

The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **URBAN NAAL**, of the Cupertino, California, community, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on January 30, 2009, in Cupertino in the 82<sup>nd</sup> year of his age and the 60<sup>th</sup> year of his religious profession.

Urban was born in Chicago, Illinois, on March 25, 1927, to Julien and Florence (Schumacher) Naal. In his sophomore year at St. Philip High School in Chicago, he joined the formation program for the Servites (Friar Servants of Mary). Realizing he did not have a vocation for the priesthood, Urban left the program after several months. He worked at a clothing store, radio shop, the *Chicago Tribune*, and for his father as an electrical contractor, before being introduced to the Marianists by friends who attended Marianist schools.

At age 21, Urban entered the novitiate in Galesville, Wisconsin. He professed first vows in 1949 and perpetual vows in 1955 at Galesville. Bro. Urban earned a bachelor's degree in education in 1951 from the University of Dayton. He later received a master's degree in education from Marquette University in Wisconsin and a master's degree in history from DePaul University in Chicago.

Bro. Urban served for almost 45 years as a teacher of history and social studies. He believed students learned best independently and did not need to be spoon-fed information. "Teachers often 'condition' students rather than letting them learn and think for themselves," he said. Bro. Urban strived to make the classroom an "experience" and was known for his experimentation on behalf of better curriculum and teaching methods.

It was his mission to visit the countries he taught about so he could provide photographs and firsthand accounts. Bro. Urban financed his travels by earning three Fulbright grants and grants from the National Science Foundation, National Defense Education Act and the Kettering Foundation. He visited 35 countries, including India, Japan, Israel, Russia and Australia, to research classroom material and take photographs.

Several of Bro. Urban's photographs were made into commercial filmstrips for classrooms. Some are still in use today on video. He also developed a social studies program that received high marks from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Bro. Urban began his teaching career in 1951 at Central Catholic High School in San Antonio. He also taught at McBride, Chaminade College Preparatory and St. John Vianney in St. Louis, St. Joseph in Victoria, Texas, Nolan Catholic in Fort Worth, and Don Bosco in Milwaukee.

Bro. Urban moved to the West Coast in 1972. He taught at Archbishop Mitty High School in San Jose for two years. After a four-year assignment (1974-1978) at Nolan Catholic in Fort Worth, Bro. Urban was happy to return to the West Coast in 1978. He spent the last 15 years of his teaching career at schools in California, including Covallis

High in Studio City, St. Mary in Inglewood, and his longest stint, 12 years, at Junipero Serra High School in Gardena.

Bro. Urban also moderated sodality, student council, drama, school dances and football. He served as dean of academics, registrar and counselor.

“He was very well liked by parents and students and always maintained a cheerful manner with them,” said Fr. Ted Ley, who lived in community with Bro. Urban. “Urb deeply loved his students and kept in touch with many of them.”

In addition to teaching, Bro. Urban published 35 magazine articles on theology and education. He was a board member of *Social Education* magazine and served for 15 years on the National Council for Social Studies. His photography reached beyond the classroom. On a number of occasions his photographs were used at the end of the local television newscast in Gardena.

He served his Marianist community as a member of the house council and as a sub director. For a time in the early 1960s, he was a vocation coordinator. In this role, he would interview nearly every student on campus and invite them to consider religious life.

After retiring from teaching, Bro. Urban volunteered as a tutor and in soup kitchens, first in St. Louis and then in California. One of his special pastimes was distributing small crucifixes he purchased from the Holy Land. He gave out several thousand “to people I sensed God wanted me to give them to,” Bro. Urban said.

He enjoyed music and was a member of the Fort Worth Opera Company and sang solos and played the organ in several churches. For a number of years, he was the early Sunday morning cantor at American Martyrs parish in Manhattan Beach, California.

“I have seen over the years the reverence people can have for a brother they have known, but I have never seen greater respect and esteem for one of our men than what the American Martyrs parishioners showed for Urban,” said Fr. Ted. “He was truly dedicated to the Society of Mary and to Catholic education. I feel greatly blessed having known him and will always remember his warm greetings, ready conversation and continuous smile.”

May he rest in peace.

