

Fr. Častimir Timothy (Ivan) Majić, ofm (1914-2016)

Fr. Častimir Timothy Ivan Majić was born January 9th, 1914 in Vitina (in the region of Herzegovina), where after elementary school he attended the Franciscan minor seminary in Široki Brijeg. He joined the Franciscans at the Humac Novitiate on July 2nd 1933. He studied philosophy and theology in Mostar and Rome and was ordained to the priesthood in Mostar on June 4th, 1939. In 1941 he studied German literature in Freiburg. He earned two doctorates (in philosophy and in theology) with well-known professors like Martin Heidegger and Hans Urs von Balthasar.

Unable to return to Croatia, he sailed for twelve days from Bremerhaven aboard the warship *Bretchford* with 1,305 anonymous exiles, registered only by numbers, arriving at New York on March 22, 1951. He arrived in Chicago by train on Easter Sunday, March 25, 1951 to begin his life as a member of the Croatian Franciscan Custody.



He served numerous posts: editor of the *Danica* newspaper, pastoral assistant and pastor at several Croatian parishes; Custos (head of the Custody); Guardian (head of St. Anthony Friary in Chicago); editor of the *Croatian Catholic Messenger (Glasnik)* and *The Croatian Almanac*; a member of the Custodial board; president and secretary of the Association of Croatian Priests of America and Canada; and editor of the Association's periodical *Vinculum Caritatis*. He was an executive member of the Catholic Conference for Ethnic Issues in America and was, as such, mentioned in a book on American social leaders and activists.

His publications include the *Golden Jubilee Book* for the 50th Anniversary of the Croatian Franciscan Custody of the Holy Family (Chicago, 1976) in collaboration with Fr. Lawrence Frankovich; a memoir in 1999 detailing his life as an emigrant, *Memories of a Life Past (Životne uspomene prošlosti)*, and in 2011 the book *Gazing Heavenwards (U nebo zagledani)*, commemorating the 66 fellow Franciscans from his home Province killed in 1945. With this book Fr. Častimir, writing at age 98 from memory, became the oldest author of a book in the Croatian communities.

His centenary birthday in 2014 brought congratulations from Pope Francis; Franciscan Minister General Michael Perry; Croatian Cardinal Josip Bozanić; Chicago Cardinal Francis George; Mostar's Minister Provincial, Fr. Miljenko Šteko; and others. A special congratulatory proclamation was issued by Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel. According to a report from the Minister General, Fr. Majić was one of only 15 Franciscan friars in the entire world that have achieved the age of one hundred.

Fr. Častimir Timothy Majić passed away quietly after 102 years and 25 days, or 37,280 days of his earthly life. May he rest in peace!

Monday, February 8, 2016

His body will be waked in the church of St. Jerome, 2823 S. Princeton Ave. (Cardinal Stepinac Way), Chicago, IL from 5 to 7 pm., followed by Funeral Mass at 7 pm.

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

The burial will be at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery at 10 am.

“O Divine Master, grant that I may seek not so much to be consoled, as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.” (St. Francis of Assisi)