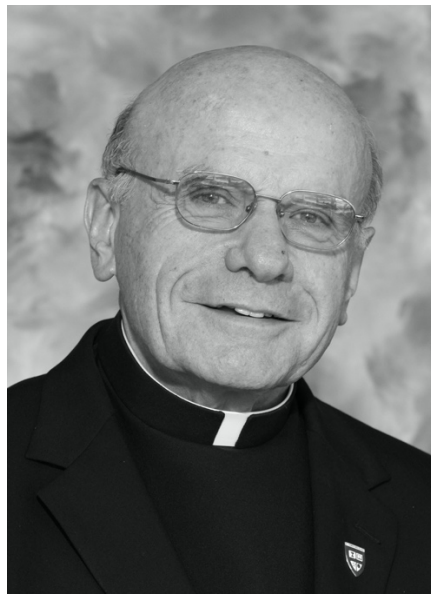


House of Schwenzenzer

St. Jose Sanchez del Rio & St. Maria Goretti



Fr. Ronald Schwenzenzer



- General biography:
 - Born in Webster, NY on December 7, 1939.
 - Nicknames were “The Schwenz”.
 - Graduate of STH Class of 1954.
 - He was ordained to priesthood in Rochester, New York on December 14th, 1968.
 - Principal and first President of STH from 1998-2011.
- Interesting stories/information:
 - Stickler for detail and vision as he had an architect mind but also congenial and a heart of service.

- “I entered the Basilian Fathers because I witnessed a great group of Basilians during my high school years who were faith-filled, holy and happy in their ministry and their personal lives. I wanted to be an architect for a while in high school but my vocation to be a priest won out... From the day I entered the novitiate I have been happy in my religious and priestly vocation and in all my various appointments. I have grown personally and professionally from each of my appointments because of the people I lived with and worked with. If you are open to doing God’s will in your life, you cannot help but be happy. I give thanks to God for my vocation and thanks to my confreres in my different appointments for their support and example in our common ministry.”
- Crisis Period:
 - Father Schwenzer came to STH in a time of leadership crisis in which a former principal was caught up in an ethical scandal that threatened to tar the reputation of the school.
 - He immediately set about renewing the image of STH with a return to the school’s glorious past by returning the school colors of the school to the original cardinal red from the more maroon colors adopted in the 70s, 80s, and 90s as well as restored the original crest.
 - He also resurrected the singing of the school’s alma mater dating back to the 1940s.
 - In doing so he restored and excited much of the confidence of alumni and used STH’s admirable history to heal the wounds of scandal.
- Building Projects:
 - He launched the largest capital campaign in school history up to that point by raising over 10 million dollars for the building of the new Hall of Honor, Cemo Auditorium, and Moran Fine Arts Center and renovation of the main building (Clay-Storey Hall) with the restoration of the original Rotunda and face-lifts and technology upgrades to all of the classrooms as well as to the gym.
 - The school also experienced some of its largest enrollment increases in its history.
 - Statue of St. Basil:
 - He commissioned the sculpting of the beautiful and prominent statue of St. Basil in the courtyard.
- Endowment:
 - Behind the scenes, Father Schwenzer, as a great steward of STH’s resources, he helped to make STH debt free despite the extensive building projects and economic downturns in the early 2000s while also adding millions of dollars to STH’s endowment.
- Round-Up:
 - Father Schwenzer showed himself a man of his word and a protector of tradition when in 2003 the student body did not break the record in sales for the first time in many years.

House Schwenzer | St. Thomas High School

- He did not give the coveted Tuesday off despite tremendous pressure to do so.
- This protected the integrity of the Round-Up tradition as not a given and reset the example that Round-Up is about Eagles Brothers uplifting their fellow Eagle Brothers.
- This infamous year continues to serve as motivation for Round-Up with totals increasing dramatically each year.
- Skin cancer:
 - Throughout his time as principal and president he suffered from bouts of skin cancer on his head but did so quietly and humbly.

St. Jose Sanchez del Rio



- Born March 28th, 1913 in Mexico and died February 10th, 1928.
- Feast: February 10th.

- Notable information:
 - He was born at a violent and conflicted time in Mexico.
 - The Cristero War began when the government began eliminating church privileges and seizing church properties throughout the country, in accordance with anti-clerical laws written into the Mexican Constitution.
 - President Plutarco Elias Calles, who took office in 1924, focused on the Roman Catholic Church, which led to seizure of church property, the closing of religious schools and convents, and the exile or the execution of priests.
 - Persecution of Catholics led to a revolt Catholics who formed an armed called the Cristeros.
 - Young Jose joined the efforts to resist and fight.
 - He eventually became the flag bearer for the army and was nicknamed Tarcisius, after the early Christian saint, martyred for protecting the Eucharist from desecration.
 - At one battle, he gave the general his own horse after the general's horse had been shot from under him.
 - He was captured by government forces and subsequently tortured for information.
 - He was told he would be released if he apostatized his belief in Christ and His Church.
 - To break his resolve, he was made to watch the hanging of another Cristero that they had in custody, but instead José encouraged the man, saying that they would soon meet again in Heaven after death.
 - In prison, José prayed the rosary daily and wrote an emotional letter to his mother, saying that he was ready to fulfill the will of God to whom he dedicated himself.
 - His father attempted to raise a ransom to save him, but was not able to appease the government in time to do so, thus failing to secure the release of his son.
 - Consequently they cut the bottom of his feet and obliged him to walk around the town toward the cemetery.
 - They also at times cut him with a machete until he was bleeding from several wounds. He cried and moaned with pain, but he did not give in.
 - At times they stopped him and said, 'If you shout, "Death to Christ the King" we will spare your life'. José would only shout, 'I will never give in. Viva Cristo Rey!'"
 - He was executed at the age of 15.
 - He was canonized as a saint on October 16th, 2016.
- Quotes:
 - At times they stopped him and said, 'If you shout, "Death to Christ the King" we will spare your life'. José would only shout, 'I will never give in. Viva Cristo Rey!'"

St. Maria Goretti:



- Born October 16th, 1890 in Italy and died July 6th, 1902 at the age of 11.
- Feast: July 6th.
- Notable Information:
 - She was born to a poor farming family.
 - She lost her father to malaria at age 9.
 - At age 11, a neighbor's son named Alessandro Serenelli approached Maria and threatened to stab her with an awl if she did not cooperate and accept his sexual advances.
 - She refused screaming, "No! It is a sin! God does not want it!"
 - He stabbed her 14 times and ran away.
 - She underwent surgery without anesthesia but did not complain once.
 - Yet her injuries were beyond the doctors' help.
 - Halfway through the surgery, she woke up.

- The pharmacist said to her, "Maria, think of me in Paradise." She looked at him and said, "Well, who knows, which of us is going to be there first?" "You, Maria," he replied. "Then I will gladly think of you," she said.
- She forgave her killer and died a day later.
- Alessandro was given life in prison and was put into solitary confinement after fighting with the other prisoners.
- One night he was visited by a vision of Maria Goretti who gave him 14 white lilies that burned his hands.
- This converted him and he became a model prisoner and decided to dedicate his life to the service of others and the Church that Maria loved to make up for his crime.
- He eventually was released on parole and immediately sought out the mother of Maria begging her forgiveness.
- She forgave him and took him in as an adopted son.
- He was present at Maria's canonization and fulfilled his promise to serve the Church by becoming a Capuchin monk.
- Quotes:
 - "He loves, He hopes, He waits. Our Lord prefers to wait Himself for the sinner for years rather than keep us waiting an instant."
 - "I forgive him."