

in a

Word™

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+Rev. Jerome LeDoux, SVD 1930-2019

*"God is love, and all who abide in love abide
in God and God in them." (1 John 4:16)*

Photo by Father Andreas Kedati, SVD

Father Jerome LeDoux, SVD passed away on January 7, 2019. He was an extraordinary human being who touched many lives. Ralph McCloud's tribute to Father Jerome points out below that words cannot satisfactorily describe who he was.

As Bishop Steib says on the next page "In his own way, he was a 'giant,' a role model, a pillar for many."
May he rest in Peace!



Words are weak...

- Pain is understated
- Life well lived doesn't express it completely
- Loss is too modest
- Hurt just doesn't capture what we feel
- He blessed us with tamales, song, prayer, faith, friendship, food and frivolity
- God is Love and all...
- He walked among us in sandals and serendipity
- Good Morning Folk!
- He lived hospitality, personality and individuality
- His laugh was contagious
- His smile was infectious
- His charm was undeniable
- He always had time
- He danced, he sang, he prayed
- He listened, he spoke, he wrote
- He was probably the most intelligent person we ever met
- He was the humblest person we ever met
- Knew no stranger
- Knew no enemies
- Knew no fear
- With soup, tamales, praline, eggnog, trail mix fed his and our bodies
- With faith and love for God he fed our souls

Rest in Peace Fr. Jerome Gaston LeDoux SVD!

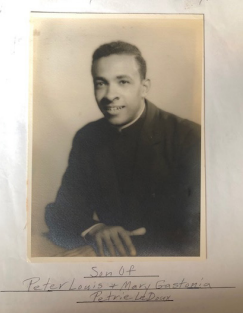
"God is love, and all who abide in love abide in God and God in them." (1 John 4:16)

By Ralph McCloud

Director, Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD)
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



*Father Jerome Gaston LeDoux, SVD
Did not die - May 2019
He died and is now in
Ray St. Louis, Missouri*



*Sen. St.
Peterburg, Ray St. Louis
Father LeDoux*



WHERE HAVE ALL THE PILLARS GONE?

On Tuesday evening of January 15, 2019, I had the privilege of attending a part of the visitation service for Bishop Joseph Lawson Howze, Bishop Emeritus of Biloxi, at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Cathedral in Biloxi, MS and the concluding part of the visitation service for Father Jerome LeDoux, SVD at Divine Word Seminary in Bay St. Louis, MS. Bishop Howze was celebrated for his appointment as the first African American Catholic bishop in Mississippi – first as Auxiliary Bishop for the Catholic Diocese of Natchez-Jackson and later as the founding bishop for the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi. Father LeDoux was celebrated for his love, gentleness, compassion and service to the people of God.

On Wednesday morning of January 16, 2019, during the Funeral Mass for Father Jerome, the wonderful choir from Holy Ghost Catholic Church in Opelousas, LA sang “Take me to the King.” These were the words Fr. Jerome uttered prior to his undergoing heart surgery. How fitting were those words because Fr. Jerome has gone to meet the King. He has gone to be with his Creator, his Redeemer, and the Wind of the Spirit. With the presence of relatives, the SVD community, friends and supporters, we expressed our farewell feelings and thoughts of “Well done, Fr. Jerome, well done!” We prayed that he would hear the words from our good and gracious God: “Well, done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the kingdom prepared for you.”



Many stories and memories were shared about Fr. Jerome. He was many things to many people: relative and community member, pastor and chaplain, professor and teacher, counselor and spiritual director, friend and supporter, vegetarian and health nut, and even a maverick of sorts and an encyclopedia of knowledge. **But, however one thought of Fr. Jerome, he was a Proclaimer of the Word, a Divine Word Missionary, a disciple of Jesus. He was kind and considerate of others, compassionate and generous with his time, loving and self-giving. In his own way, he was a “giant,” a role model, a pillar for many.**



I found myself asking the question: “Where have all the pillars gone?” I looked at the pictures of the first four African American priests of the Divine Word Missionary community in the Southern Province hanging in the hall of the seminary and memories of their work and labor flooded my mind. I looked at the picture of the eight SVD bishops in the same hall. Six of the eight have gone to claim their eternal reward. The memories of what they taught me by their life and ministry flooded my heart.

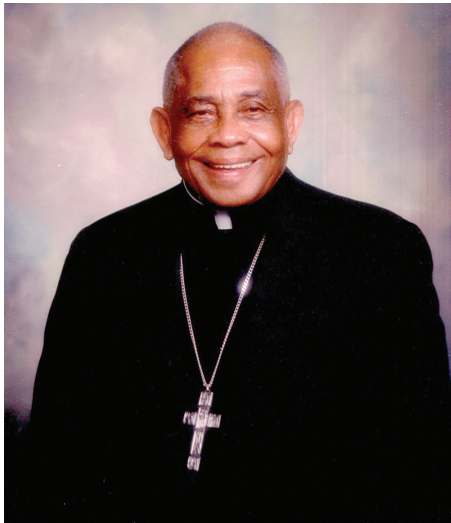
I thought of all the SVD confreres who were young priests when I was a seminarian looking up to them as they labored in the vineyard of the Lord. Some have died; others have retired. These were my role models, my good shepherds, my friends whom I looked up to and admired. I reflected on what they had to endure in order for me and others who succeeded them to be where we are today. These were the men on whose shoulders I stood! They were the ones who spurred me onward to serve God and our people as a Divine Word Missionary. They were the ones who served our people so that they could be – not just Catholics, but good Catholics, so that they could make their world a better place, a holier place just because they were there!

