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Death Notice No. 28 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Region of Italy recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **AMBROGIO ALBANO**, of the Santa Maria Community, Rome, Italy, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on October 26, 2014 in Rome, Italy, at the age of 89 with 73 years of religious profession.

Ambrogio was born November 1, 1924, in Vercelli (Piemonte) to Alessandro and Natalina (Gregori). He was a good student in elementary school at the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Throughout his life he enjoyed returning to Vercelli to visit his parents and his sister Maria, as well as to meet with his former classmates, with whom he shared cultural and religious interests. The bond with his native city became even more meaningful when, in January 1969, the Marianists established a community on the outskirts of Vercelli in the Cappucini district. For Ambrogio that was a dream come true, and it was his own task as Provincial Inspector to confirm the operational decisions concerning the house and the apostolic work in line with our charism.

Ambrogio came to know the Marianists through a meeting with one of the brothers. In 1935 he entered the postulate in Pallanza, making his novitiate there also, and on November 3, 1940, he professed his first vows in the Society of Mary. He proceeded to the scholasticate in Rome to earn his teacher certification and the *Maturità* in classics (high school diploma).

On July 21, 1946, Ambrogio made his perpetual profession in Brusasco (Torino) as a clerical student. With a thesis on “The lyrical-dramatic work of Paul Claudel” he earned his degree in Letters at the University of Rome in 1952. He completed his academic training with a Diploma in Physical Education and, in Paris, the high school teaching certification for French language and literature (1961). In the meantime, in a letter to his superiors, he declined further study towards the priesthood, although he had been approved for it.

In 1954-55 he was in Giove (Terni, Umbria) as Brother Novice Master with Fr. Luigi Frey. Just after the completion of the construction of the Marianum residence for university students (next door to Santa Maria in Rome) in 1958, Ambrogio was called upon to direct it until 1963, when he was named Provincial Inspector, a responsibility that was renewed for a second mandate through 1973.

The General Administration then called him to Via Latina 22 for the General Archives of the Society, where he worked until 1999 with great competence and organizational capacity. But he never abandoned the field of the direct apostolate: he was present as an animator in Santa Caterina da Siena Parish in Via Latina, next door to the General Administration, where he directed a catechetical-biblical group.

Gifted with a great intellectual acuity and a good memory, joined with a notable capacity for work and good organization, within the Italian Province he worked in the field of education at the

national level (for many years he was a councilor of FIDAE [Federation of Institutes of Educational Activity], the national organization of Catholic schools. In trying to update the Italian Marianist schools, he ran into opposition in the rigidity of some brothers who were having difficulty dealing with new laws imposed by the State of Italy.

Alert to the cultural changes of the 1960's and 1970's, Ambrogio promoted an assembly of the Marianists on the topic of secularization, a phenomenon already showing up in the Church's cultural context.

At the same time, he prodded his younger Italian confreres to do historical research about the Society of Mary. He liked to quote a sentence from St. Augustine: "Strictly speaking, we do not have three times: past, present and future, but only the present: the present of the past, the present of the present, and the present of the future" (*Confessions* 20, 26). And he himself added: "Within the perspective of the *Magnificat* in this unique present, remember the great works accomplished by God, give thanks for his gifts and divine mercy, entrust the Marianist charism to the blessings of the generations to come."

Given that our Marianist patrimony for the most part was in the French language, Ambrogio began the project of the *Quaderni Marianisti*, some fifty publications on Marianist spirituality; these were followed by about forty further publications of the *Corpus Chaminade*, which contained all the letters of Fr. Chaminade from 1784 to 1843. The translations were almost all done by young Italian brothers.

Finally, on the occasion of the Centenary of the Italian Marianists (1887-1987), Ambrogio created twenty *Quaderni Marianisti del Centenario*, which recounted the history of the Province, of the individual houses and communities, as well as some small publications with biographies of brothers who were not so well known.

All the confreres in the Marianist world are acquainted with the mass of work that Ambrogio Albano developed: from the reorganization of the General Archives (AGMAR) to the publication of twenty-four volumes of *Répertoire analytique des boites* [Analytical list of the storage boxes], to the *Répertoire générale ou Titularium* [General list or Titles list], which made possible the awareness of the documents of the archives and how to access them for consultation by researchers.

Not the least important of his work were the valuable seven volumes of *Écrits et paroles*, [Engl. *The Chaminade Legacy*] which contain all the writings of the Founder: an immense labor, coordinated by Ambrogio and made possible by the team of well deserving Marianist scholars who worked with him for decades.

The Society of Mary owes a great debt of gratitude to Ambrogio for his stay at Via Latina; and Ambrogio owed much to the formation given him by the Society of Mary. He himself always recognized the strong incentives from influential friends within the Italian Church and in international circles. His work and presence were recognized, as for example his activism in the Central Directorate of Italian Catholic Action, especially in the early postwar years.

In 1999 Ambrogio left Via Latina for the Roman communities, first in San Giovanni, then at Santa Maria, where he spent his last years in the infirmary, suffering from Alzheimer's Disease, which sapped his once robust and athletic physical strength. His loss of ability to write and to read constricted him to a humiliating silence.

The Blessed Virgin welcomed him into heaven on October 26, 2014, a few days before his 90th birthday (he was born November 1), to the heavenly banquet with all the other brothers on the Solemnity of All Saints. R.I.P.