

# SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

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Father John E Boll

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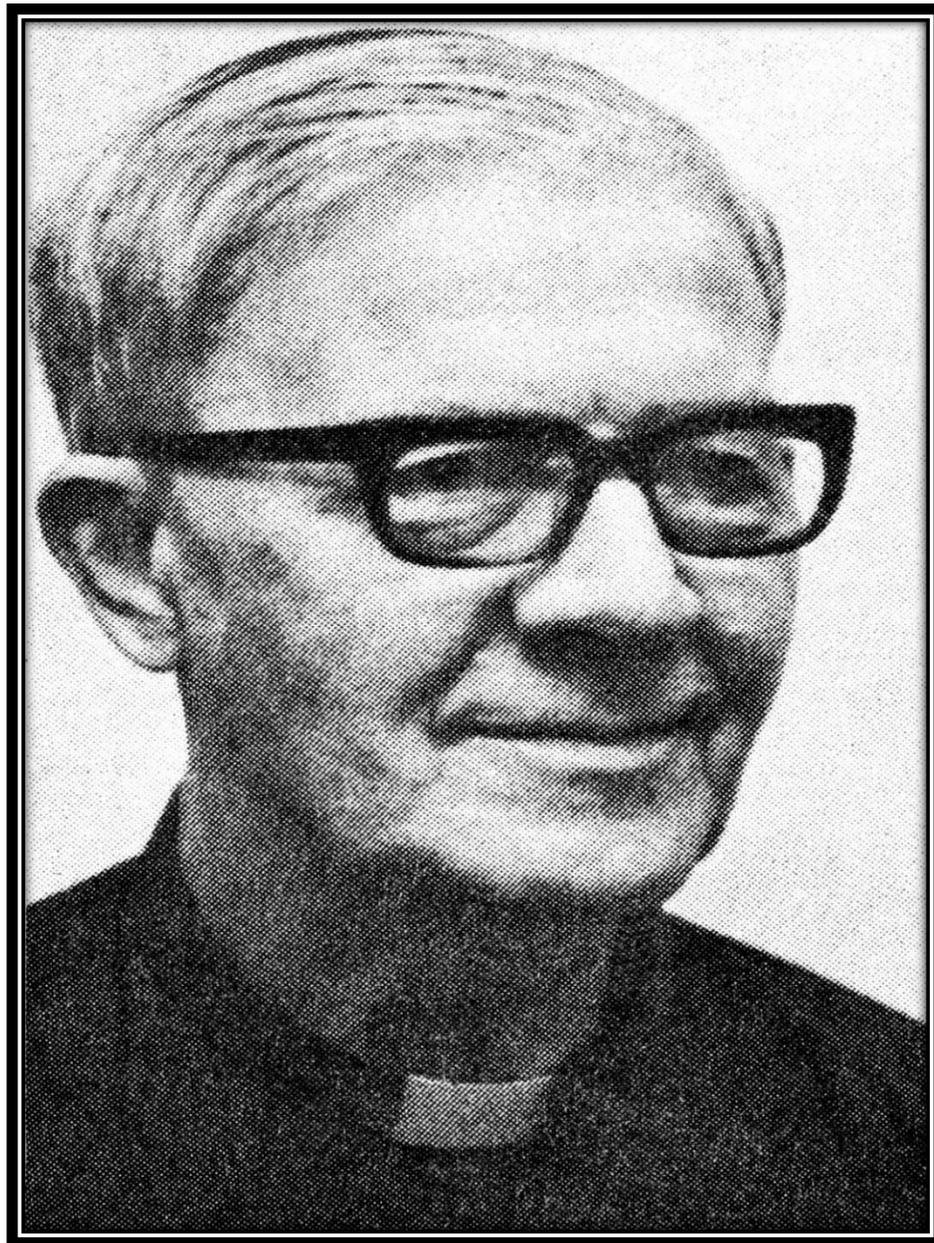
## *Father Francis Henry Zegwaard, MSC*

Native of Zandroort, North Holland, the Netherlands

Priest of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

Parochial Vicar, Holy Family Parish, Citrus Heights

March 20, 1912 - February 7, 1986



**Francis Henry Zegwaard was born on March 20, 1912 in Zandroort, North Holland, the Netherlands,** son of Peter Zegwaard and Margareth Vandermay. He was baptized the day of his birth at Saint Agatha Parish in Zandroort. He was one of seven children born to the Zegwaard family.

### **EDUCATION**

Francis attended college at schools in Driehuis, Municipality of Velsen, from 1925 to 1931 and then in Arnhem, the Province of Gelderland, the Netherlands, from 1931 to 1933. He joined the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and was a student at the seminary in Stein, Limburg, the Netherlands, from 1933 to 1937.

