

Fr. Al found great joy in running. But in 1989 he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) which not only robbed him of the ability to run but of the ability to take care of himself. This turn of events would challenge Fr. Al to new heights of virtue. The champion of service to the dignity of the human person was challenged to allow himself to be the recipient of the loving care of the Sisters, as he endured what many call a cruel and demeaning disease.

In a sermon given on the occasion of his 60th birthday, Fr. Al reflected that, “his heart was overflowing with gratitude to God for all the graces and gifts” which God had showered upon him throughout his life. Among so many, he highlighted the three greatest graces:

- **The grace of good, pious and religious parents**
- **The grace of a priestly and missionary vocation**
- **The grace of the ALS affliction**

Later, Fr. Al would say, “I am not sure if I had to give that sermon again if I would speak of ALS as one of the greatest gifts.” Yet in faith he goes on to say, “I would like the courage to look upon this affliction as a grace. I would like the spirit of faith to consider this disease as a gift from God.”

This champion of the poor continued to serve by establishing Boystown and Girlstown programs in Mexico, and celebrating Mass with the children. However, these activities, which once brought consolation, were now experiences that were often painful and involved personal struggle.

For more information regarding the cause for canonization, please visit www.fatheralsainthood.org

As Jesus on the cross, I do not look back. I do not consider the future but I trust God. I believe in his grace from instant to instant.

-Fr. Aloysius Schwartz

With characteristic generosity, Fr. Al shared the story of his work among the people of Korea, his own profound understanding of poverty and his three-year journey with ALS through writing. His books invite readers to consider the gifts and talents we have been given and how we are using them to the fullest potential as well as to give glory to God in all things.

Though touching the lives of thousands of people and being twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, Fr. Al retained a deep humility to the end of his life. Shortly before his death he said that he would be happy to have on his grave, “Here lies Al Schwartz. He tried his best for Jesus.”

Books by Fr. Schwartz

Killing Me Softly: The Inspiring Story of a Champion of the Poor

1993, Alba House, Society of St. Paul

Poverty: Sign of Our Times

1970, Alba House, Society of St. Paul

The Starved and the Silent: The Dramatic Encounter of an American Priest with Christ’s Poor in Korea

1967, Doubleday & Co., Inc.



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VENERABLE FATHER ALOYSIUS SCHWARTZ

PRIEST, MISSIONARY,
SERVANT OF THE POOR



“Our strength to love and to serve others comes from the Holy Eucharist.”

-Fr. Aloysius Schwartz

On January, 22, 2015, Pope Francis authorized the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to declare Fr. Aloysius Schwartz ‘Venerable.’ This title is given to those who have lived a life of heroic virtue in the service of the Lord and his Church. Fr. Schwartz is the first person from the Archdiocese of Washington to receive this title.



I have always felt the loving presence of Christ in my life. It is something very deep, subtle, and usually barely discernible, but it is very real and very precious.

-Fr. Aloysius Schwartz

Aloysius Schwartz was born in Washington, DC in 1930. From a young age, Aloysius knew he wanted to be a missionary priest. As a child he attended Holy Name Church and School in Washington, before entering St. Charles Minor Seminary in Catonsville, Maryland. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop John Michael McNamara, auxiliary bishop of Washington, in 1957 after completing his studies at Maryknoll College and the Louvain University in Louvain, Belgium.



His studies in Louvain had a profound impact on his priesthood. It is here that he encountered 'Mary, Our Lady of Banneux, the Virgin of the Poor.' He would later say, "My priesthood belongs to the Virgin of the Poor." In a visit to the shrine of Our Lady he promised to live a life of poverty and to always serve the poor. Thus, the trajectory that would define

his remarkable life was set in motion. Just six months after his ordination to the priesthood, Fr. Schwartz began his mission work in the Diocese of Busan, South Korea.

A humble man, Msgr. Schwartz was affectionately known as Fr. Al. He took the call to poverty with great earnestness; he understood that an authentic response to poverty has to be, "more than a pity, a sorrow. It has to involve bringing an effective response to the poor." He firmly believed that it is difficult for someone living in comfort to truly bring about an effective response to poverty. Therefore, each individual must be challenged to embrace material poverty.

No one accepts a proud truth. So, too, witness to poverty, if it is to be effective and authentically Christian, must at the same time be meek and humble.

-Fr. Aloysius Schwartz

Fr. Al chose to live in a dilapidated shack as an effective sign and witness. He understood that all are called to practice Christian poverty, but not all are called to such radical poverty.

In his writings, Fr. Schwartz said that through contemplation we come to know our physical and psychological limitations that our poverty can take. However, this should be a dynamic stance – that is, what is not possible now might be possible later if we stretch our limitations.

Fr. Al saw that poverty robs people of their inherent dignity. In his writings, Fr. Al encouraged each person to adopt a spirit of detachment, sacrifice, and even self-inflicted discomfort to make possible for others a dignity that reflects their shared destiny as children of God.

Only through contemplation can man arrive at a clear vision of what man is; and this is indispensable if one wishes to serve his fellow man in a meaningful way.

-Fr. Aloysius Schwartz

His many works reflect Fr. Al's deep concern for the dignity of every human person. Beginning with the foundation of "Operation Hanky," a self-help embroidery program employing 3,000 slum dwellers, Fr. Al went on to establish Boystown and Girlstown programs in Korea, the Philippines and Mexico, hospitals for the poor, hospice programs, medical programs for destitute tuberculosis patients, and technical schools.

In August 1964, Fr. Al founded the order of the Sisters of Mary to help him in his work in serving the poor. There are now more than 300 sisters carrying on his mission in Korea, the Philippines, Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil and Honduras.

