

# Neerology

Florian Ruskamp  
1918 - 2000



On a cold winter day, January 3, 1918, on a farm in Olean, Nebraska, God gave a little baby boy to Joseph and Anne Ruskamp. When he was baptized shortly thereafter at Sacred Heart Church in Olean; they named him Joseph Anthony. He was the fifth child of fourteen children. His siblings were Lawrence, William, Adolph, Roman, Catherine, Elizabeth, Corrine, Veronica Ann, Jermain, Reynard, Francis, Anthony, and a boy who died at birth.

Of Joseph's childhood we know very little, other than he apparently was sickly. He tells us that his father took him to the pastor of the parish and told him that little Joseph "would hardly make a good farmer, but he should try for the priesthood."

There can be little doubt that Joseph came from a solid Catholic home, where God was very much present. Family prayers, Sunday Mass, and good family values were the order of the day. That Anne, Joseph's mother, was a religious woman is manifest in an incident of his early childhood. He tells us that "I am told that when I was about two years old, I had a serious blood poisoning in my right knee. The night before the amputation, my mother stayed up all night fondling my baby sister, and praying all through the night. The next morning the doctor decided it would be better to try extracting the poison. By God's benevolent grace the operation did the trick. And it left me with eight scars all the way from the knee to the hip. Maybe my Mom offered me to God already then to become a priest or religious."

Music must have been a part of the family life, as Florian says that they had a "Farmer's Band" in which all the boys played musical instruments. Joseph played the saxophone. That he had a love for good music from then on is evident in that in his later years Florian enjoyed listening to good classical music and appreciated those who performed it.

During his early years, Joseph was scrupulous about sex, the human body, procreation and birthing. He tells us that when his "mom had another baby, I did not have the fortitude to come and see her. When I finally saw her after three days, all she said was: 'See what God has given us.' She probably felt I had some shame about child bearing."

"Sad to say, I was taught there is something impure about the human body. Dancing with a woman was something I never learned to do gracefully. In fact that still costs me an effort. I can honestly say that in those days it was quite common to teach the youngsters a certain 'body-

shame'. Certain parts of the body, especially the genitals, were considered impure. A normal, natural attraction between the sexes was not taught, much less appreciated. All this easily led to scruples, and easily became a matter for the sacrament of confession, as it was called in those days. Celibate life came to be considered far better than matrimony. However, Christ didn't make that distinction and even worked his first miracle for a young married couple."

One Christmas vacation, while a student at Mt. Calvary, Joseph went to Milwaukee with a fellow student. The student's little sister attracted him, and the parents noticed it. As a result they told him it would be alright with them if he would want to marry her. They remained friends instead. Some of the girls that were his classmates in grade school were among his good friends. He relates that "during my years at Calvary, Garrison, and Marathon I had very little contact with women, and naturally I missed their enriching friendship with them. All of this would have a strong effect on Joseph as he grew into spiritual maturity, trying to cast off the bonds of former sexual taboos.

And so, not being very adept at farming, Joseph decided to go to the seminary. But to which seminary would he go? These were hard times because of the depression. Since money was a factor in those days the pastor sought out a reasonable seminary – Mt. Calvary. So Joseph left Nebraska with his oldest sister (who was entering the convent of the Franciscan Sisters in Milwaukee) and entered St. Lawrence Seminary.

When he arrived at Mt. Calvary Joseph had no intention to enter the Capuchin Order. He was filled with the missionary spirit. His mother knew the Benedictine Missionaries who sent her "begging letters" which Joseph used to read. Joseph's mother, Anne, gave this missionary spirit to all the children. Whenever a missionary came to the parish in Olean, Nebraska, the parents would give high praise to the vocation of missionary. Here it seems the seeds of Florian's missionary vocation were being sown.

Even though Joseph had no intention of joining the Capuchins, he became enamored of these Capuchin Friars. Some of those who particularly impressed him were Louis Biersack, Rufin Powers, Boniface Goldhausen, Lawrence Merten, Henry Barth, Clarence Grosser and Theodore Roemer. This led Joseph to strongly consider his future – diocesan or religious life.

Having decided to become a Capuchin, Joseph Ruskamp traveled to St. Felix Friary in Huntington, Indiana. There he received the Capuchin habit on August 26, 1937, and was given the religious name "Florian." When he requested acceptance into the order, Florian stated that his intention was "to save my own soul and, with the grace of God, those of others."

