

A SHORT ACCOUNT

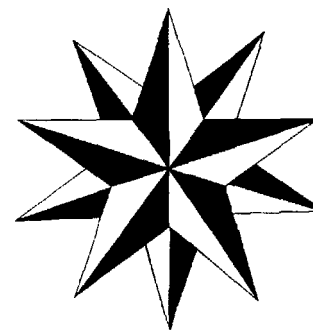
OF THE LIFE

OF

Brother Andrew Gonzales F.S.C.

(Prudencio Gonzales)

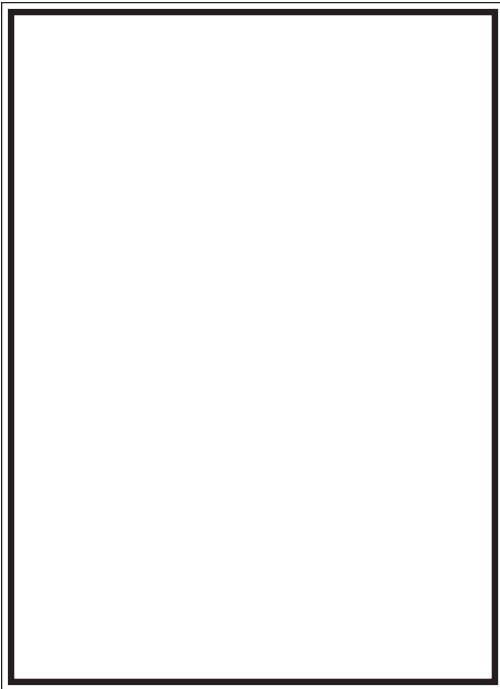
1906 - 2000



SIGNUM FIDEI

TOUR OF DUTY

- 1923 - St. Michael's High School, Santa Fe, NM
- 1927 - St. Paul's College, Covington, LA
- 1930 - St. Peter's College, New Iberia, LA
- 1931 - Cathedral High School, Lafayette, LA
- 1935 - Landry Memorial High School, Lake Charles, LA
- 1938 - Cathedral High School, El Paso, TX
- 1943 - Regiomontañó, Monterrey, MX
 - (Became Prefect of Students in 1946)
 - (Became Sub-Director of Community in 1949)
- 1951 - Cathedral High School, El Paso, TX
 - (Director/Principal)
- 1954 - St. Michael's College, Santa Fe, NM
- 1956 - St. Michael's High School, Santa Fe, NM
- 1957 - Mullen High School, Denver, CO
 - (January - Became Sub-Director)
 - (December - Became Director/Principal)
- 1959 - Mullen High School, Denver, CO
 - (Became Sub-Director)
- 1960 - Cathedral High School, Lafayette, LA
- 1961 - St. Michael's High School, Santa Fe, NM
- 1964 - Archbishop Rummel High School, Metairie, LA
- 1966 - St. Michael's High School, Santa Fe, NM
- 1978 - Cathedral High, El Paso, TX
 - (First Semester Only)
- 1978 - St. Michael's High School, Santa Fe, NM
- 2000 Died on February 16



Brother Andrew Gonzales, FSC
1906 - 2000

What is the measure of a life? Was a life full because it had length of years? Was the life unfulfilled because a person died young? Both ideas are illogical because lives are measured by the impressions left on the world, their intensity and goodness. Time and value, in fact, have little to do with each other; the good die young, old, and in between. To add to the dilemma, we read in Scripture: **“He dies a mere youth who reaches but a hundred years.”** (Isaiah 65:20) **Brother Andrew Gonzales** passed away on February 16, 2000, at the age of 94, a mere youth. Yet, he lived a full life for he left his impressions on the hearts of those who knew him. His ministry was filled with intensity and goodness. He entered the **Christian Brothers** at the age of 15 and was a spiritual son of **St. John Baptist De La Salle** for 79 years.