### **ORDAINED A PRIEST IN THE MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART**

On August 10, 1937, Francis was ordained a priest in Stein, Limburg, The Netherlands, by Archbishop Josephus Hubertus Gulielmus Lemmens, Bishop of Roermond, the Netherlands, for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.



Cathedral photo taken from the Web

**Saint Christoffel Cathedral, Roermond, The Netherlands**

## LIFE OF MINISTRY

Father Francis spent forty years of his priestly life ministering to the people of the Philippines and during World War II he was a prisoner of war for two years. In his four decades as a missionary priest in the Philippines, he served as assistant pastor of San Nicolas, San Isidro and Virgen de la Regla parishes from 1939 to 1952. He was named pastor of Virgen del Carmen parish and served as pastor for 25 years, from 1953 to 1978. While pastor, he built a school in Carmen City in the Province of Agusan.



Photo from the parish website

### **Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Del Carmen, Agusan, Mindanao**

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Del Carmen, Surigao del Norte, was established in 1635 as a mission station by early Spanish missionaries. It is among the oldest outposts of Christianity in Mindanao and the oldest parish in the Diocese of Surigao. In its nearly four centuries as a Catholic parish, it was served by Augustinian Recollects, Jesuits, Benedictines, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and lastly, the Society of the Divine Word, SVD.

## RETIREMENT

When Father Zegwaard retired from his forty years of missionary work in the Philippines in 1978, he took nearly two years off before he came to Sacramento and offered to serve in a parish. He was appointed parochial vicar of Holy Family Church in Citrus Heights to work with Monsignor Vito Mistretta who was the founding pastor of the parish in 1949.



Photo by John E Boll

### **Holy Family Church, Citrus Heights**

During his five years of ministry at Holy Family Parish, Father Zegwaard visited the sick in their homes and in the hospital and also endeared himself to the children of the parish by visiting the classrooms in the parish school and the parish religious education program.

#### **DEATH OF FATHER ZEGWAARD**

On the evening of Friday, February 7, 1986, while in his quarters at Holy Family Parish rectory, Father Francis suddenly died one month shy of his 74<sup>th</sup> birthday. His unexpected death was discovered the next morning and the shock of the news of his death spread throughout the whole parish community.

#### **FUNERAL FOR FATHER ZEGWAARD**

On Tuesday evening, February 11, a rosary was prayed for Father Francis in Holy Family Church. The next morning, Monsignor Mistretta, joined by the priests of the area, concelebrated the Funeral Mass for Father Zegwaard in Holy Family Church with the parish community.

After the Mass, the body of Father Francis was taken in procession to Calvary Cemetery in Citrus Heights for the Rite of Committal and burial in the Priests' Section of the cemetery to await the return of the Risen Jesus who will come to awaken the dead from their tombs.



**Crucifixion Scene next to the Priests' Section at Calvary Cemetery, Citrus Heights**



**Father Zegwaard's Headstone, Calvary Cemetery, Citrus Heights**

Photos by John E Boll

### FATHER FRANCIS' SURVIVING FAMILY

Father Francis Zegwaard was survived by three brothers and three sisters. Two of his brothers are priests, Fathers Henry Zegwaard of San Jose and Father Gerard Zegwaard who with his sister, Engelina Van Diepen, reside in Oakdale. Joseph Zegwaard, the third brother, and his other sisters, Eugenie Hadraken and Margaret Zegwaard, live in the Netherlands.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

Father Francis Zegwaard, MSC, took seriously the apostolic commissioning of the first Christians by the Risen Jesus to go into the whole world to proclaim the Gospel. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart sent Father Francis to the Philippines where he spent forty years serving the Catholic community on the Island of Mindanao.

After retiring from his life of ministry in the Philippines with his religious community for over half his life, he came to Sacramento and offered his final years of ministry to the Church of Sacramento. We are grateful to Father Zegwaard for his generous service to Christ through the Church.

Like the Good Shepherd Himself, Father Francis visited the sick in their homes and in hospitals, talked with the children in the parish school and in the faith formation classes, and celebrated the sacramental life of Christ with the parish community in Citrus Heights until the day the Lord called him home to the fullness of life in the Kingdom.

From his place in the heavenly realm, may Father Francis intercede for all peoples of the world until we are all gathered together before the glorious Throne of God forever!

*Eternal Rest grant to Father Francis,  
O Lord.*

*May he behold the light of your Glorious Face  
And rejoice forever.*

*May his soul and the souls of all the faithful  
Departed rest now in peace.*

*Amen*