As a novice, Florian had some trouble keeping the silence, but was said to be prompt and willing to carry out orders and that he had a fine religious spirit. He was known as kind, cheerful and sociable, but somewhat self-diffident and timid. He was of average talent, but studiously inclined. As he grew into religious life his discipline was very good. As the time to pronounce his first vows approached, Felix Ley, the novice daster, wrote that Florian was "very

punctual and exact. Model as far as rules are concerned. Has retained a certain simplicity and has a fine inner spirit and love of prayer. Cheerful – much esteemed by the others. Slow but steady and very dependable. An excellent novice, who is doing his best to prepare for profession.” And on August 27, 1938, Florian pronounced his first profession

Of his four years at Garrison, Florian says nothing. But we find from others that he continued to grow in the Capuchin way of life. On August 29, 1941 he made his perpetual profession. After Mary Immaculate Friary, he came back to Wisconsin to study theology at St. Anthony Friary, Marathon. He was a little above average, always attentive in class and diligent in studies.

As to his growth in Capuchin life, Mark Stier, director of clerics, noted that Florian was “serious minded and conscientious...serious about his vocation...a most obedient and exemplary Cleric...charitable and humble...very likeable and respected by others...always ready to lend a helping hand.” His health during this time was somewhat good, but he was weak, necessitating a lunch between breakfast and dinner.

Again the theme of his missionary desires came forward. “When I got to Marathon, Richard Brunner was there, retired from his missionary years in India. My classmates Roderick Brennan, Camillus Doerfler, Felician (Robert) Nelesen, and I volunteered for the missions...We knew we would go to either Guam or Nicaragua. Theodosius was provincial and Mark Stier was in charge of us seminarians. They did not tell us where we would be going. I learned Spanish from Kevin...we would read from the Spanish Bible. But I really learned Spanish in Nicaragua. It was easy language for me to learn.”

After he finished his third year of theology, Florian was ordained on 15 May 1945. The following year, having terminated his theological studies, he left for the missions in Nicaragua in September. He finally accomplished his dream of becoming a missionary.

So began Florian’s missionary life which would last for 51 long years. What he had said at the beginning of his Capuchin life—to save his own soul and those of others—now would become a reality. Florian would pastor many people in different ways as well as try to grow in his own spiritual life. He was missionary, associate pastor, pastor, superior regular, and mentor to many Capuchins and lay people. This life bring him not only joys and happiness, but also sufferings and sacrifices.

Florian’s first assignment was to the Rama, Nicaragua mission area. During the ten years that he was there, he traveled the extensive rivers and mountains baptizing, catechizing and marrying. At first it was done by either horse, or mule, or walking or by a non-motorized boat. Once his uncle sent him an outboard motor to facilitate the mission travels. This became the first of many outboard motors in the Bluefields Mission.

Florian tells us that the missionaries kept weapons for protection against snakes and animals. "The most I killed was a hog! I thought it was a deer. My fellow Capuchins had a good time over that."

During these years in Rama, Florian contracted different tropical diseases, such as malaria and amoeba, which affected him during the rest of his life. As a result of this, he had to return to the United States several times for treatment. Besides, he was troubled with bouts of dizziness for over a year. The doctors could treat the physical illness but were puzzled about the dizziness. The doctor wrote: "It is our feeling that probably this dizziness represents a psychologic reaction and is associated with some tension and nervousness which Florian does not even recognize and that most probably all of this is related to the fact that he is apparently quite unhappy in his present assignment." The doctors recommended that a change in assignment would be beneficial to Florian and to the work he was doing.

And so, in 1956, Florian was transferred as pastor to Puerto Cabezas, where he labored for another ten years. There, besides functioning as pastor of the parish, he worked with the parish school, the Agnesian and Carmelite Sisters, and had his first experience with the Miskito people, whose language he never really learned. He promoted different programs in the parish, such as the Legion of Mary, Bible Studies and Marriage Encounters. If he thought something would be of benefit for the people, Florian initiated it. During his pastorate Isidore Herriges built the fine new church in Puerto Cabezas.

