FR. GAETANO MENEGATTO (1918-2013)

WWI was just coming to an end when Fr. Gaetano Menegatto was born in Torri di Quartesolo, a small town near Vicenza, Italy on December 7, 1918. He had three brothers and one sister. Only his brother Gino (with his wife Marilisa) is alive.

Following grade school in his hometown, he began middle school ("ginnasio") in the Institute Leo XIII run by the Congregation of St. Joseph in Vicenza. In 1931 he entered the seminary of the CSJ in Montecchio Maggiore and, following the novitiate in Vigone (Torino), Italy he made his first vows on August 28, 1935. His formation continued with two years of philosophical studies in Ponte di Piave (Treviso), Italy. In 1937 he was sent for his internship to the CSJ province of Ecuador, South America where he stayed till the end of 1953. In Ecuador he taught in the seminary, studied theology, made his perpetual vows (September 19, 1940), was ordained to the priesthood (September 19, 1942), was novice director for several years, and director of the Ambato community.

In 1954, after a visit to Italy where he celebrated his first Mass with his family, he sailed again toward America... namely the United States and the recent CSJ foundation of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Here he was the delegate of the Superior General, director of Lourdes Vocational School (1954-59) and pastor of Lourdes Church (1960-64).

In 1964 a new departure, by train this time, to begin the community of the Congregation of St. Joseph in Ohio, first in Elyria and then in Avon. His ministry included teaching and spiritual direction at Elyria Catholic High School. He also worked extensively in the Cursillo movement. In 1977 the Congregation of St. Joseph accepted the direction of Holy Rosary Parish in Cleveland's Little Italy and Fr. Gaetano was appointed pastor. He retired in 1989 and returned to the Avon community. Here Fr. Menegatto spent the last 24 years of his life, faithfully serving at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, assisting with the CSJ seminarians, and tending a beautiful garden. On June 1, 2012, in the early afternoon, while completing his usual communion round to the shut-ins of St. Vincent de Paul, he was the victim of a car accident which cut short his ministry and gave him a taste of Calvary on the way to the dawn of new life. He died peacefully on October 22 at Good Samaritan Nursing Home (Avon) where he had resided since December 2012.

Fr. Menegatto has enjoyed great esteem within the Congregation of St. Joseph, shown also by the responsibilities given to him: several terms as local superior, vicar of the U.S. Vice-province from 1964 to 1973, and Provincial Superior from 1973 to 1979.
The esteem and affection of his students, parishioners, and all those who have known him have no measure. He has indeed been a religious and priest according to the model of St. Leonard Murialdo: faithful, generous, and totally dedicated to the work of the Gospel.
In paradisum deducant te angeli. Rest in peace.