

May 12, 2020-Tuesday, Fifth Week of Easter

Roger Schutz

Roger Schutz was the founder and prior of Taizé, the first ecumenical community in Europe.

Born on this day in Switzerland in 1915, Roger was ordained a minister in the Swiss Reformed Church. In 1940, as World War II loomed over Europe, the 25-year-old minister left Switzerland and traveled to the village of Taizé, in the region of Burgundy, close to the demarcation line which separated German-occupied France from free France. Soon Brother Roger and the Taizé community were sheltering Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis. After the war, they cared for orphaned children, as well as the German prisoners of war interned near Taizé.

On Easter Sunday, 1949, Brother Roger and six other men formally made a commitment to live a life of community, celibacy, and simplicity, devoted to peace and justice, in the monastic community of Taizé.

When he first arrived in Taizé, Brother Roger sought the local Catholic bishop's permission to use the village church.

The bishop referred him to the papal nuncio in Paris, Archbishop Angelo Roncalli. The two men became friends. When the archbishop became Pope John XXIII, he invited Brother Roger and his community to attend the Second Vatican Council.

In 1986, another pope, John Paul II, visited Taizé. In 2003, Pope Benedict XVI invited Brother Roger to attend the World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany, but the 90-year-old monk declined for health reasons.

Shortly thereafter, on August 16, Brother Roger was fatally stabbed by a Romanian woman attending a Taizé evening prayer at its headquarters in eastern France.

Thomas said to Jesus, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life." (John 14:4-5)

Thomas wants to know *the way*.

Three times in this short passage, *the way* is used. In the Acts of the Apostles, it will be used eight times. Before Christianity was ever called Christianity, it was called, *The Way*.

It was a certain way of life.

I'm familiar with some ways of life. A vegetarian. That's a way of eating. A vegetarian could explain that if you want to be one of these people, then this is what you do and don't do. Clear, simple focus.

A person in Weight Watchers could tell me how to eat and live as a Weight Watcher. A person in Alcoholics Anonymous could explain their way of life as an AA member. They all would probably refer me to systems, or books, or principles, or teachings.

There are two things anyone who was going to be a member in this community that was called *The Way* had to do:

- They had to know *The Way* so they could help other people live it.
- They had to really live *The Way*.

How am I doing? Do I really know *The Way*...and am I living it?

Spent some quiet time with the Lord