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Justice pioneer passes

by Dennis Coday

NCR Today

Joe Winter, who writes for *NCR* on occasion from Wisconsin and Minnesota, sent the following this morning.

Milwaukee -- A priest turned married man who was at the cusp of the social justice movement in Milwaukee, especially as it struggled greatly with race relations, died March 3. He was 94.

Eugene Bleidorn said he battled in his own mind to mix the challenges and responsibilities of being a priest and later becoming a married man, and that he felt black people in this country get short shrift. Later in life, he took on the first-of-its-kind Wisconsin Works program that sought to essentially end welfare in the state. He was an investigator with the state Equal Rights Division, and an affirmative action officer for the State Vocational School System.

He often stated -- and wrote in his autobiography -- that he was especially moved in his first years as a priest while working alongside Fr. James Groppi and other civil rights activists at St. Boniface Parish in Milwaukee, where he first was assigned.

Read more here: Bleidorn wanted to serve all people

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