It was during these years also that Cuthbert Gumbinger, the superior regular for the Capuchins, resided with Florian at Puerto Cabezas. It seems this was the time when Florian began to update himself in theology, bible, ecclesiology, and the spirit of Vatican II. Cuthbert Gumbinger went to the Rome with Matthew Niedhammer as theologian for the Vatican II Council. When Cuthbert would return, Florian would "pick" Cuthbert's mind about the council and the new trends of church life. He ordered books on the council and voraciously devoured them. He suggested many of these books to the missionaries for their updating.

At the Franciscan Week of November 1966, Florian was elected as superior regular of the Bluefields Mission. He continued to live in Puerto Cabezas. Bernard Wagner, Capuchin relates that "after the Vatican Council II (Florian) tried to keep abreast of all that was happening in the church, keeping himself informed through reading. As superior regular he sent a number of friars to courses in different areas of pastoral work, in order to study and later to put into practice the recommendations of the documents of the Second Vatican Council and also of the documents of the Episcopal Conference of Latin American Bishops who met at Medellin." The friars responded and began to implement the Vatican Council teachings. This caused some tension between the church of the Atlantic and Pacific Coast, as some of the Nicaraguan bishops thought we were going too fast on the Atlantic side. However, at the time there was a feeling that the two sides of the country, in spite of being under one government and flag, were in fact two different entities with their own cultural flavor and ecclesiology. One would have to say

that Florian was largely responsible for the church of the Atlantic Coast entering into the renewal spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

He writes: "There is always the danger that missionaries become set in their ways. Updating is even more important for them because their tendency is to sacrifice all for the people. The province also encouraged us to take renewal courses, and have study weeks in the vicariate. Many of our friars took courses available in the states, but many also took advantage of courses given in other countries. We slowly gave up our old ways of thinking and got into the swing of Vatican II. We gave renewal a high priority. I was blest to be able to take courses here in the States and Canada, also in Mexico, Bolivia, Columbia, Argentina, and other courses given in Central America. Also courses given by CELAM and CLAR. CELAM has to do with church renewal in general and CLAR has to do with renewal for religious." Before Florian would try to convince others to the value of renewal, he first of all renewed himself in the spirit of Vatican II. His own words: "John XXIII deserves the highest honors for inaugurating the Second Vatican Council. And now it is our turn to help keep the 'doors wide open' towards the future."

In 1969, Florian, along with Daniel Kabat, went to Managua to set up a Capuchin residence there, which would serve as a residence for the missionaries of the Atlantic Coast who went to Managua frequently to both rest and make important purchases for their missions. But now Florian would enter into a new phase of renewal—not just of the Atlantic Coast, but also that of the Pacific Coast. "Hardly had I arrived in Managua," states Florian, when the bishop (a Franciscan from Italy and Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Managua) approached me and begged me to take the office of president of the Conference of Religious...I must say the two terms I had were very pleasant for me. I visited all the dioceses, and got to appreciate the wonderful work of the religious women and men. I tried to connect Nicaragua with the rest of the religious of Latin America."

"Vatican II," he continues, "recommended many innovations in the church. By that time I was already in Managua. Julian Barni and the bishop agreed that we should organize a National Pastoral Renewal Week. I was involved in this with a native priest. Some of the diocese collaborated and we started organizing, with the help of theologians from Latin America. Thanks be to God, it was a big success, and the participants—priests, sisters and laity, recommended that we hold another week of renewal and clarify many of the issues as to the pastoral application (of the National Pastoral Renewal Week.) The two bishops also were in complete accord. In the meantime Managua got a new archbishop in the person of a native, Miguel Obando y Bravo. Maybe because he did not assist at the first week, he was not in favor, and another pastoral week was never held." Nevertheless, Florian continued to work for renewal among the priests and religious.

Bernard Wagner writes: "(Florian) took a special interest in all the religious in Managua planning courses and meetings so that they could share (with one another) and he spent much time visiting different religious communities for the purpose of animating them in their

religious life. If I am not mistaken, he served two terms as president of the conference for religious of Nicaragua.”

Bertha Bumann, a sister of St. Agnes and for many years missionary in Nicaragua, might be representative of all the religious women and men who knew Florian and appreciated his efforts to bring them into the new church of Vatican II. She writes: “How much we profited from and enjoyed him....in Puerto Cabezas...where so many of us missionaries got our roots in Nicaragua! All his outreach to us in parish projects—whether in Bible study, or San Pedro fiestas, in church improvements or religious updating, you name it—Florian was a truly dedicated and devoted priest of God and leader of the church. Always leaps ahead of most of us, he patiently presented the new and the challenging to us. Even preparing us for Vatican II. He taught us. He showed us. He guided us. He helped to put on the new Christ in the modern church. His influence spread from the east coast to the west coast and beyond. Religious and others were so much better for having had the blessing of knowing Florian, working with him, and having been touched by him. He did make a difference. And I praise God for having known him and being influenced by his positive attitude in Christ-like being.”