Brother Andrew (Prudencio) was born on January 8, 1906, in El Macho Pecos Canyon in New Mexico. He was the son of **Celestino Gonzales** and the former **Senobia Gonzales**, both deceased. He is survived by his brother, **Tomas Gonzales**, of Pecos, NM; a nephew, **Tommy Gonzales**, and wife, **Helen**, of California; nieces, **Nova Snyder** and husband, **Ross**, of Pecos, NM; **Sylvia Harding** and husband, **Ernest**, of Pecos, NM; **Mildred Melendez** and husband, **Kenneth**, of Ohio; and **Cordelia Garcia** and husband, **Reyes**, of Santa Fe, NM; aunts, **Isabel Gonzales-Mares-Hesch** and **Angelina Garcia** of Pecos, NM; and numerous other relative and friends.

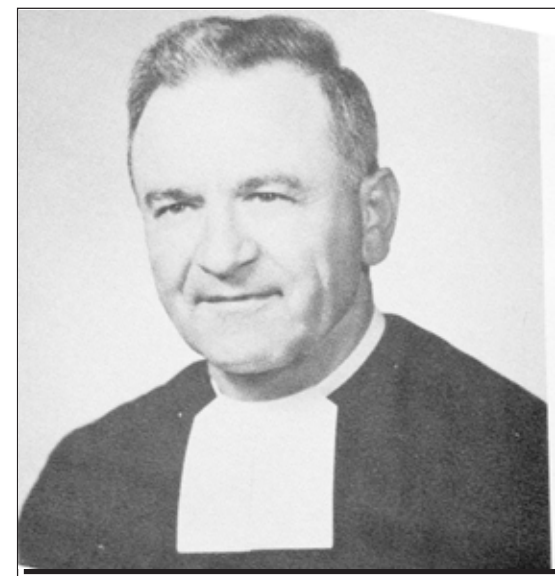
Prudencio Gonzales entered the **Junior Novitiate** of the **Christian Brothers** on April 4, 1920, in Las Vegas, NM. On October 21, 1921, he received the **Religious Habit** of the **Christian Brothers** and was given the name **Brother Andres Celestino**. The **Brothers** knew him, however; as

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Brother Andrew Celestino. Upon completion of the **Novitiate**, he was assigned to the **Scholasticate** on October 30, 1922, also in Las Vegas, NM. **Brother Andrew’s** first teaching assignment was in Santa Fe, NM, at **St. Michael’s High School**. During his fifty-five years in the classroom he was assigned to nine schools in the New Orleans - Santa Fe Province and was also **Prefect of Students** at **Regiomontano** in Monterrey, Mexico. In 1935, **Brother Andrew** received a B.A. in English from Manhattan College, in the state of New York. St. Mary’s University in San Antonio, TX, awarded him an M.A. in English in 1939. He made **Final Profession of Vows** on July 2, 1934. In addition to the many academic courses he taught, **Brother Andrew** coached sports, was a yearbook moderator, produced many dramatic presentations, and loved horses. **He** was **Director/Principal** at **Cathedral High School** in El Paso, TX, from 1951 to 1954, and **Director/Principal** of **Mullen High School** in Denver, CO, from 1957 to 1959. At **St. Michael’s College**, now named **The College of Santa Fe**, in New Mexico, he taught accounting and English literature for two years. In many of the schools and communities of the District, he held the position of **Bursar**.

Brother Edward DeReyna gives the following remembrance of **Brother Andrew**:

“It was in the mid 1950’s that I was assigned as moderator of the school band. My



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job was to help the band master with the band. This was a job I was not qualified for because I knew very little about bands and music. While he was at St. Michael's, Brother Andrew kept encouraging me and was regularly in attendance at band concerts. I had the good fortune of having lived with Brother Andrew for about forty years. I grew to realize that he was a very sincere religious, and dedicated to our schools and the Christian Brothers."

In 1962, **Brother Jeffrey Calligan** was assigned to **St. Michael's** to begin his teaching ministry. The following remembrance presents **Brother Andrew** as "being there" for the younger **Brothers** who were just beginning their teaching ministry:

"It was 1962 and I was a 'new' Brother, just out of the Scholasticate, doing practice teaching and living at the old St. Mike's in the heart of Santa Fe. I confess that community life as lived in the community was not what we expected.

