

Father JOÃO AFONSO ZAGO

(December 2, 1935 – June 23, 2021)



João Afonso Zago was born in Videira - SC (Brazilian state of *Santa Catarina*), on December 2, 1935, son of Fiorindo and Giancemina Eberle Zago. He was baptised on December 15, 1935 and received the sacrament of Confirmation on April 28, 1944.

P. João joined the Camillian seminary in Iomerê-SC in 1949. On December 10, 1956 he began his novitiate and made his first religious profession on December 11, 1957.

From 1959 to 1964 he studied philosophy and theology at the Camillian *Pius XII* Institute in Jaçanã, São Paulo - SP. He made his solemn profession on February 11, 1960. He was ordained deacon on December 21, 1963 and consecrated priest on June 29, 1964.

Most of Fr João's religious and priestly life was dedicated to the formation of seminarians and to parish ministry. From 1965 to 1967, he was the vocation promoter and parish vicar of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário* parish. From 1967 to 1974, he was an assistant formator and professor at the Camillian Seminary of Iomerê and, for a certain period, also superior of the local community.

Returning to São Paulo in 1974, he served as parochial vicar and formation assistant in the seminary of *Vila Pompéia*. From 1983 to 1986 he was parish priest of *São Camilo* Shrine in Rio de Janeiro - RJ. From 1986 to 1989 he was superior of *São Camilo* major seminary in Ipiranga, collaborating in the formation of seminarians. From 1989 to 1991 he was again appointed superior of the community of *São Luiz Gonzaga* in Iomerê. From 1991 to 1992 he was superior of the *São Camilo* de Pinhais seminary - PR. In 1992 he was appointed Master of Novices in the community of *São Pio X* of Granja Viana – SP; during these years he was also superior of the community.

In 1993 he was appointed parish priest of the parish of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário*, remaining in this post for eight years. In 2001, he was transferred to the major seminary of Ipiranga as spiritual director of the seminarians and chaplain of the *São Camilo* hospital in Ipiranga.

From 2004 to 2021, he was parochial vicar of Pompéia parish. During these long years, he also assiduously visited the sick in *São Camilo* hospital. In April 2021, he was transferred to the *São Pio X* community in Granja Viana.

P. João was an excellent pastor who looked after the parishioners who came to him with zeal and care. For years he was involved in the ECC (*Encontros de casais com Cristo* = Encounter of married couples with Christ), EJC (*Encontros de jovens com Cristo* = Encounter of young people with Christ), EAC (*Encontros de adolescente com Cristo* = Encounter of adolescents with Christ), the groups of separated/remarried couples, and the different pastoral groups of the parish of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário*. Always available, he left a sign of faith in the lives of many people, especially among the faithful of the parish of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário*. With the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic, Fr João stayed with his family in Iomerê, for most of the year 2020. Due to an accidental fall, he returned to São Paulo – SP. Since the beginning of the year 2021, he underwent several surgeries, which have weakened his health. Unfortunately, when he seemed to be in the phase of a good clinical rehabilitation, on June 8, 2021, he was diagnosed with Covid-19 infection. He was admitted to the intensive care unit of the *São Camilo* Hospital in Pompéia. He died on June 23 at 2.30 pm, on the eve of the feast of St John the Baptist.

As he wished, his body will be transferred to his native city, Iomerê, where, after the funeral Mass, he will be buried in the family tomb at the municipal cemetery.