words: "As an administrator, Father George sometimes guided those under him with a burly manner, but in later years, this gruff exterior gave way to a softer side. He is remembered for his hearty laugh and a wonderful sense of humor that endeared him to his community and the people to whom he ministered. He was also an avid sportsman who enjoyed fishing and hunting. His uncle, Father Paul Schuster, SDS, was provincial of the US Salvatorian Province and consultor on the Generalate in Rome."



Photo courtesy of the Salvatorian Archives

Ordination Portrait of Father George Schuster, SDS in 1952

*Father George Schuster, SDS,
Was a good man and faithful priest
Who was a friend to many.*

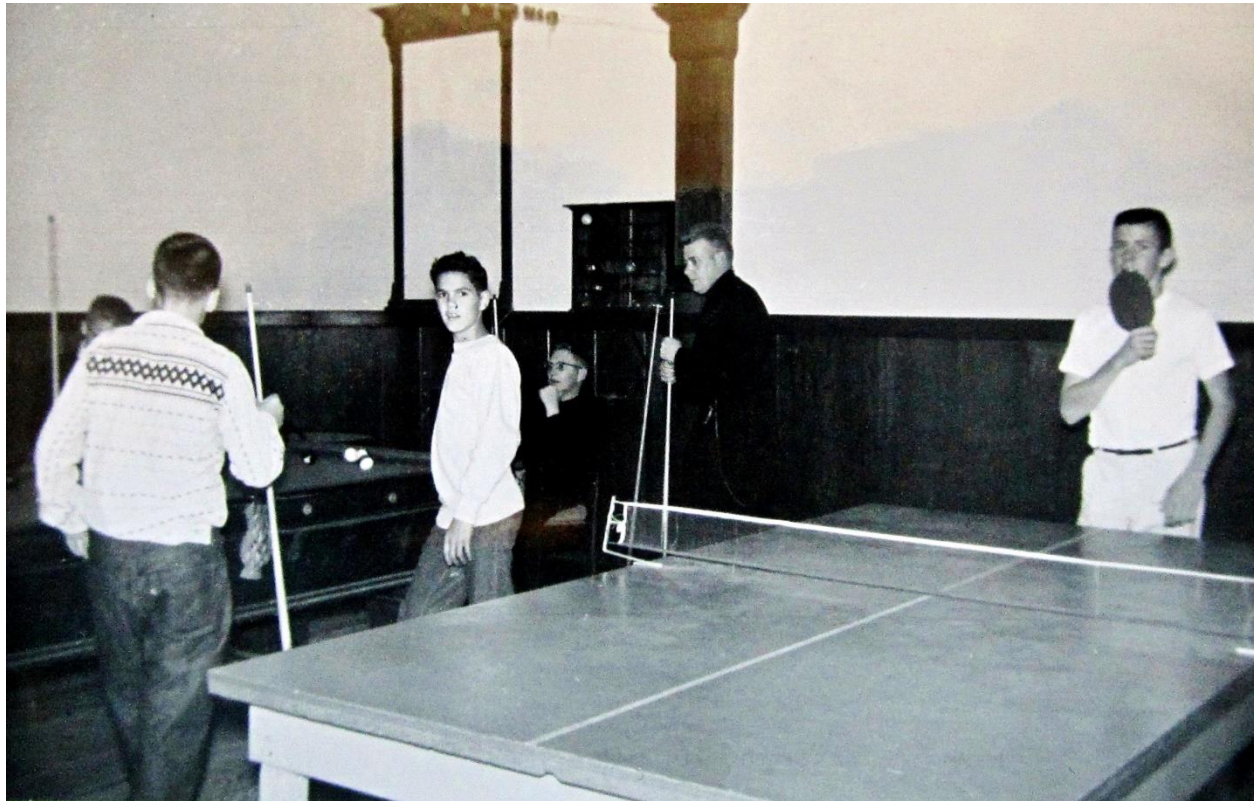
*As we all grew older,
Father George became our good friend
With whom we enjoyed spending time
And remembering funny stories together.*

*We who knew you, Father George, grew
To love you as our friend and mentor.
Thanks for sharing your life with us!*

REST NOW IN PEACE

Special thanks to Father Michael R Hoffman, SDS, Salvatorian Provincial Archivist, for providing historical information about Father George Schuster; to Father Michael Cloney, retired priest of the Diocese of Santa Rosa, for use of photos he took while a seminarian at Saint Pius X Seminary in Rio Dell in the mid-1950s; and to the *Catholic Herald* for the obituary written about Father George Schuster and published in 1992.

PHOTOS OF FATHER GEORGE SCHUSTER ON HIS JOURNEY



Photos courtesy of Fr Michael Cloney

Playing Pool at Saint Pius X Seminary, Rio Dell 1956

L-R, Seminarians Jim Smith, Herb Hesse, Martin Orgoven, Fr Daniel Carroll, SDS, Fr George Schuster, SDS and Robert Perkins



Father George Schuster with Seminarians at Rio Dell in 1956



Father George looks on as Mike Flynn packs his things for summer vacation in May 1958



Saint Pius X Seminary Student Body at the Galt Campus in 1962



Photo by John E Boll 1962

**Bishop Joseph McGucken Blesses the Corner Stone and Archival Box, Saint Pius X, Galt, 1962
With Father George Schuster, SDS, serving as Deacon**



Photo by John E Boll

Salvatorian Priest Staff, Saint Pius X Seminary, Galt in 1963

**Front Row, L-R, Salvatorian Fathers Tim Lickteig, Cletus LaMere, George Schuster, David Christel, Robert Casper
Back Row, L-R, Fathers Richard Birdsall, Nicholas Freund, Daniel Carroll, Regis Kleene**