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**Death Notice No. 10 (To all Unit Administrations):**



The Province of France, recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **ANDRÉ BOULET**, priest of the Les Cèdres Marianist Community (France), who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on July 6, 2012 in Sucy en Brie, France, at the age of 88 with 65 years of religious profession.

Fr. Boulet, whose health was always delicate, was himself amazed at his long life, since upon entering the novitiate he had hoped simply to be able to pronounce his first vows and work a little while in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

André Jean-Marie - this middle name was given him by his mother in honor of the saintly Curé of Ars - was born in Petite-Synthe, near Dunkerque, on October 11, 1923. At that time, the Church celebrated the Divine Maternity of Mary on that date and Fr. Boulet refused to see merely simple chance in the coincidence of dates. He was baptized ten days later with Jordan River water that his godfather had brought back from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He passed his childhood in the bosom of a numerous, comfortable and profoundly Catholic family in a large mansion surrounded by a park. That setting made him familiar with nature, which he loved to observe. 70 years later, he could outline from memory the detailed plan of the family property, which wartime bombardments had entirely obliterated. He loved to evoke that picturesque universe through piquant Flemish expressions. In school, only catechism and drawing interested him. At the time of his First Communion, his pastor gave him his first lesson in mental prayer, a lesson that remained ingrained in him for good.

War and exile came to put an end to those happy years. The family had a hard time. They found refuge in La Rochelle, where André, enrolled in the Lycée Fénelon, became acquainted with the Marianist brothers. He admired their pedagogy and appreciated their kindness. He was particularly impressed by the teaching and personality of Fr. Hoffer, his philosophy teacher and, before long, his spiritual director, to whom he confided his vocation that was aborning. After the Baccalaureate in mathematics, he prepared, at the Lycée Stanislas in Paris, the competition for the École Centrale, but was stopped dead in his tracks by a crisis of hemoptysis that occurred during the tests of the competition, which required his first stay in a sanatorium. Tuberculosis was then often fatal, and his vocation matured in contact with this very special milieu of TB patients, where the younger patients were without a future. He saw many of his comrades die, he prepared several of them for death, and already tried out on them his abilities to bring peace and consolation.

Entering the novitiate at Antony to become a teaching brother, he lived through that time of formation with a profound joy and pronounced his first vows on November 1, 1946. His scholasticate allowed him to complete his scientific training, but a relapse of tuberculosis sent him for another sanatorium stay, this time at Plateau d'Assy, where he began studies in theology and Sacred Scripture.

He was then called by his superiors to the priesthood and was sent to Fribourg to do his seminary. He was ordained on July 18, 1954, by Bishop Haller, then in 1955 was named Director of the Marianist Scholasticate at the Villa Saint-Jean. Over the next 13 years, he put all his teaching and chaplaincy talents to work, complementing these activities with courses for sisters of several congregations in Fribourg and a ministry of

confessor for the Sisters of Saint-Paul. Be it mathematics, physics, astronomy, theology, Sacred Scripture, spirituality, he loved to teach and, starting out from created things, to open minds and hearts to the mystery of God. He often remarked that, having so often had poor teachers in the course of his studies, he knew what not to do!

In September 1968 Fr. Boulet was assigned to the Résidence Chaminade in Paris where, besides being a provincial councilor, he continued his teaching activity before very different audiences, among them the novices at Art-sur-Meurthe. These years were marked, above all, by the refounding of Marianist lay groups, whose importance Fr. Boulet grasped very quickly for a return to the spirit of Fr. Chaminade and for the renewal of the entire Marianist Family. He multiplied the groups of the Marianist Fraternities, devoted himself to their spiritual animation, put in place structures and means of formation, directed the magazine *Vie et Fraternité marianistes*, where his pedagogical talent, twinned with that of a writer, found a new means of expression. He went deeply into the insights of the Founder and put the spiritual maternity of Mary at the heart of his teaching, encouraging lay persons to consecrate themselves to her in the spirit of Fr. Chaminade. From 1975 to 1979 he was also the National Chaplain of the Legion of Mary, a movement whose missionary zeal he admired and which he mentored with his advice for restructuring. He had the joy of meeting its Founder, Frank Duff, in Ireland and retained a strong remembrance of that encounter.

October 1982 opened a new stage. Fr. Boulet was assigned to Antony as director of the Maison Saint-Jean. He devoted himself to the mentoring of his aged brothers, whom he “wanted to make happy because they had the right to a happy old age after years of untiring work and devotion,” all the while continuing his activities with the Fraternities, the direction of the *VFM* magazine, and his courses for the Marianist novices. Many people from every background found in him a spiritual guide who was sure, kindly, available and welcoming.

In October 1992, he left to become chaplain and formator at the Marianist novitiate of Art-sur-Meurthe, continuing his multiple activities, and adding the writing of his first book, entitled: *Petite catéchèse sur Marie, Mère du Christ et Mère des hommes*. In 1998, he rejoined the Résidence Chaminade in Paris as chaplain and, even if the rhythm of his life slowed down a bit, he continued to respond to numerous invitations, especially for preaching retreats.

In March 2006, he was named chaplain at the home for seniors at Les Cèdres in Sucy-en-Brie. There he wrote his last book, *10 Paroles pour suivre le Christ*, in which reveals the heart of his own religious and priestly life, peppering it with biographical memories. His health began to deteriorate. More and more weakened by repeated hospitalizations, he experienced the trial of complete dependency. He lived it in a spirit of abandonment to the Divine Will, calmly preparing himself for the Face to face that he longed for and for which all his life had prepared him. The Lord came to take him in his sleep on July 6, 2012, a few hours before dawn.

Endowed with many talents, which he always put at the service of God and his brothers, with interests in many areas, sensitive to the arts and in awe before the beauty of the Creation, with a heart faithful in friendship, deeply attached to his natural family and to the Society of Mary, happy in community, often covering over his acute sensitivity with a bit of humor, Fr. Boulet was above all a man of faith, giving priority to union with God, to the “inner man,” as a faithful disciple of Fr. Chaminade. His delicatessen and his goodness, the sureness of his judgment, the rectitude of his faith, made of him a spiritual guide who was sought out and loved, a true “Father” who made himself “all things to all men” and to whom many came in search of consolation. He was willing to accept only one compliment: when someone called him “good,” he was deeply touched and drew joy from it, so much did he live his priesthood as a participation in the divine Paternity.

At the announcement of his death, someone remarked: “he was a crystalline man.” But, perhaps, for him, should the spelling be tweaked and written: “he was a Christalline man”?