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REV. JOSEPH ROTH, CANISIUS PROF, DIES

By Staff
May 18, 1989

A Mass of Christian Burial for the Rev. Joseph S. Roth, 73, a retired Canisius College philosophy professor, will be offered at 8 p.m. Saturday in Our Lady of Solace Church, Salt Springs Road, Syracuse.

Father Roth, a member of the Society of Jesus for 53 years, died Tuesday (May 16, 1989) in Murray-Weigel Hall, the Jesuit infirmary, on the Fordham University Campus in the Bronx, where he had been a patient for about a year. Visiting hours are scheduled for Friday and Saturday in the Jesuit Chapel at LeMoyne College, Syracuse. Burial will be in the Jesuit Cemetery in Auriesville.

A priest for more than 41 years, Father Roth served two assignments at Canisius. From 1949 to 1954, he taught philosophy, German and religion there. After other assignments, he returned to Canisius to teach philosophy from 1967 to 1981, when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 65.

Although he had asked to remain at Canisius after his retirement, he was transferred to LeMoyne College, Syracuse, over the objections of his colleagues in the philosophy department at Canisius.

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They contended he was not permitted to remain in the Jesuit community at Canisius because of his objections to the dismissal of a female faculty member, Dr. Marian Gray, who had accused the college administration of sex discrimination. The transfer, the philosophy staff contended, was a violation of academic freedom.

At the time, the college administration denied that Father Roth was being disciplined for his involvement in the case, and Father Roth declined to discuss the matter.

Father Roth got involved in the case when he was elected by the college faculty to serve on a committee that conducted a hearing on charges brought by the administration against Dr. Gray, who was then chairman of the Elementary Education Department. The panel concluded the charges had not been substantiated, but Dr. Gray was dismissed anyway.

A native of Syracuse, Father Roth entered the Jesuits in 1935 at St. Isaac's Novitiate, Wernersville, Pa. He was ordained June 22, 1947.

From 1954 to 1965, he taught philosophy at LeMoyne. Before returning to Canisius, he earned a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Ottawa.

Father Roth is survived by three brothers, Donald M. of Syracuse, Martin C. of Rochester, Mich., and Dr. G. Stuart of Punta Gorda, Fla.

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