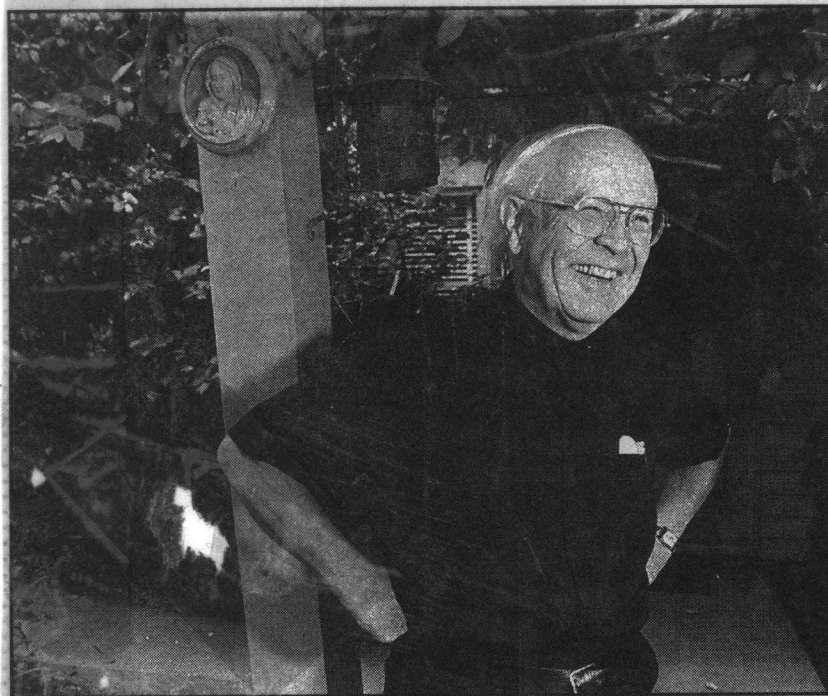


# Markey remembered as visionary, leader, man of faith

## Longtime priest founded Aptos' Resurrection parish



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel file photo

Father Francis Markey, shown here in 1987, died Friday at his home in Santa Cruz. Markey was well-known as former pastor of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Capitola. He helped create the Good Shepherd School, built Christ Child Chapel in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and later opened Resurrection parish in Aptos, where he served as pastor.

By **DARREL W. COLE**  
Sentinel staff writer

**SANTA CRUZ** — His friends called him a maverick, a teacher, a visionary and, above all, a "man of tremendous faith."

The Rev. Francis L. Markey died Friday at his home in Santa Cruz after a year-and-a-half battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly called Lou Gehrig's disease. He was 90.

Markey was well-known as pastor of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Capitola. He helped create the Good Shepherd School, built Christ Child Chapel in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and later opened Resurrection parish in Aptos, where he served as pastor.

Fellow priests called him a visionary — a pioneer who wasn't afraid to challenge traditional Catholic doctrine.

"He was not afraid to be a leader and a prophet of his time," said Bishop Sylvester Ryan of the Diocese of Monterey, which includes Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Benito and San Luis Obispo counties. "He was a man of tremendous faith, and had a deep understanding of the

human condition and a great compassion for each and every person he worked with."

Markey was also, Ryan added, "lots of fun and great to be around."

Markey was born in Decatur, Ill. on Oct. 16, 1908. His family moved to Stockton when he was a child. He graduated from St. Agnes High School there in 1926. He was ordained a priest in Santa Fe in 1937. When World War II began, he signed up as a U.S. Army chaplain and was the only priest in the Galapagos Islands. After his military service ended in 1947 he was transferred to Holy Cross Church in Santa Cruz.

While in Santa Cruz, he served for 12 years as editor of the Central California Register, the diocese newspaper, and the church's national Spanish-language newspaper, Excelsior, before returning full time to preaching.

In 1960 he was named pastor of St. Joseph's. While there he joined with the Star of the Sea parish to create Good Shepherd School. In 1965 he opened what was to be his last assignment, Resurrection parish.

He retired in 1974, but began a

new career of public service and served as a substitute priest for colleagues worldwide. He was the first president of the Priests Senate in Monterey, helped organize the Monterey Bay Memorial and Funeral Society, and was active in the Kiwanis Club.

Markey grew his own vegetables and fruit, baked his own bread and maintained bee hives for honey. He was forever curious and had a "child-like wonder" about life, his friends said.

Throughout his life in the church, Markey was a maverick, challenging church leaders on the traditional ways of doing things, including allowing women as priests, his friends said. He initiated change in his own churches by allowing women to take part in Mass by reading and giving communion.

"There is a certain paranoia among religious people — an unwillingness to assume risk, which after all is the name of the game. No risk, no gain," Markey said in a 1987 interview with the Sentinel.

The Rev. Michael Miller of Salinas was a friend of Markey's for 27 years. He said he looked up to the longtime priest as a mentor.

"I always considered him a man of great integrity," Miller said. "But he always had a playfulness that he applied to himself and the church and just about everything else. If it wasn't God, it could be challenged."

Markey's cousin Margaret Webb agreed that Markey challenged church doctrine, but added that he always knew when to pull back.

"He knew where the boundary lines were. He saw there were political realities, too," she said.

Markey is survived by sister Louise Beatie and brother-in-law Byron Beatie of Aptos.

Two vigils will be held for Markey. The first is 8 p.m. Thursday at Villa Maria del Mar Chapel, 19th Street and East Cliff Drive in Santa Cruz, with Ryan presiding. The other will be 8 p.m. Friday at St. Joseph's in Capitola, with Miller presiding.

A special memorial Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Saturday at St. Joseph's, followed by burial at Holy Cross Cemetery in Santa Cruz.

Contributions are preferred to the Bay Area chapter of the ALS Association, 140 Geary St., fourth floor, San Francisco, CA 94108.

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