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## FATHER SIDNEY PETER HALL

Responds to the Vision of Vatican II and Serves in Mexico

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**The Young Father Sidney Hall**

*A call to Latin America's missions* which has been growing louder over the past years will be answered by a native Sacramento priest, Father Sidney Hall, when he leaves two weeks from now for Mexico as a five-year member of the Maryknoll Order.

The 35-year-old priest, who grew up in Sacred Heart parish and attended the parish school before entering the seminary, will receive his mission crucifix on Sunday, September 11, in a mission day departure ceremony in the Blessed Sacrament Cathedral.

### **Cross Presentation**

The ritual will begin at 3 PM. Bishop Alden J Bell will present the cross and preside at Benediction. A reception will follow at St. Joseph's School auditorium featuring food which Mexican ladies of the parish have prepared.

Father Robert Golish, MM, superior of the Maryknoll House in San Francisco, will be present. He will bring the cross and the papers officially accepting Father Hall into the missionary order.

On the 15<sup>th</sup>, Father Hall who has had one assignment, assistant pastor at the Cathedral since being ordained May 11, 1957, will leave for 3-4 weeks orientation in Maryknoll, New York. An advanced course in Spanish will follow for about another two months in the Mexico City area and will probably include part time work in a parish.

"Then I'll be assigned either to one of two Maryknoll parishes in Mexico City or to one of the many on the Yucatan peninsula," Father Hall says. It probably won't be until the end of the year that he'll receive his fulltime assignment.

### **Mexico Experiences**

Father Hall will be on a five-year temporary enlistment with Maryknoll, remaining attached to the Sacramento Diocese. "Maryknoll has opened its doors to diocesan priests, offering training, supervision and their experience. This is in response to the Second Vatican Council's decree on the Missions.

"Also some bishops who may want to adopt a parish in Latin America and send their own priests, can have their priests trained by Maryknoll," the priest adds. "Bishop Bell, by letting me go into this work is carrying out the thinking of the council and I represent one of his gifts to the missions."

Trained at St. Joseph's College, Mountain View, and St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park, the Sacramento priest first heard the mission call in 1961 when then Bishop Joseph McGucken, sent him to Cuernavaca, Mexico, for its concentrated Spanish course.

"That's probably where I got my vocation to Latin America," Father Hall believes. "I helped a couple of weekends in Mexico City and said Mass in some of the rural areas.

Then I spent two summers' vacations in 1963 and 1965 with the Latin America Mission Program in Mexicali – that's where my vocation jelled."

The need for priests and the people's friendly response during his summer experiences caused his desire to grow, he recalls.

A year ago this month, he read about the Maryknoll's offer, applied in November and asked for Bishop Bell's permission last February on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, the patron of the Maryknollers.

Although he can only guess what his assignment will be, Father Hall surmises that his Cathedral background has well-prepared him for city parish work. His work here has been primarily with the Mexican people in the urban setting.

"If I go into Yucatan, it will mean a lot of travelling. A parish there includes the parish town and perhaps 30-40 little towns and ranches as well. In Mexico City, though, I know of one Maryknoll priest with 30,000 people in his parish who is saying Mass in a tent.

### **Cathedral Duties**

His duties at the Cathedral have included working with the parish school children, driving the school bus morning and afternoon, charge of the CYO group for five years and of an adult convert class.

Father Hall, whose parents, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Hall, live in St Mary's parish, finds it difficult to project five years ahead but he intends to return, adding, "It will be a temptation, I know, to ask for a longer stay."

But he makes one definite promise -- "When I return, I will be that much better able to serve the Mexican people."



Photo from Father Hall

### **Father Hall Celebrates Mass in Mexico**