

“When he calls me to his side, I’ll come riding on my horse”

Bishop Dermott Molloy, who spent many years in Peru confronting material poverty and terrorism, died on August 19. In this article, Fr. Doroteo Borda thanks the bishop for his own priestly vocation.

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Below is a brief biography of Bishop Dermott Molloy, who died on August 19, along with an article by Fr. Santos

Doroteo Borda, who thanks "Tayta Demetrio" for his Christian and priestly vocation. ["Tayta" is a Quechua word meaning "Dad" and "Demetrio" is "Dermott" in Spanish.]

Bishop Dermott Molloy was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1930, and ordained a priest in 1955 for the diocese of Birmingham (Alabama, USA). Upon going to Peru as a missionary, he worked as a parish priest in Huancarama for 14 years, where he thoroughly learned the native Quechua language. In 1976 he was named auxiliary bishop of Huancavelica, and in 1982, titular bishop. The diocese is located in the heart of the Peruvian Andes, 3,800 meters above sea level.

He was a member of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, an association of priests intrinsically united to Opus Dei.

In Huancavelica Bishop Molloy oversaw the construction of the “Santa Teresa Jornet” nursing home for the elderly, the “Carmen Escrivá” center for the advancement of women, several soup kitchens, 16 churches and the city’s minor and major seminaries.

He translated the Bible into Quechua, and promoted many projects to strengthen the Quechua cultural patrimony, including the restoration of a number of colonial churches. He helped create a school of music employing the Suzuki method, which had a big social impact on many young people in the region.

In 2005 he suffered a series of debilitating strokes that left him partially paralyzed. After moving to Lima, each week priests from his former diocese made the eleven hour trip to the capital to visit him in the Daughters of St. Camillus nursing

home, where he offered all his sufferings for the Church.

Article by Fr. Doroteo Borda

Dear Tayta Demetrio:

Riding on your “white horse,” you have just left us for the Home of the Eternal Father after being sick for eight years. Since you are brave, our Father God blessed you with one of the heaviest crosses and you have borne it with elegance. You not only took up your cross with love, but you carried all of your sons on it too.

I recall very vividly the day I first went to confession with you. The church was packed with faithful and there was no room. You were seated behind the church on a bench under the cypress tree. Your hands rested on your knees, and I was at your right. I compared my dirty and dark hands with yours, clean and white. I thought you were an angel and I

wasn't mistaken, for you have lived every day of your life with so much simplicity and candor.

I remember how you spoke Quechua better than anyone and made it your second language. Now I understand that you identified yourself perfectly with the people of Huancarama: "To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men..." (*1 Cor 9:22*).

Whenever you came for a mission, after Mass the children of Arcahua waited eagerly for the delicious caramels you brought us. Truly, as Pope Francis asked, you were a shepherd "living with the smell of the sheep," since you shared our homes and customs and ate our humble peasant dishes. And you were happy to sleep at night under sheepskin covers.

It was in October 1975 that you first spoke about opening the seminary in

Abancay and you suggested that those of us who wanted to be priests should leave our names in the parish at Huancarama. My mother and sister realized that this was the moment for me to go with you to Abancay.

Whoever crossed your path experienced how big your heart was. You loved my humble family tenderly. I remember my father Gregorio being as excited as a child when you came to visit us, and you would laugh along with him, a child yourself.

You used to ride through our villages on your chestnut-colored horse, bringing joy to the hearts of the people. And you would sing: “I’ve asked Tayta God, and he knows it very well, that when he calls me to his side, I’ll come riding on my horse.” Now with your friend Enrique Pèlach, both of you excellent

horsemen, you gallop in heaven on white thoroughbreds.

Dear Father Demetrio: now that you are in the Home of the Eternal Father, ask that your sons may know how to ride as you did. That we be generous and seek nothing outside holiness. From the saddle of your white horse, bless your people of Huancarama and your beloved diocese of Huancavelica.

Thank you for being the instrument for my finding my priestly vocation and for the gift of holy Baptism by which you gave me life in Christ.

Your son entrusts himself to your intercession,

Santos Doroteo Borda López

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