

The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **JOHN BLANK**, of the Alumni Hall community in Dayton, Ohio, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on April 14, 2009, in Dayton in the 88th year of his age and the 69th year of his religious profession.

John was born in Cincinnati on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, February 11, 1922, to Charles and Mary (Ernst) Blank. His family was deeply religious with a special devotion to Mary. John's mother prayed the rosary every morning, and when John was stricken with polio at age 10, the family prayed the rosary nightly at his bedside. "I believe it was the faith of my family, in particular my mom, that pulled me through this critical time of my life," John said.

He attended Holy Angels parish school in Cincinnati and was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. The assistant pastor gave the students weekly talks on missionary life that left a lasting impression on John. He was determined to enter the seminary upon eighth grade graduation, but his pastor advised him to first finish high school.

John enrolled at Purcell High School in Cincinnati and met Bro. Stephen Karpi, SM, who greatly affected his life. Bro. Karpi, who was John's Latin teacher, died suddenly a few months into the school year. The last line of Bro. Karpi's memorial tribute read: "Would some bold Cavalier take his place?" John responded to the call, and in 1936, at age 14, he entered the postulate of the Society of Mary at Mount Saint John in Dayton.

In 1939, he entered the novitiate at Mount Saint John and chose as his motto: *Quod isti et istae, cur non ego* (If others can do it, so can I.) Bro. John professed first vows in 1940 and perpetual vows in 1944 at Mount Saint John.

He earned a bachelor's degree in 1943 from the University of Dayton and a master's degree in religious education in 1955 from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

Bro. John spent the first 22 years (1943-1965) of his almost 70 years of ministry teaching at several high schools in Ohio. He taught religion, Latin, English and driver's education at Chaminade in Dayton, Cathedral Latin and St. Joseph in Cleveland, and Archbishop Moeller in Cincinnati. He also spent a year (1960-1961) as a teacher at Chaminade in Mineola, New York. In addition to teaching, he moderated the vocation, booster, sodality, yearbook and father's clubs.

One of his students at St. Joseph's was Fr. Ken Templin, SM, who recalls a very patient, warm and loving religion teacher. "When I was a freshman, he asked me to help him with something," said Fr. Ken. "It turned into a four-year relationship as a member of the yearbook staff." Fr. Ken said John was the first Marianist to invite him to enter the Society of Mary and encouraged him to go on vocation retreats. "A letter he sent to me while I was having a rough time in the novitiate said, 'What others have done, why not I?' I've never forgotten that."

Fr. Ken lived in community with Bro. John at Archbishop Moeller. “He taught me how to be a good community member, how to drive and how to have fun.”

In 1965, Bro. John received his chance to become a missionary when he was assigned to teach at St. Joseph Secondary School in Cornet, Chahwan, Lebanon. During his 11 years in Lebanon, he taught English and religion and served as a librarian and counselor.

Bro. John returned to the U.S. for a year in 1974 to teach again at St. Joseph in Cleveland before leaving for another foreign destination—St. Paul’s College in Altona North, Victoria, Australia. He taught at St. Paul’s a total of nine years (1976-1981 and 1983-1987) with a two-year sabbatical between stints.

Rounding out his years of missionary work, Bro. John spent his last 10 years of teaching (1987-1997) at St. Joseph International School in Yokohama, Japan, where he taught English.

Fr. Lee Sciarrotta, who served with Bro. John at Emmanuel Parish in Dayton, where he ministered after returning from Japan, described John as a kind and gentle man who loved to care for the community dog, Angel, and helped tutor youngsters in Latin.

John was a delight, according to Fr. John Putka, director of the Marianist community he lived at until recently on the campus of the University of Dayton. “He was a favorite in the community as well as with the staff at UD. John had a multitude of ‘fans,’ and they frequently had their pictures taken with him,” said Fr. John. “He also kept in touch with many former students and was especially pleased with his correspondence with King Juan Carlos of Spain, a former student.”

May he rest in peace.