Where are the pillars today? Have we become the pillars for our younger confreres and are we setting the standard for them as the pillars of the past set for us? My younger brother, who is now a grandfather, constantly reminds me: “You’re the old man now! You are the pillar!”

I pray that we who have become the “old men” in the Southern Province can tell our story in word and in deed to our younger confreres and that we are the pillars they need to be great missionaries, great disciples of the Lord.

Most Reverend J. Terry Steib, S.V.D.
Bishop Emeritus of Memphis
January 17, 2019

in a word or two



Bishop Joseph Lawson Howze, Bishop Emeritus of Biloxi, MS, Biloxi's founding bishop and first black bishop in the 20th century to head a diocese in the United States, passed away Wednesday, January 9, 2019 in Ocean Springs at the age of 95.

Bishop Howze, son of the late Albert Otis Howze, Sr. and the late Helen Lawson, was born in Daphne, AL on August 30, 1923. He began his school years at Most Pure Heart of Mary Elementary School in Mobile, AL. That first year of school was interrupted in 1928 by the death of his mother, just six days after she bore her fourth child. The eldest, at age 5, young Lawson (Joseph is his baptismal name) was shuttled back and forth between the homes of his grandparents, aunts and father, who later remarried and fathered three more children. His remaining elementary and high school years were spent at Baldwin County Schools and at Mobile County Training School at Plateau.

After graduating as Valedictorian of his 1944 high school class, four years later, he graduated with honors, and as president of the senior class, from Alabama State College, in Montgomery. He had intended to study medicine, but instead earned a bachelor's degree in science and education. He began his two-year teaching profession as the Biology and Chemistry teacher at Central High School in Mobile.

Bishop Howze had first been a Baptist, then a Methodist, serving as a choir director and church organist and pianist. But while he was teaching at Central High, he was drawn to the Catholic faith through the example of Marion Carroll, Jr. who was one of the seven Catholic students in his biology class. Soon after he began instructions in the Catholic faith under the direction of Josephite Father Benjamin Horton.

On December 4, 1948, at age 25, he was baptized at Most Pure Heart of Mary Church in Mobile, and on the following day he received his First Communion. He soon realized that he would really like to be a priest and began to inquire about the process.

In August 1952, he wrote to Bishop Vincent S. Waters of the Diocese of Raleigh NC, asking to study for priesthood in that

diocese. In September 1950, he entered Epiphany College in Newburgh, NY to begin preparatory studies for the priesthood. His priestly studies were interrupted for a year when he went to teach biology at St. Monica's High School in Tulsa, OK.

In January 1953, he was adopted as a student for the Diocese of Raleigh, NC and began his studies at the Diocesan Preparatory Seminary in Buffalo, NY. On May 7, 1959, Bishop Waters ordained the young priest for the Diocese of Raleigh. Father Howze said his first Mass at Most Pure Heart of Mary Church in Mobile on May 10, 1959. He served as pastor of several parishes in North Carolina during his 13 years of priestly ministry there.

On November 8, 1972, Father Howze was appointed by Pope Paul VI as the auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson and was ordained a bishop on January 28, 1973 in Jackson by Luigi Cardinal Raimondi. Within a year, he was named president of the National Black Catholic Clergy. On March 8, 1977, Bishop Howze was appointed by Pope Paul VI as the first bishop of the newly established Diocese of Biloxi. Establishing a new diocese was hard work, but Bishop Howze was very proud of what he, with the help of devoted clergy, religious and laity, accomplished during his tenure as bishop of Biloxi and was forever grateful to the people of the diocese for their unfailing generosity of time, talent and treasure.

Bishop Howze retired May 15, 2001, after serving as bishop of the Diocese of Biloxi for 24 years. He loved the Diocese of Biloxi and prayed unceasingly for its continued success. He had a genuine concern for the salvation of souls. Now, we pray that God, who called Bishop Howze to priesthood and the episcopate, will now welcome him to his heavenly home where he will continue to intercede for us. May he rest in peace.



Bishops Howze and Perry at 1987 address to African American Catholics by Pope John Paul II.

Divine Word Missionaries is an international missionary community of over 7,000 brothers and priests. In 1905 the SVDs began working among African Americans in the Southern United States. Today, Divine Word Missionaries work in over 35 parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas.

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