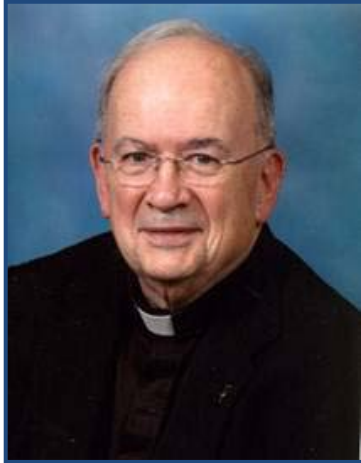


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April 11, 2011

Death Notice No. 17 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Province of the United States of America, recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, WILLIAM WIGHTMAN, priest, of the Our Lady of the Pillar Parish Marianist Community (St. Louis), who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on April 5, 2011 in St. Louis, MO, USA, at the age of 82 with 63 years of religious profession.

Bill was born to William and Cecilia (Stack) Wightman in St. Louis, Missouri, on May 17, 1928.

“It was the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, and my mother never forgave me for causing her to miss Mass on this holy day of obligation,” Bill said in 2007. He had three brothers and a sister

who became a nun in the St. Joseph of Carondelet order.

Bill first came in contact with the Marianists at Northside High School in 1942. He entered the postulate after his junior year in 1945. A year later, he entered the novitiate in Galesville, Wisconsin. Bill professed his first vows on August 15, 1947 and graduated from the University of Dayton with a bachelor’s degree in education in 1950.

Bro. Al Kuntemeier attended Northside with Bill and they were at the postulate together. Bro. Al remembers Bill as friendly, open, and charitable. “He was just a nice man,” Bro. Al said. “It was good to have him as a friend.”

Bill taught at McBride High School in St. Louis from 1950 until 1955. He taught religion, English, Latin and social studies. He also moderated the school paper and served as athletic director. Bill professed his final vows as a Marianist on July 10, 1951.

Bill traveled to Europe in 1955 and entered the seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland. Fr. Bill was ordained on July 19, 1959.

Fr. Bill returned to the United States to serve as a chaplain and teacher at the Marianist scholasticate in San Antonio, Texas, from 1960 until 1964. He then served at the novitiate in Galesville, Wisconsin, from 1964 until 1968.

He was excited to return to high school teaching at Assumption High School in East St. Louis, Illinois, in 1968. Fr. Bill earned a master's degree in religious education from Saint Louis University in 1974.

From 1975 until 1983, Fr. Bill taught and ministered at Daniel J. Gross Catholic High School in Omaha, Nebraska, and Thomas More High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Bro. Joe Grieshaber lived in community several times with Fr. Bill. Bro. Joe recalls when they borrowed the recreational vehicle of Fr. Bill's brother to visit all the natural springs around Missouri.

"His priestly functions were gracious and understandable," Bro. Joe said. "He was a kind, gentle man. I'll miss him."

Fr. Bill returned to his hometown in 1983 to serve as an administrator of the Marianist Retreat and Conference Center in Eureka, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis.

Beginning in 1987, Fr. Bill served for a decade as pastor at Our Lady of the Pillar Parish in St. Louis. He said this was his most satisfying assignment because it brought him close to a wide variety of people.

Fr. Bill took a sabbatical in 1997 to rest and improve his computer skills. He moved to Texas in 1998 to serve as a chaplain and director of the Marianist community at Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth for one year.

Fr. Bill returned to St. Louis in 1999 to serve as director of the Curé of Ars community. After six years there, Fr. Bill once again found himself at Our Lady of the Pillar Parish, this time as an associate pastor. He would spend the remainder of his life serving at his beloved parish.

"When I look back on my years as a Marianist and try to imagine what I might have done and become if I had not entered the Society of Mary, I can never come up with anything in which I might have been even minimally satisfied and happy," Fr. Bill said. "The people I have lived with and those whom I taught and have ministered to gave me more than I could have found elsewhere. These same people encouraged and counseled me as I made my way through a life that has been mostly very positive but has not been without some minor hills and valleys. God and his Mother have been very good to me!"

Fr. Bill will be missed by his Marianist brothers.

May he rest in peace.