Among the **Brothers** in the community was **Brother Andrew**. He was the Bursar for the school as I remember it. His nickname (never to his face) was 'tombstone' among the older **Brothers** because **Brother Andrew** did, indeed, present a serious face to most. But to those of us who were young and a bit lost, he was always quite helpful. In fact, often he would laugh at our answers to his question 'How are things going?' His laughter and smile were never derisive, they were always inclusive. They said (without the words), 'Been there, done that!' and it was a comfort knowing he was around.

Somehow in his silent seriousness there was a

loving ambience that went with him. He was an 'older' Brother to emulate in many ways.

In later years, when I would return to St. Mike's for one thing or another, I made it my business to sit with **Brother Andrew**, for at least one of my meals there. Or if that failed, I would sit by him in the reading room as he went through his daily ritual of reading the news. Our conversations were never long, but they still evoked the feeling in me that here was someone who had, indeed, 'been there' and 'done that,' and he was telling me that it was okay!

I am delighted that now he is in heaven watching, looking down on us. I have no doubt that he is still smiling knowingly and assuring me that while things are ever new, there's nothing new under the sun that need rob us of our peace and surety. God is ever there, leading and loving. I am grateful for my **Brother Andrew**, his life, his love, his fraternity."

One of the ministries conducted by the **Brothers** during the summer months was **Camp La Salle** in Pecos, NM. **Brother Andrew** was a strong supporter of the camp, especially the care of the horses. **Brother Abel Clement**, who lived with **Brother Andrew** for many years, gives the following remembrance:

"My relationship with **Brother Andrew** goes back to my first year of teaching at Cathedral High School in Lafayette, LA. He was to me an example of a good and devoted teacher. I admired the respect his students had for him. Years later, when I was assigned to take care of the horses at **Camp La Salle**, **Brother Andrew**

proved to be a big help. Being a 'Horse Lover,' Brother Andrew volunteered to help with the horses at the summer camps. His knowledge of horses and wise advice were a great help to me. He was very much appreciated for his work at camp."

Bursar Archbishop Rummel High School, Metairie LA, 1966



In 1964, Brother Andrew was assigned to Archbishop Rummel High School in Metairie, LA, as Bursar for the school and community. Brother Ephrem Hebert, who was the Director/Principal, remembers:

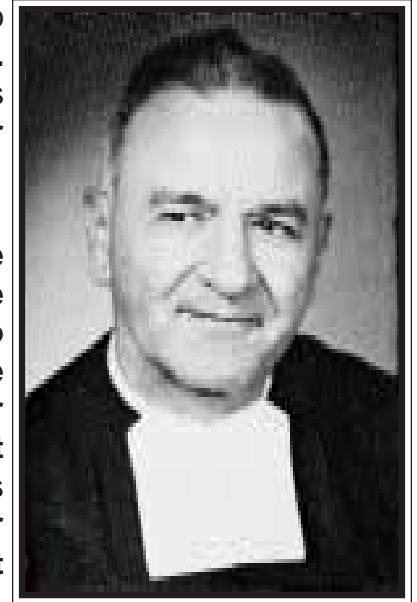
"He was a big support in the school and community; very efficient. Brother Andrew was always present for community activities and school events. Brother Andrew had a strong sense of duty."

The year 1966 saw Brother Andrew back

at his beloved St. Michael's. With the exception of about six months spent in El Paso, TX, he was to spend the remaining 34 years of his life at St. Michael's. During those years he taught Spanish, tutored, ran the school's business

office, helped at Camp La Salle, and distributed the school mail. In short, he kept active.

Brother Louis Welker, who was assigned to St. Michael's in 1977, gives these impressions of Brother Andrew:



"In the beginning he represented to me the old guard, trying to hold on to the past. He was the Senior Brother in the school and I just assumed he was against the younger Brothers. As time went on and I got to know Brother Andrew, I discovered that he was very supportive of my work in the school in the area of Religious Education and later as Disciplinarian. Quite often, we were on the opposite sides of the fence when it came to religious services. For Mass and Community Prayer, his preference was a short form and I preferred longer ones. It is funny how we change with time! Now that I'm older, shorter suits me fine!

