

Fr. Thomas J. MILLER 70 USA CAN
* February 14, 1932 Dunkirk, NY

+ December 18, 2002
Hemet, CA

Fr. Thomas J. Miller, C.S.Sp., was born on February 14, 1932 in Dunkirk, NY. There he attended St. Mary's elementary and high school. He joined the Congregation of the Holy Ghost after completing his college studies (at Cornwells Heights, PA), and his philosophy studies at St. Mary's Seminary (Ferndale) in Norwalk, CT, with his profession of vows on August 22, 1953 at the Holy Ghost Novitiate in Ridgefield, CT. After completing his theological studies at Ferndale, he was ordained to the Priesthood there on June 4, 1958. He then completed advanced studies, earning a M.Ed. in Education at Duquesne University in 1960.

Fr. Miller's first appointment was to St. Joseph's Home for Homeless and Industrious Boys in Philadelphia, PA. He served there until 1967 when he began his dedicated pastoral service to the African American faith communities in the south. Fr. Tom served for one year at Sacred Heart Church in Lake Charles, LA when the Provincial asked him to join the faculty at Gerard High School in Phoenix where he taught Religious Studies and English until 1970. Eager to return to an African American parish ministry, he was assigned to St. James Memorial Church in Alexandria, LA where he served as co-pastor from 1970 until 1976. From 1976 until 1981 he served as associate director and vocation director at the Holy Ghost House of Studies in Lafayette, LA. In 1981 he moved to Farnham, P.Q., Quebec, in Canada to assist in the International Novitiate, but already in 1982 he returned to Louisiana to serve at St. Katherine Church, Leonville, LA. Soon after he moved to Holy Ghost Church in Opelousas, LA as an associate pastor and then in 1984 as Pastor of Holy Ghost Church in Marksville, LA. In 1987 he was appointed as Pastor of St. Augustine Church (Isle Brevelle) in Natchez, LA, and again in 1990 as Pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Church in Houston, TX. In 1993 Fr. Miller was appointed Pastor of St. Thomas Church in Point-a-la Hache, LA prior to being assigned as Director of Holy Spirit Seminary in Houston, TX in 1998. In 1999, his health began to wane rapidly and he retired first to Holy Trinity Residence in his beloved Opelousas, LA, then requesting to be more present to the confreres, to Casa Laval in Hemet, CA. He died there on December 18, 2002. The Congregation, and especially the Province became Fr. Tom's family, as did all the wonderful (especially the poor) people

he served in his assignments. His humility, simplicity and genuine holiness (especially in his human struggles) inspired all. A Memorial Mass was celebrated at Holy Spirit Church in Hemet, CA on December 21, 2002. As requested his remains were buried at St. Augustine Cemetery at Isle Brevelle and St. Thomas Cemetery in Point-a-la Hache, LA.

USA-East Newsletter – January-February 2003

CSSp Archives 13G-10