NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Jesuit Volunteer founder dies

Dan Morris-Young | Oct. 5, 2012

A memorial service will be held Friday in Spokane, Wash., for Jesuit Fr. John ?Jack? Morris, the priest who named and helped found the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in 1956 and who in 1982 led a 7,000-mile pilgrimage from Bangor Naval Base in Bremerton, Wash., to Bethlehem to call attention to the threat of nuclear weapons.

Morris died Sept. 30 at the Jesuit infirmary in Spokane after a long battle with cancer.

Born in Anaconda, Mont., Morris would have been 85 on Oct. 22.

After high school, Morris served in the U.S. Navy before attending Georgetown University and Regis College in Denver. He entered the Jesuit Novitiate at Sheridan, Ore., in August 1950. He was ordained a priest on June 16, 1962, in Spokane.

Morris helped found Senior Chore Service in Seattle in the early 1980s. Associated with Catholic Community Services, it remains a major source of assistance to low-income seniors.

In the 1990s, Morris worked in Ugandan refugee camps and helped direct retreats and recovery programs there. Morris returned to the U.S. in 2002 and did parish work at Rockaway, Ore., until failing health led to his retirement.

On April 4, Morris wrote a message to ?family, friends, Jesuit Volunteers and former Jesuit Volunteers? that was posted on the Facebook page of the Northwest Jesuits. Morris shared that he had been told he might only have a very short time to live and thanked ?all of those who...gave transfusions of prayer and hope.?

The 7 p.m. vigil service Friday will be at the Jesuit House Chapel on the Gonzaga University campus.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m. Saturday at St. Aloysius Church, which adjoins the university. Burial will take place at the Oregon Province Cemetery.

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