In 1977, I was named Vocation Director for the Province. When I would return to St. Michael's to visit the school and community, Brother Andrew would always make me feel most welcomed. His kindness touched me very much!

Once he said to me: 'You need to come visit us more often.'

Another thing that impressed me about Brother Andrew, something that cannot be denied, is that the young people at St. Michael's really loved him."

With the passing of the years, **Brother Andrew** began to suffer from the usual disabilities of old age. He had to use oxygen to support his breathing. **Brother Samuel Martinez**, who was his caretaker for nine years, gives the following account of the last few months of **Brother Andrew's** life:

"I lived with **Brother Andrew** for the last nine years. It was at the time of Brother's illness that we became very close. He was a person who shared and told me that he appreciated what was being done for him and that he had full confidence in me.

The last few months were very stressful for Brother Andrew. His bout with congestive heart failure brought the best out of him for he realized that his time had come. Brother Andrew prepared himself with his spiritual confessor and was anointed with the Oil of the Sick. Brother Andrew was ready to face the future and his God.

His submission to the doctors, nurses, and to me were very admirable and humbling. I never heard him become negative about his health or the services he was receiving.

The last week of his life was an example of peace and serenity. His heart began to become weak because of the strokes he was having daily. It was at this time he was most helpless and humble. As I fed him his food, I could see his anxiety at not being able to do it

himself. This humility made an impression on me.

The last night of His life, his body was ready, his soul was ready ... so he died peacefully and with a serene spirit of joy."

When a man dies, everything dies except the remembrances of his works in the lives of others. **Brother Andrew's** ministry as a **Christian Brother** touched the lives of others, it was lived intensely, with no nonsense, and filled with much goodness.

A **Mass of Christian Burial** was held on Friday, February 19, 2000, at 10:00 a.m. at **Santa Maria de la Paz Catholic Community**. Interment took place in **Rosario Cemetery** in Santa Fe, NM.

MAY HE REST IN PEACE!

By: Brother Louis Welker, FSC
Director, De La Salle Christian Brothers
Lafayette, LA



Eulogy for Brother Andrew Gonzales
February 16, 2000

Family and friends of **Brother Andrew** and my **Christian Brothers**.

Thank you for sharing with us in this liturgy of the **Resurrection** as we are celebrating **Brother Andrew's** entrance into heaven.

We are all gathered here as a people of faith in the resurrection. And it is faith that we are recalling today as I attempt to reflect on my former teacher, my mentor in my first years of teaching, and my confrere.

We read in **St. Paul's** letter to the **Hebrews, Chapter 11**, that **ONLY FAITH ... only faith ... CAN GUARANTEE THE BLESSINGS THAT WE HOPE FOR, OR PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF THE REALITIES THAT AT PRESENT REMAIN UNSEEN.**

The apostle Paul goes on to state that **"IT WAS FOR FAITH THAT OUR ANCESTORS WERE COMMENDED."**

...and he speaks of Abel, Abraham, Moses, Gideon, Samson

...and we may add **Brother Andrew** to this list

...along with those who have brought us up in the faith
...those we have admired and tried to imitate
...our parents and relatives

...all these we commend to **God**, as we do today, **Brother Andrew Celestino (Prudencio Gonzáles).**

I am privileged today to be able to speak for **Brother Andrew's Brothers** with whom he has shared 80

years of his life.

I am happy to speak for him as he was my freshman Algebra teacher at **Cathedral High School** in El Paso, Texas.

He was my **Assistant Principal**, we called him **Sub-Director** in those days, and mentor as I spent my first three years of teaching in **El Regiomontañó** in Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico.

I have admired his leadership in those days, and have come to admire the manner in which he lived out his life as one of my older **Brothers**.