Even though Florian was greatly appreciated by priests and religious, the same was not true of some within the church. For some reason, complaints were made to Rome about his work with the Conference of Religious of Nicaragua. When all was said and done, the general minister of the order, Paschal Rywalski, wrote in answer to Rome: “I have the utmost confidence and trust in what Father Florian says concerning his work in the CONFER. I personally have known Father Florian for some years and respect his life and work.” And in a letter to Lloyd Thiel, provincial minister: “I...promise to pray for the continued good work for the church in Nicaragua by Father Florian and the other missionaries.”

Adding to that testimony of Paschal Rywalski is Maria Aranzazu Ladron de Guevara, of the Board of Directors of the Nicaraguan Conference of Religious who wrote that “Florian gave his life to Nicaragua and did much for the Conference of Religious.”

Having lived with and served the local church of Nicaragua for 51 years, Florian left his beloved mission and returned to the United States. He wrote: I left Nicaragua on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1997. The decision was made during a retreat with Sister Annette at Clare Hall in Milwaukee the first week of July. During the retreat I made this entry: ‘My leaving Nicaragua need not be sad. In fact, I would want a celebration of departure to commemorate the growth of the local church of Nicaragua.’ I also felt that my own family deserved my closer presence, since they are all getting older.”

The Nicaraguan newspaper *El Nuevo Diario* published an interview with Florian in which it said: “Florian is leaving Nicaragua; this friendly and happy North American known by everyone within circles of the Catholic Church. Having arrived to serve on the Atlantic Coast, he has lived many years in Managua; his house has served as a place of rest for those who come from the coast, and also as the site of many meetings. At age 79, he is returning to the states,

although he plans to come back every now and then, because he considers himself Nicaraguan in his heart. Religious lover of the church, man of reconciliation, loved and respected by everyone, he is finding himself the object of many tributes.”

Arriving to Detroit, Florian consulted with the provincial Daniel Fox, who suggested that Florian visit the whole province before coming to a decision about his future dwelling. So for many months “I was traveling around in Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin and Montana, and visited about 15 friaries in all. I admired all the wonderful work of the brothers. Marathon had a special attraction. Maybe because of all the programs carried on there, and almost all with the participation of the laity.” Florian was to live the rest of his life at St. Anthony Retreat Center in Marathon, Wisconsin.

So who was this man – Florian – who lived among us? There are certain things that stand out in his life, all of which could come down to the common denominator of “concern.” One could say he was a man of prayer and contemplation, of reconciliation. He was a man who was not afraid to search out his feminine side, to inquire ever deeper into the mystery of the church and how it related to the lives of people, to discover deeper meanings of his Capuchin calling and of his life as a brother.

Anyone who knew Florian was impressed by his spirit of prayer and contemplation. It was something about which he was very serious, because he knew that these moments of prayer brought him close to God, and God to him. He writes: “I want to attune to God’s love for all without exemption. To make this possible, I will have to give prime time to prayer, and especially to quiet contemplation every day. Although I’m still struggling with this, I am convinced that to allow God to love me in His way is the most important matter in life.” In his diary, Florian constantly returns to his desire to enter ever more deeply into prayer and contemplation, “to let go and let Christ take over.” Again and again he wants to spend more “quiet time in prayer.”

Bernard Wagner notes that “first and foremost, Florian was a man of prayer, especially mental prayer or contemplation. He set aside time for that every day and surely it was the power behind everything that he accomplished. He was also dedicated to community prayer, never missing the recitation of the office or the Mass celebrated by the community if he could be there.”

Florian was a true son of Francis, in that he sought out reconciliation—reconciliation with himself and his weaknesses, and reconciliation with those with whom he had problems, as well as reconciliation between people who were at odds.

