

in a
WordTM

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ALLELUIA!
BLESSED ARE THESE WHO HAVE
WORKED FOR TRUTH AND JUSTICE.

As the Easter season begins we here at IN A WORD remember three very important people who have gone on to their heavenly rewards. These individuals were our friends. They supported IN A WORD from the beginning. They made a difference...a huge difference in the world around them.

Monsignor ED MILLER (Shepherd of West Baltimore)

This dynamic priest was pastor of St. Bernardine's Church in Baltimore for 33 years. On Sunday morning, December 15, 2013, he was found by parish members when he did not arrive at Church. On the way to offer Mass he had suffered a fatal heart attack.



Monsignor Miller was widely respected for encouraging lay leaders to take ownership of the parish. He initiated dozens of evangelization and outreach programs to build up the wider community.

"The death of Monsignor Miller is a tremendous loss for the archdiocese, for the people of St. Bernardine's and for the Catholic Church in Baltimore City," Archbishop William E. Lori said in a Dec. 16 statement. "Monsignor Miller was wholly committed to the mission of evangelization, to bringing others closer to Christ, and spent 42 years of his life doing just that in West Baltimore."

The depth of his commitment to the African American catholic community is seen in a letter he wrote to us on March 1, 2010. He was writing after hearing that IN A WORD would no longer be in print form but would go to digital format. The letter demonstrates his passion for the African American Catholic community.

Dear Jim:

It is with great sadness that I read about the real possibility that In A Word may cease its publication at the end of 2010. I have found it so resourceful over the years. You do hit on some of the realities we face. Declining numbers of African American parishes and schools, and the overall lack of enthusiasm and energy for and in African American Catholic apostolates is so evident. Offices for Black Catholics have often been merged into Cultural Offices, and the sheer numbers of our Hispanic Sisters and Brothers outweighs attention to Black Catholic concerns by directors. The lack of enthusiasm from the National Black Catholic Congress Office is tangible. It has taken an incredibly conservative bent, reflective of, as you point out, an overall conservative energy in the nation. Our bishops far too often are Republican ward bosses without tee shirts, still naively thinking that politicians can be the answer, when they do not see that we have had the answer all along, the power and truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The energy of the annual "Pastoring" gatherings is a faded memory, as I alluded to in Hilbert Stanley's eulogy.



Msgr. Ed Miller at 2003 Pastoring Workshop

I am sure John Harfmann has shared with you that he and I have spoken about this and plan to try to draw together here in Baltimore, in late spring or early summer, a handful of the leadership in the African American apostolate to throw it all on the table and see what people are thinking and feeling, and what we are willing to "bring to the table" to have a revival of energy and enthusiasm. The richness and unique giftedness of African American Catholic spirituality is still a vital gift for the entire church, but life has regressed to people's doing their own thing, often out of a need to "survive". Many of the "pillars" have passed on, and their replacements (if there even are any) and those charged for ministry to and with African American Catholics in these days do not come with the background needed to be effective and knowledgeable. How we miss Joe Francis, Jim Lyke, Hilbert Stanley, to name a few.

January's IN A WORD, with the liturgical dancers on the front, suggested to me another caption than the printed "Every Song Has To End". It said to me, "Father, I Stretch My Hand to Thee, No Other Help I Know". It is time to stretch, to renew, and to move forward with a new articulation of what the "State" of African American Catholics might be today. Hopefully, your January issue may strike that spark.

God's Peace be with you, my Brother!
Ed Miller

"This is what God asks of you, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God." – Micah 6:8





Brother Dennis Newton, SVD

Brother Dennis Newton, SVD, 62, director of the Divine Word Mission Office, passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, April 5, 2014. Born in Waterloo, Iowa in 1951, Dennis was one of five children. He became a Divine Word Missionary in 1977, professed perpetual vows in 1983, and held a bachelor's degree in history from Divine Word College and an MBA from the University of Louisiana.

It was Brother Dennis who in 1982 conceived the idea of creating *IN A WORD*.

In the early days he was the main catalyst for the publication. He helped in advising, creating our first editorial board, shipping the monthly issues. He encouraged branching out into video documentaries for the Divine Word Missionaries and the African American Catholic community. He was an ardent supporter of our work until the day he died.

Brother Dennis graduated from Divine Word College in Epworth in 1974 and returned to the college in 1988 as a vice president. He served as vice president of Finance for five years, followed by six years as vice president of Admissions and Recruitment. In 1999, he was named vice provincial of the Society of the Divine Word-Chicago Province, which extends from Canada to the West Indies and from Nebraska to Massachusetts.

In 2002, the Society of the Divine Word Generalate in Rome named him national mission director. The Mission Office, founded in 1958, raises funds for Divine Word Missionaries in Africa, Asia, Oceania, Europe and South America. Their activities include developing healthcare clinics, building schools, and ministering in Catholic parishes.



1987 *In A Word* Editorial Board



Divine Word farms raise funds for the missions

Brother Dennis' creative vision brought together a hard working team at the Mission Office. His drive and inspiration was infectious. During his tenure as mission director, Brother Dennis oversaw the establishment of Divine Word Farms in Iowa, which help to raise funds for the missions outside of North America.