If there is one characteristic quality that **Brother Andrew** portrayed throughout the years, it was constancy and a sense of duty, of responding to the needs of the **Brothers** of our **New Orleans - Santa Fe Province**. I speak not only of his assuming the principalship in two of our schools, but more so of his responding to a call to **"go straighten out"** the senior class at **St. Paul's** in Covington as his second teaching assignment, and his answering a similar call for assistance in Denver, CO, in 1957 and in El Paso, TX, in 1978.

I thank **Mildred** for her wonderful words about her uncle at the rosary last night and **Cordy**, her husband and **"Conjunto"** for their singing to which I will refer later.

Both showed us the wonderful and warm family person **Brother Andrew** was, **Mildred** in her reminiscences and **Cordy** in the family spirit. We, at **St. Michael's**, were able to observe this when she visited with **Brother Andrew**, especially on his several recent birthdays.

I have but one bit of history that, perhaps, few of you have knowledge of and this concerns a return trip from Monterrey

in 1949, when most of the **Brothers** in Monterrey were called upon to make their annual retreat back in Santa Fe.

Brother Andrew had been asked by the Principal, **Brother Marcelino Lacas**, to procure airplane tickets for the return (the first airplane flight for most of us). He was told that he needed to have vaccination certificates for each of the eight **Brothers** traveling. **Brother Lacas** told him to secure these from our “family” physician. **Brother Andrew** secured these, all without any of us getting vaccinated and was refused by the airline ticket office as the “**certificates did not show that the vaccination had taken.**” He went back to **Dr. Nicolás** and had the certificates remade to show the results of the vaccination, again without any needle striking any of us and then was allowed to purchase our ticket. Of course, some of us were detained in El Paso for lack of valid vaccinations. Add that to your memoirs.

Cordy’s “Conjunto” sang for us, beautifully, the “**Pescador de Hombres**” and way back in 1920, **Prudencio Celestino Gonzales** told our **Lord** and **Savior**:

“**Señor, me has mirado en los ojos
sonriendo, has dicho mi nombre**”

and responded with “**en la arena**” ... really “**en el rancho**” “**he dejado mi barca**” ... “**mis caballos**” and “**junto a tí, buscaré otro mar.**”

His actual words, at profession as a **Brother**, were “**I consecrate myself wholly to you and will go wherever I may be sent, to do anything in the said society.**”

I have already referred how **Brother Andrew** lived those words over 80 years, and in particular on three separate occasions.

Monterrey was a fourth. He was asked to “**buscar otro país.**” It was here that he did the work of his **Lord** and as in **Cordy’s** hymn last night spoke “**his words in a foreign land**” and they did “**understand.**”

The warmth and respect that **Mildred** spoke about was so much in evidence on the several occasions when the **Regiomontañes** flew us back for various reunions.

What, then, besides this constancy and fidelity to his calling, do I recall?

“**His firmness and dedication in the classroom, severe with himself, no nonsense in school.**”

His sense of fairness and justice. I was a beneficiary of this, particularly in Monterrey. If it were not for his assistance then, I would not be a Brother today.

His patience in suffering in these last years. Perhaps, few of us know that his jaw and neck were a perduring pain for him during the last 70 years, the effects of a bus accident in the early thirties.

His gratitude for anything that was done for him in his last years. Brother Sam has spoken poignantly about this in Brother Andrew’s last days.

His prayerfulness. He was often in chapel, while others were about or on respective duties, in these last retirement years.”

One last reflection: **Brother Andrew** was a pioneer in the founding of our **Province**. While for many years, Santa

Fe had produced the greatest number of **Brothers**, there was a period of 20 years in the 30's and 40's when no candidates were accepted, and we have had none in the last 20 years here in Santa Fe. This, I am sure, affected him deeply.

May I close with a call to have others “**look back in the eyes**” of our **Lord** and “**follow him,**” as **Brother Andrew** did?

And may we all join in this prayer of the liturgy of this week:

“God, you live in those people who are just and sincere.

Help us to live such lives so that you may live in us.”

Brother Andrew, you have left your “**barca**” and have followed your **Savior** and **Lord** into **His eternal kingdom**. Remember us before **Him**.

By: Brother Paul Walsh, FSC
St. Michael's High School