Florian’s quest for self-knowledge was a continual reconciliation with himself throughout his life. From his own words we learn the following: (I must) “accept myself – my true self – just the way I am (which is) most important in order to move on. Any type of self-aggrandizement

will only hinder my spiritual growth. My true self – as God sees me – is essential for growth and new insights. Listening with my whole person, my sinful person, my limited creaturehood – all must be accepted, embraced in order to have God bring me to my true self, as He intended. I am His work of art – not mine.”

There were times when Florian found himself at odds with one of his brothers or a parishioner. It was then that he was restless until he could talk with and be reconciled with that person. To him it was important because being a brother to all meant just that – at odds with no one. That was part and parcel of being a Capuchin Franciscan and a man of peace.

During the Sandinista Revolution, the friars found themselves divided between various ideologies. Both civil society and the church were becoming more and more polarized. Florian could tell us that he was “interested in the matter of forgiveness, reconciliation and unity...I have been ‘pushing’ contemplation and reconciliation very gently, but it is not exactly what priests and religious are hungry for...As a good farmer I need to keep on sowing, and allow the rain and sunshine to do their part.” Franciscan Weeks for the friars were always sure to include some sort of reconciliation to bring the community back to its Franciscan spirit of peace and brotherhood, no matter what the diverse ideologies were that each held.

This necrology would not be complete without mentioning this facet of Florian’s life. In his journal he frequently mentions the feminine aspect as his life. He had already told us that at the beginning of his life, he was somewhat embarrassed by the idea of his mother giving birth to another child. This idea of womanhood was something he dealt with during his whole life. In fact it was during his years in the missions that his attitude of avoiding women gradually changed into the highest admiration. He was involved with Marriage Encounter and learned to work with them, and appreciate women in his work with the religious. As the years passed he learned to appreciate the feminine element present in himself as a requisite for contemplation. As Meister Eckhart affirms: “In order to be a contemplative, one has to be a woman.” Florian became convinced that to go deeper into contemplation he would have to discover the feminine in his own being.

His diary mentions different times about discovering just who and what he was all about. Florian wanted to know himself as God created and knows him. Therefore realizing that he was made with both masculine and feminine elements, he could never come to know and understand himself unless he comprehended both sides of his person. For this reason he sought out relationships with women and worked with them – all to be a full human person with both masculine and feminine qualities.

All this would lead Florian close to God. In one of his diary entries, he says: “The deep desire in me for fecundity and maternity is hard to explain, a kind of mystery that God wants to carry out in me without my knowing how. Meister Eckhard influenced me very much. For instance his remark: “In order that God be fruitful in us, our intellect must be transformed and become feminine.”

His great desire to know his feminine side led Florian also to a deep devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. "There are aspects of Mary which I am still trying to put into practice. Mary must be always more and more my Teacher, my Mother and my Companion. Mary didn't just offer her bodily organs to give birth to Christ. She was disposed to God's plans with her whole mind, soul and body. And the author La Brance tells me: "Looking at Mary we can more easily become aware of the maternal spirit of Christ", and I would add, also in us. Mary no doubt inspired me to let God impregnate me, make me fecund, love-bearing, giving birth to God's Love all the time. I am trying to update my devotion to Mary and be a Life-Giver with Her."

The church was the great love of Florian. He learned this love living within the confines of his very Catholic family in Nebraska. He deepened this love when he went to St. Lawrence Seminary to study for the priesthood. When he entered the Capuchin Order it was "to save my own soul and that of others." After pronouncing his vows and being ordained to the priesthood, he lived 51 years as a missionary in Nicaragua to accompany that local church in its joys and struggles. He suffered loneliness, illness, absence from his brothers and sisters, all out of his love for the church. He was ecstatic with the Second Vatican Council in its openness to the world and to all people. In his own words: "For me Vatican II was a most extraordinary event. I eagerly read all the topics and tried to put them into practice. Really John XXIII deserves the highest honors for inaugurating the Second Vatican Council. And now it is our turn to help keep the 'doors wide open' towards the future." He loved conversations with Cuthbert Gumbinger, who was Matthew Niedhammer's theologian at all the council's sessions. He avidly sought out books and articles on the new theology of the council. This was not for his own personal gain, but in order to be a better pastor to his people and to help them become Council People. But it was not limited to his parishioners. Florian's love for the church extended to his Capuchin brother missionaries. He tried to help them become knowledgeable in the council documents in order to further the building up of the local church of Nicaragua. Sending friars to various courses in Latin America, suggesting reading material for them, involving them in workshops during the Franciscan Weeks with various Latin American theologians, working himself with bishops, priests and religious—all this was the passion of Florian which grew out his deep abiding love for the church.

