



SM bulletin



Thursday, 30 April 2015

ROGER DUMORTIER SM (1928 - 2015)

Superior General 1969-1977

Roger Dumortier born in Linselles, near Lille, on 28 July 1928, was from his earliest education closely linked to the Marist family through his brother Diogène a Marist Brother who worked for many years in Madagascar. It was in conversations with Diogène that Roger recognised his distinctive calling to be a "Marist and a priest". He was professed in 1946 at *La Neylière* and then proceeded to do his studies in Ste-Foy and at the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy in Lyon where he graduated with a licentiate in both Philosophy and Theology. He was ordained a priest in 1955.

His pastoral activities centred on the education ministry where he exercised various roles from professor to director until he became secretary to the provincial in Paris, René Closset, from 1964-68. He was elected a delegate to the general chapter of 1969-70 where he was elected superior general at the young age of 41. The general councillors elected along with him were Frs Earl Niehaus, Bernie O'Brien, Pablo Rovalo and Franz Wagenaars.

At the end of his Administration at the 1977 General Chapter, Fr Bernie Ryan, Roger's successor, said: *"On behalf of the whole Chapter I should express to Father Dumortier personally and to his whole administration, the grateful thanks of us all for what they have done over the last 8 years. In Fr Dumortier we have had a superior general who has been marked by that characteristic of Fr Colin – "magnitudo" – largeness of heart; and with his assistants, during a time of decentralization in the Society of Mary, he has helped us preserve a wonderful balance not given to other Societies. During this Chapter we have admired his warmth, his courage, and especially his integrity; and with Fr. Buckley, happily with us, the tradition of the Society has been well guarded and will continue to be."*

Roger then committed himself enthusiastically to the ministry of Catholic Education. He exercised the following important roles:

- 1977-1978 Assistant director of the Marist College in Bury, near Paris.
- 1978-1984 Assistant secretary general of Catholic Education, Paris.
- 1984-1990 Provincial of the Province of Paris, France.
- 1990- 2003 Director of Catholic Education in the diocese of Pointoise, near Paris.
- 1995-1999 Provincial delegate directing the trusteeship of Marist schools in France.
- 2003-2012 Provincial delegate for the overseeing the schools' property portfolio.
- 1990-2015 Resident in the Marist Community of Notre Dame de Bon Secours, Paris

Roger was a celebrated administrator with an eye for detail and a natural capacity to be in charge. Essentially he expressed his religious commitment through his professional work - be it in education, administration or as a leader - participant or provocateur! Often times he could be charming and delightful company. He was a man of his age, and like many others of his time, his worldview was profoundly marked by the "events of '68".

In recent years he suffered greatly from his intensifying disabilities. Letting go must not have been easy and he did so with a certain grace.

Fr Roger Dumortier died on 26 April in Bon Secours, Paris.

MAY HE REST IN PEACE

