Fr Ernest Faggioni

Birth: Jul. 2, 1917
Death: Jun. 14, 2006

Salesian Father Ernest Faggioni, 88, died June 14 in St. Petersburg, Fla., following cardiac arrest. He was a resident at St. Philip the Apostle Residence for elderly Salesian priests and brothers in Tampa.

Father Faggioni was born in Brazil to Italian immigrant parents. The family returned to Italy, and a short time later he entered the Salesians of Don Bosco at Ivrea, Italy, in 1936. He volunteered for an overseas mission and was sent to the U.S. He made his novitiate at Don Bosco Seminary in Newton, N.J., and professed his first vows in 1937. He did his college and theology studies in Newton and was ordained on June 29, 1947.

Father Faggioni spent most of his Salesian life on the West Bank, serving at different times as teacher, principal or treasurer at the Hope Haven orphanage in Marrero (1940-43, 1950-59, 1963-66), as treasurer of Archbishop Shaw High School in Marrero (1966-74) and as assistant pastor at St. John Bosco Church in Harvey (1988-2000).

Many Hope Haven alumni fondly remember Father Faggioni as a father and confidant, as well as a teacher, someone who was very strict with them but really cared about them. They credit his tough-love approach with their later success in life.

"I came from a very poverty-stricken family," said Al Scramuzza, "but Hope Haven and Father Ernest taught me that it's not where you come from that matters, it's where you come to."

Some of Father Faggioni's young fellow Salesians like Brother Charles Todel also found him very helpful in their efforts to teach and supervise the youngsters on a 24-7 basis. Having just come from Italy, Brother Charles counted on Father Faggioni to help him learn American games like baseball and football so that he could tend to the boys at recreation time.

During his 59 years as a priest, Father Faggioni also was principal at Don Bosco Tech in Boston (1947-49) and Salesian High School in New Rochelle, N.Y. (1949-50); director of Don Bosco Juniorate in Paterson, N.J., and Haverstraw, N.Y. (1959-63); treasurer at Don Bosco Preparatory School in Cedar Lake, Ind.