Florian's life and all his activities stemmed from his love, above all, for the Capuchin Order and all the brothers. In letters to various provincials, Florian reiterates his love for the province and all it has done for him personally and for their generous spirit to the mission of Nicaragua. His visits to the states were always to his family and then to the friars whom he loved. He tried to make the house in Managua a welcoming place for the brothers who arrived to Managua for a little rest and relaxation. He saw to it that there were plenty of drinks and snacks. Namedays and birthdays were celebrated with some special cake, ice cream and a something "a little stronger" than Pepsi. Only God knows how many trips he made to and from the airport, facilitating the travels of the missionaries.

When the Central American Vice-Province of our Lady of Hope was erected, he expressed his "joy at having given birth to a new circumscription (region of the order), and seeing the

Franciscan charism taking root in this local church (of Nicaragua) touches me deeply.” That he was appreciated by the friars was evident in a letter from Emilio Melendez, vice-provincial of the Vice-Province of St. Felix Cantalice: “For us, Florian was a father, a spiritual father who, with his example of holiness, helped to form many brothers with their identity as true “minor brothers.”

There were several events that all coincided during the last year of Florian’s life that would bring him face to face with Sister Death who visited one of his sisters and two brothers within 12 months. Plus that he made several retreats during which he meditated on death. During a retreat in Appleton, at Mt. Alverno Retreat Center, he mused that “taking the wine at mass should mean my full acceptance to join Christ in His passion and death. He was afraid, hesitant: ‘Let this cup pass from me’ This also I can accept at each Mass with Christ.”

Then when his brother, Tony, died in September 1999 in California, Florian wrote in his diary: Death “should be something gentle, instructive and admired. Francis called it Sister Death: “All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death.” How to handle these moments is a big issue. It is not an everyday occurrence. But it is part of our life journey, in fact, the most important. We enter into eternal life, which is quite beyond our comprehension, but really, God’s best gift...We need to look forward to it, and praise God ahead of time.”

Again when his brother Roman died in November of 1999 Florian would feel the presence of Sister Death and cause him to again say: “We are all getting closer to Sister Death, and this is a special time to see it as Francis did, Clare and all the saints.” Reflecting on the last days he spent with Roman, he remarks: “Death became very much a part of my life: mystery, sadness, feelings hard to explain. Yes, death means new life. I’m reading *Vivir la Tercera Edad* [*Living the Third Stage*] to get the deeper meaning of death—our passing to the better life. The author tells us to live it ‘en la alegria del Espiritu [in the joy of the Spirit].’”

In January 2000, Florian traveled to Cartago, Costa Rica, where the new Vice-Province of St. Felix of Cantalice was to be erected. It was as if God was granting him one last blessing: to be with those with whom he had worked, in order to say good-bye. While there on January 26, 2000, he went for a walk, during which he suffered a fall and broke four ribs. The next day, he returned to Marathon Retreat Center, where he tried to adjust to his broken ribs and “take good care of Brother Body.” In the midst of his pain he could say: “I’m sure God is with me in all this...God is surely a lovely God—close to me—and loves me more than ever.” On February 9, 2000, two days before he died, Florian was ready to go to St. Fidelis Friary in Appleton WI. In his last diary entry he writes: “There will be time in Appleton to relate to all the sick and dying. Even death will take on new meaning for me. I am not trying to escape from God’s designs. All this will give me a new type of relation to God, myself and all humanity.”

On February 10, 2000 Dan Crosby drove Florian from Marathon to St. Fidelis Friary in Appleton. At about 11 a.m. on the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, 2000, Claude Pulvermacher went to Florian’s room to work on documentation, as is done with all who come to live at the

senior home. Ironically among those documents is one which speaks of funeral arrangements. At noon Florian went to the dining room for dinner. After dinner he said that he felt tired and was going to his room to rest. Shortly after dinner Claude went to Florian's room and found that Sister Death had come to Florian and accompanied him to God.

The funeral was celebrated at St. Lawrence Seminary Chapel on Monday, February 14, 2000. He was buried in the Capuchin Cemetery on the side of the hill where he awaits the sounding of the trumpet which summons us all to final resurrection. May he rest in peace.

~ David Belongea