

November 17, 2007

**Death Notice No. 32 (To all Unit Administrations):**



The Region of Switzerland, recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **JOSEF STÄHLI**, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on November 7, 2007 in Sion, Switzerland in the 90<sup>th</sup> year of his age and the 72<sup>nd</sup> year of his religious profession.

Josef Stähli was born on May 18, 1918, at Flums (St-Gall Canton). He was the 9<sup>th</sup> in a family of 11 children, four of whom died in infancy. His parish priest spoke to him about the Marianists and Josef, at 15, went to the postulate at Martigny to know his vocation better. Two years later, in 1935, he went to St-Remy-Signeulx, in Belgium, to study his call thoroughly. On September 12, 1936, Bro. Josef made his alliance with Mary. On July 26, 1941, he committed himself for ever in the Society of Mary. He received his formation as a teacher at Freistadt (Austria) and at Sion.

For forty years, Bro. Josef practiced his professional activity in two schools: Altdorf and Brigue. In 1940, his superiors sent him to Brigue to teach the first primary class. In the following year, he left for Altdorf where he taught for 26 straight years, then returned to Brigue. From 1970 to 1973, he was principal of the primary school and from 1973 to 1980, he was director of the Marianist community.

During his entire teaching career, Bro. Stähli was active beyond the classroom. At Altdorf, he took up manual work, took care of materials for schools, and became involved with youth movements. Finally, he took care of the secretariat for 200 teachers. At Brigue, his extracurricular activity was impressive: he took care of Mass servers and was the treasurer and director of the community. He was a member of the committee on cultural films and became its vice-president from 1972 to 1975. In Church matters, he represented the religious of the Haut-Valais at the Synod 72 in the Diocese of Sion (1972-1976) and took care of the archives of that gathering.

It was not surprising to find our fellow brother very active during his long retirement (1980-2007). He rendered many services to the Marianist seminary Regina Mundi (1984-1990) and in community at Chaminade (Sion). He was unhappy if he could not render some service. This is how, during his whole life, Bro. Josef carried out the words of Mary to the servants at the marriage in Cana: *Do whatever he tells you!*

Bro. Stähli spent the last six months, from May to November 2007, at the Maison St-François, for he needed special care which we could no longer give him at Chaminade. By his joviality, he brightened the life of the other patients, as he had done throughout his life as a Marianist. He had long wanted to reach a hundred, when, suddenly, he was in a hurry to return to the Father's house. In a few days, his health declined and on Wednesday, November 7, 2007, he rendered his soul to God in the presence of two Sisters, the head-nurse and the superior of his community. May the Lord welcome his faithful servant into eternal happiness!

During the meal after the funeral Mass, one of his nieces told us an anecdote Bro. Josef was proud of. In the month of June 1938, when Fr. Jakob Gapp traveled to his native Tyrol, young Josef accompanied him to the train station at Freistadt and carried his suit-case. Was this the origin of his devotion to Blessed Jakob? As a matter of fact, he very often followed the novenas proposed by the Marianists of Austria by using a booklet, NEUN-TAGE-ANDACHT, published in 1986, a novena he recommended to the members of his family.