

February 8, 2008

Death Notice No. 2 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **ROBERT KELLY**, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Feb. 1, 2008, in Dayton, Ohio, in the 85th year of his age and the 60th year of his religious profession.

Bro. Bob was born in Brooklyn, New York, on July 22, 1923, to Michael and Mary (Carey) Kelly. He attended St. John the Evangelist Parochial School in Brooklyn where he served as an altar boy. As a youth he was drawn to religious life and admired the Marianists who were his teachers at St. Michael's Commercial High School in Brooklyn. Bro. Bob came to St. Michael's after leaving another high school. The school principal, a Marianist, told him he was welcome at St. Michael's and it was where the Blessed Mother wanted him to be.

After graduating in 1941, he worked at Arthur H. Dinsmore, an insurance broker. A year later, he enlisted in the United States Navy to serve in World War II. Bro. Bob was a Yeoman Second Class stationed on the USS Chepachet, a fleet replenishment oiler. While under attack, his ship shot down an enemy plane—a special accomplishment for an ammunition vessel. After three years of active duty in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Bro. Bob's interest in religious life continued to grow. He was honorably discharged from the Navy in 1945 and took a job with the Veteran's Administration. At the same time, he began consulting various religious orders. High school memories of the Marianists led him to the Society of Mary.

At age 23, Bro. Bob entered the novitiate in 1947 at Beacon, New York. His scholasticate years were spent at Maryhurst in Kirkwood, Missouri (1948), Mount St. John (1948-1951) and the University of Dayton, where in 1951 he received a bachelor's degree in education. Bro. Bob professed first vows in 1948 at Beacon and perpetual vows in 1952 at the University of Dayton.

In 1952, Bro. Bob began a 45-year career in education. His first assignment was a one-year stint at Our Lady of the Holy Rosary elementary school in Dayton. For the next 15 years, Bro. Bob taught business, religion, English and driver education at the secondary school level and also served as an assistant principal, principal and school business manager. His assignments included Cathedral Latin School in Cleveland, Chaminade High School in Dayton, Hamilton High School in Hamilton, Ohio, and Memphis Catholic High School in Tennessee. Bro. Bob also was director of the first Marianist community in Memphis. During this time, he earned a master's degree in education from Ohio State University.

In 1967, Bro. Bob boarded the Queen Mary to embark on a new adventure in his career. He was one of three Marianists sent to establish the first Marianist community and school in Dublin, Ireland. The school, St. Laurence College, began operation that same year with Bro. Bob in charge of finances. In the early years, Bro. Bob was the heart of the school and community. "He was extremely generous with his time," said Bro. Fred Rech. "He was always willing to drive to collect visitors, make cherry pies, chat with brothers when they were down, and frequently make peanut butter sandwiches for those in need."

Bro. Bob managed the finances for the school and community and taught religion and business courses until 1981. At school he had a smile for everyone and was ready to listen to a child in trouble or assist a teacher in need of help. "All who worked with and knew Kelly loved him," said Bro. Fred. "He always had time to sit down for a cup of tea and a chat. He loved to listen and at the same time dispense his fatherly advice."

After a one-year sabbatical (1981-1982), Bro. Bob was off to another foreign destination: St. Joseph College in Yokohama, Japan. Bro Bob taught business, typing and accounting. He also served as principal and as a member of the school's board of directors until 1996.

Bro. Joseph Scheible, who was in the novitiate and in Japan with Bro. Bob, remembers his good cheer and loud, happy laugh. "In Japan he was always concerned for the welfare of his teachers, students and staff," said Bro. Joseph. "He was a good friend to me and to all the community members."

Fr. Jim Mueller, who also lived with Bro. Bob in Japan, said he was always happy. "Bob was one of the best community persons I ever knew. He was extremely welcoming to those who came to the community and would give a helping hand wherever and whenever needed."

Bro. Bob was a diabetic but loved food, especially desserts. Health issues brought him back the United States in 1996. He retired from active ministry and served as a greeter at the Marianist retreat center at Governor's Island in Huntsville, Ohio. Bro. Don Smith remembers how proud Bro. Bob was of the photo sent to him by the Veteran's Administration of his ship and crew from the USS Chepachet. "He delighted in sharing the photo and his pride in serving his country," said Bro. Don. At Governor's Island, Bro. Bob was a big television fan and a faithful viewer of "Judge Judy."

A continual decline in health due to complications from diabetes necessitated his move in 2002 to Saint Leonard, the Franciscan healthcare center in Centerville, Ohio. Later that year, he moved to Mercy Siena healthcare center in Dayton. Bro. Don said that when he visited Mercy Siena, Bro. Bob always had a big smile and cheerful greeting for him.

One of his former students summed up the feelings of many: "I will always have great memories of the little round man!"

May he rest in peace.