He was responsible for four farms—three in Iowa and one in Nebraska—including an experimental farm on which the Divine Word Missionaries teach missionaries from outside the United States how to produce agriculture without the use of pesticides and other chemicals. He implemented this program in order to help communities learn how to grow produce and raise livestock locally, thus saving transportation resources and diminishing the carbon footprint.

Along with leading the Mission Office, he advocated for the homeless. In 2001, he received Volunteer of the Year from Chicago's Residents for Effective Shelter Transitions (REST), which provides shelter and food for the city's homeless.



Brother Dennis with staff from *Two Lil' Fishes*

Brother Dennis served on the board of directors for *Two Lil' Fishes*, a meal program for the homeless in Chicago, and Leading India's Future Today (LIFT), a non-profit organization dedicated to developing leadership excellence among youth in Tamil Nadu, India.

Early in his career, he taught at Nanzan High School in Nagoya, Japan, and Holy Rosary Institute in Lafayette, La.; and served on the pastoral staff at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Lafayette. He also held several leadership roles in the Society of the Divine Word U.S. Southern Province, including provincial treasurer, director of Brother Formation, and retreat center director.

He will be missed but we take heart the words spoken by Father Michael Hutchins, SVD at the funeral Mass when he said... *Today, Dennis, as you stand in the warm and comforting light of the Risen Lord, may you recognize Him anew as the friend you fed and clothed and visited so well. We won't say now, "Go and take your rest." That would be wasted counsel. Rather, we say, "Go and intercede energetically for us before the Risen Lord. Seek for us all a full measure of His redeeming grace."*

in a word or two



Sister Eva Regina Martin, SSF

Sister Mary Eva Regina Martin, SSF (nee Gloria Martin) daughter of the late Felix Martin and Adeline Charles, entered eternal life on April 7, 2014. She was 74 years of age.

Sister Eva Regina, a native of Grand Coteau, LA, had close ties to the Society of the Divine Word.

One of the earliest African American priests was her uncle Father Leander Martin, SVD.

Sister Eva was enthusiastic and supportive of **IN A WORD**. After every issue she would write or call with high octane enthusiasm. What a good friend!

Her smile and love of people was widely known. So many people were touched by her life and goodness. So it was fitting that hundreds crowded into the Chapel Motherhouse of the Sisters of the Holy Family to sing her praises. The funeral Mass was fittingly celebrated in the Cathedral of St. Louis in New Orleans because of the many many people that came to give witness to her life.

As a consecrated religious, Sr. Eva Regina served the people of God as an educator, catechist, and retreat director. In Louisiana she taught at St. Raymond and St. Paul the Apostle in New Orleans; Our Lady of Lourdes in Abbeville. Also in Louisiana she was principal at St. Francis Xavier in Baton Rouge; Holy Ghost in Marksville; Immaculate Heart of Mary in Lafayette; and St. Nicholas, St. Philip Neri and Our Mother of Mercy in Houston, Texas.



In 1991 Sr. Eva Regina studied at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she earned her PhD in African American

Studies in 1994. In 1995 she served as the Director as well as a faculty member of the Institute of Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University in New Orleans.

Sister loved the Institute for Black Catholic Studies but she had to step down after she was chosen to be

Congregational leader for the Sisters of the Holy Family. She continued to be interested in the Institute and did what she could to promote the program,

She loved the Sisters of the Holy Family and vigorously pursued the Church to recognize Henriette Delille as a saint. To that end she gave many lectures and talks on the life of Mother Henriette Delille, who founded the Sisters of the Holy Family in 1842. She led a pilgrimage to Rome in the fall 2012 to promote the beatification.



Sister Eva Regina also held positions on various boards, including the American Bishops' Advisory Board for Black Catholics, Notre Dame Seminary and the Catholic Book Store in New Orleans. She had received many awards, most notably the Harriett Tubman award presented by the National Black Sisters Conference in 2002.

Sister Eva Regina taught spirituality classes part-time for the archdiocese and also gave numerous workshops and retreats on spirituality and education. In February 2013, just after Pope Benedict XVI announced he was resigning the papacy, the Sisters of the Holy Family drew the name of a cardinal participating in the conclave in order to pray for him. Sister Eva Regina pulled the name Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina, with whom she was unfamiliar. She prayed: "I know this one may not make it to the top, but be with him anyway, even though he is unknown." After he was elected pope, Sister Eva Regina said: "I am filled with joy as I read words of praise about his humility, his love of service to the vulnerable and the poor, his 'shoe leather' evangelization and his widespread capacity for goodness."

She will be missed but all who knew her would say that she is not sitting still in heaven. She is no doubt still smiling and hugging everyone she sees. For certain she is looking down on us and interceding with God on our behalf.

Thank you God for blessing us with the joyful life of Sister Eva Regina Martin!

Divine Word Missionaries is an international missionary community of over 7,000 brothers and priests. In 1905 the SVDs began working among African Americans in the Southern United States. Today, Divine Word Missionaries work in over 35 parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas.

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Web page can be found at <http://www.inaword.com>