

May 26, 2008

Death Notice No. 12 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Province of the United States of America, recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **STANLEY MATHEWS**, of the Mercy Siena Gardens community, Dayton, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on May 18, 2008 in Dayton, Ohio, in the 86th year of his age and the 66th year of his religious profession.

Stan was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on July 6, 1922, to Stanley and Julia (Bien) Mathews. His father died when he was very young, but Stan was surrounded by a loving mother, sister and uncles who clearly influenced his call to religious life and love for the Cincinnati Reds. A First Communion or Confirmation at the Mathew's home was celebrated with a trip to Crosley Field to see a Reds game. The combination of family, religion and baseball made a lasting impression on Stan.

At age 18, after graduating from St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati, Stan was sure of his call to religious life. Nine of his classmates had entered religious life, including several of his best friends. He also had an uncle who was a priest in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. At his mother's request, however, he attended two years of college at the University of Cincinnati before entering the novitiate of the Society of Mary at Beacon, New York. Although he grew up a few blocks away from Purcell High School, a Marianist school, Stan had never met a Marianist. He was drawn to the order for its devotion to Mary, teaching ministry and brotherhood.

Interestingly, while Stan was in formation as a Marianist, his mother, who had been widowed for many years, joined the Sisters of Notre Dame and also became a religious.

Bro. Stan professed first vows in 1942 at Beacon and final vows in 1945 in Dayton.

He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Dayton in 1943 and earned master's degrees in education (1949) and library science (1952) from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

In 1944, Bro. Stan began his career as an English teacher at Cathedral Latin in Cleveland. He soon added journalism advisor and counselor to his duties at the school, where he served until 1951. "At Cathedral Latin, I remember Bro. Stan as a listener, par excellence," said Bro. Joe Spehar, who worked with him. "Brothers would come to his room to talk and, though he had much to do himself, he never gave the slightest hint that his work was more important than their concerns." Fr. Joe Lackner said that when speaking with Stan, you were the focus of all his attention. "He really communicated presence."

An avid reader, Bro. Stan put his library skills to work at the University of Dayton. In 1952, he became the first full-time librarian at the Marian Library, where he served until 1958. According to Bro. Bill Fackovec, Bro. Stan brought great interest and vision to the library's potential as a center of research. Bro. Stan edited two Marian anthologies, "The Promised Woman" (1953) and "Queen of the Universe" (1957). He also helped edit "The Marianist," a popular periodical published by the Society of Mary. During this time, Bro. Stan taught English and education at UD and served as a counselor for student residence halls.

In 1959, he returned to Cleveland as principal of St. Joseph's High School, where he was known as a meticulous planner and a loved and respected role model for students and faculty. Fr. Gene Contadino was a new teacher in 1962 with Bro. Stan as his principal and biggest supporter. "He was marvelous. He was one of the kindest men I have ever known and one of the toughest advocates for better conditions for lay teachers," he said. Fr. Gene said Bro. Stan would introduce his staff to the school PTA each month—72 teachers—off the top of his head. "That's how well he knew us."

Another colleague at St. Joseph's, Fr. John Putka, remembered Bro. Stan not only as a beloved and enlightened administrator but a powerful example of what it means to be a Marianist. "He had a profound impact on all who knew him, and his legacy will endure for generations to come," said Fr. John.

Former St. Joseph's student, Fr. Martin Solma, was grateful for Bro. Stan's wisdom and guidance throughout his spiritual journey. "He was one who could empower people, capitalizing on their gifts and talents."

Bro. Stan left St. Joseph's in 1965 for a three-year term as principal at Chaminade High School in Dayton. At the same time, he served as president of Dayton Junior College. In 1968, he returned to teaching at UD and began a six-year stint as educational programmer for the Bergamo Center for Renewal in Dayton. At Bergamo, he organized programs such as the Black America Workshop and World Hunger Workshop. From 1970 to 1979, he was a part time English instructor at Wright State University and taught courses on gerontology.

During this time period, he also became involved in Provincial administration for the former Marianist Province of Cincinnati. From 1968 to 1994, Bro. Stan served in a number of capacities, including director of communications for the Renewal Program, vocation director, programmer for the human resources program, assistant provincial, director of education and Provincial Councilor. He also was a member of the Provincial Chapter and General Chapter. "Bro Stan sustained a careful balance between preserving the tradition and fostering needed changes in the Province," said Fr. Jim Heft. He was a huge proponent of renewal programs for the brothers, bringing in leaders in theology and culture to speak to communities.

According to Fr. Heft, Bro. Stan's talents converged during the years he served as UD's first rector, a position he held from 1982 to 1994. Bro. Ray Fitz, president of UD at the time, appointed Bro. Stan to the rector position. "He just had a very easy way with people. It didn't matter if he was dealing with a CEO of a Dayton corporation or the person taking care of the grounds, he was equally hospitable and kind to everyone," said Bro. Ray.

As rector, Bro. Stan initiated the Marianist Foundation endowment, which funds the rector's office and supports UD's efforts to promote Marianist activities and values. The concept has expanded to the other Marianist universities. Bro. Stan also served on the UD board of trustees intermittently from 1972 to 1998.

After stepping down as UD's rector in 1994, Bro. Stan enrolled in a sabbatical program at the University of Notre Dame and completed a program at the Center for Continuing Formation in Ministry.

Later that year, coming full circle, Bro. Stan returned to Cleveland to teach adult education and tutor students at St. Agatha-St. Aloysius grade school. He also was a volunteer librarian and collected books to send to children in Nairobi, Kenya. Myron Achbach, a friend and former Marianist, remembers visiting Bro. Stan in Cleveland. "Here was this man who held some of the highest positions in the order tutoring an eighth grade girl in reading," said Myron. "I was touched by his humility and goodness. He didn't care about the limelight; he cared about helping others."

Bro. Stan returned to the Dayton area in 2003 and spent a year with the community at Governor's Island in Huntsville, Ohio. Due to declining health, in 2004 he joined the community at Mercy Siena Woods in Dayton.

Throughout his religious life, Bro. Stan was a champion for Lay Marianists and an active supporter of Lay Marianist communities and groups such as Common Bond.

Bro. Mike O'Grady, a longtime friend and fellow baseball fan, was inspired by Bro. Stan's passion for many things—vocations, renewal programs, books, the laity and, of course, the Cincinnati Reds. "Gracious is a word used over and over to describe Bro. Stan," said Bro. Mike. According to Bro. Mike, when Stan was diagnosed with a terminal brain tumor, he took his usual calm and common sense approach to the situation. "You gotta know when to let go," Stan said.

One thing Bro. Stan did not let go of was his enthusiasm for vocations. On one of his last visits with Stan, Bro. Mike, who is assistant novice director, jokingly reminded Stan to pray for vocations. "Stan looked me straight in the eye and said 'Always,'" said Bro. Mike.

May he rest in peace.