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Death Notice No. 25 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Region of Austria recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **ALOIS LEITNER**, priest, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on October 19, 2015 in Freistadt, Austria, at the age of 77 with 61 years of religious profession.

Fr. Leitner dedicated a great part of his life to the Bible apostolate and to Marianist spirituality, establishing the Greisinghof House as an important center for those purposes.

Alois Leitner was born June 17, 1938, in Höf in the parish of St. Veit (Upper Austria) in a farm family; he was the seventh of eight children of Franz and Theresia (née Nimmervoll) Leitner. For six years he attended the elementary school at Waxenberg before entering the Marianist postulate and school at Freistadt in 1950. From 1952 to 1953 he attended the teachers' training college at the Marianum in Vienna as a postulant. On September 1, 1953, Alois began his novitiate at Greisinghof, and professed first vows there on September 2, 1954. From 1954 to 1958 he continued his preparation for teaching in Vienna, as a scholastic.

For one year (1958/59) he taught at the Marianum in Freistadt and was prefect in the boarding section. On July 26, 1959, he made his perpetual profession. From 1959 to 1962 he was prefect at the Vinzentinum (a student home) in Salzburg, and at the same time, he did his philosophical studies in that city. From 1962 until 1966 he studied theology in Fribourg (Switzerland). He was ordained a priest on April 11, 1966, in his home parish of St. Veit by the Bishop of Linz, Franz Zauner. After ordination, he worked for two years in our schools in Vienna (Marianum and Albertus Magnus) as a chaplain. From 1968 to 1976, Fr. Leitner worked as teacher and chaplain in Linz.

In the year 1974 he took over diocesan responsibilities as director of the *Bibelwerk* which took him to many parishes. In 1975, he joined the *Glaubensinformation* (information on faith) to the *Bibelwerk*. In that year, the idea was born to center these activities at the former novitiate Greisinghof, inviting people from the parishes to come there for courses. In 1976, the transformation of the house as a *Bildungshaus* (house for formation) was finished, and Fr. Leitner started his work as priestly director of the house, alongside with Bro. Siegfried Klein as manager. The high point of his efforts was certainly the establishment of the Bible School at Greisinghof, in 1984. Fr. Leitner gave the house and especially the church its distinct style, in atmosphere as well as in architecture.

He dedicated also much attention to the people from the surroundings who came – and continue to come – to the religious services in the church.

Another important aspect of Fr. Leitner's activity was the spirituality in our Province or Region. For many years, he was the Provincial Assistant for Religious Life. Inspired by the American and other European provinces, he founded in 1987 the *Marianistische Apostolatsgruppe* (MAG), i.e. fraternity groups of dedicated laypeople.

Health reasons motivated Fr. Leitner in 1991 to reduce his responsibilities. He moved from Greisinghof to Freistadt, but continued giving some courses at Greisinghof until recent years. When he felt better, he took charge of the nearby parish of Weitersfelden in 1998 where he worked with great enthusiasm until 2008. During the last years, he was the superior of the small community at Freistadt. He knew that his heart was in very bad shape in spite of the doctors' efforts. Nevertheless, his sudden death came as a shock to everybody.

May he find the fullness of life in God. May the seeds of the Gospel which he sowed bring much fruit. R.I.P.