



## **R.P. Silvano Votto, S.J.**

Father Silvano P. Votto, SJ, died in a hospital in San Jose, California, on December 16, 2020, after testing positive for Covid-19. He was 78 years old.

Fr. Votto was born in Gozzano, Italy, on January 8, 1942, the only child of Roberto Votto, a retired army officer, and U.S. born Rose Zavalloni Votto. In 1946, young Silvano and his mother relocated to San Francisco, where he attended St. Vincent de Paul school and St. Ignatius College Prep (class of 1959).

After two years of studies at the University of San Francisco, Fr. Votto entered the Jesuit novitiate at Los Gatos in 1962 to begin studies for the priesthood. Studious and with a gift for languages, Fr. Votto listed on his application an interest in “language, literature and philosophy” and competence in Greek, Spanish, Italian, French, German and Latin. His first assignment was to teach classical languages to young Jesuits at Loyola University of Los Angeles, who perhaps did not share his enthusiasm.

Theological studies were made at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley (1970-1973), and he was ordained a priest on June 2, 1973, in St. Mary’s Cathedral in San Francisco. He then began doctoral studies in Semitic languages at Berkeley, and later, in Rome. Fr. Votto’s primary work was his 14 years teaching biblical Greek and introductory Sumerian language and literature at Rome’s Pontifical Biblical Institute and giving conferences and lectures on biblical subjects around Italy.

By the late 1990s, his eyesight had deteriorated, and he returned to California working as a researcher and translator of Latin and Italian documents in the California Province Archives, then located in Los Gatos. After that work became impossible, he spent his time giving weekly lectures on Scripture to the Jesuit Center community, with only the Greek text at hand and relying on his memory. He also shared his great love for art with illustrated lectures on European paintings, which continued up to the time of his last illness.

Fr. Votto left no close relatives. He was predeceased by his parents and an uncle, the renowned opera conductor, Antonino Votto. (Despite rumors to the contrary, he was not related to baseball star, Joey Votto.)

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, a private funeral Mass was held at Sacred Heart Jesuit Center, Los Gatos.