

Legacy Project

May 14th

Brother William Joseph Geenen, C.S.C.

born: 28 April 1930

died: 14 May 2011



William was born in Appleton, Wisconsin and went to Sacred Heart Juniorate for his high school studies. He joined the Brothers, pronouncing his first vows in February 1949 and went to St. Edward's University getting his degree in 1953. He joined the faculty at Gilmour Academy where he spent the next 20 years. He taught English literature, was Principal for 12 years and Admission Director until 1973. On a recruiting trip to Sarasota an event occurred which changed his life. He met an elderly man who was poor and lonely. William reflected on that encounter and asked his provincial (Charles Krupp) for permission to develop a new ministry to the lonely and needy aging adults. He arrived in Sarasota with \$79 and a vision and recruited his first of many volunteers. Word spread, donations were sought and the Senior Friendship Centers were begun. 'People Helping People' was their motto. He drew inspiration from Brother Andre' Bessette and St. Joseph. In 1994, he was elected Provincial of the Midwest Province. During his 6 years, his successful vision in Florida spurred the development of Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame. In 2000 he returned to Sarasota. "*The Energized Angel has returned*" said a newspaper article, and continued his work. William could present his case and people would open their pocketbooks. The 1973 encounter was the start of making thousands of people's lives healthier and happier from the vision of a honest, compassionate good man who could make things happen.

*I consider my life of no importance, if only I may finish the ministry
that I received from the Lord.*

-- Acts, 20:24

We can do no great things, only small things with great love.

-- Mother Teresa