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**Death Notice No. 9 (To all Unit Administrations):**



The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **CHRISTOPHER CONLON**, priest, of the Cupertino community, California, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on March 26, 2017 in Cupertino, California, USA, at the age of 81 with 62 years of religious profession.

Father Chris was a teacher and campus minister who found joy in working with young people. He served in both high school and university ministry during a 55-year career.

Christopher Ward Conlon was born on July 26, 1935, in New York, New York. He and two sisters were the children of Christopher and Lillian (Semaine) Conlon. He attended St. Margaret parish school and first encountered the Marianists when he attended an elementary school retreat conducted by a Marianist priest. Shortly before he graduated from Bishop Laughlin Memorial High School in Brooklyn, New York, he requested admission to the Marianist novitiate. By this time, he had met exactly three members of the Society of Mary. This was enough.

Young Christopher entered the novitiate in Marcy, New York, and professed first vows there one year later, on September 8, 1954. He attended the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio, and earned a bachelor's degree in 1957.

In the autumn of 1957, Father Chris began ministry at Cathedral Latin School in Cleveland, Ohio, where he taught Latin, English, geometry and religion, and moderated the speech and debate teams. He professed perpetual vows on August 15, 1958, in Dayton. He continued teaching at Cathedral Latin through the 1961-62 school year.

“He wasn’t much older than us, and we appreciated his enthusiasm,” recalled Cathedral Latin alumnus Joe Spagnuolo. “I remember him writing cheers in Latin for football games!” Joe said.

From 1962-1966, Father Chris attended the Marianist seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland. He was ordained in Fribourg on March 26, 1966, and was awarded an STL degree in July of that year.

He returned to the United States and to his home state of New York, where he taught at Chaminade High School in Mineola from 1966-1969. In the wake of Vatican II, Father Chris and his fellow Marianists “survived the tremendous changes in American life, and especially in teaching religion, through careful planning together,” he later wrote.

In August of 1969, Father Chris was called to Hollywood, Florida, to serve at another Chaminade High School. He was a teacher and chaplain for 12 years, and then served another five years as the school’s principal. “The community spirit and wonderful people made my 17 years there memorable,” Father Chris wrote in a jubilee reflection many years later. By taking summer

classes, Father Chris earned a master's degree in religious education from Loyola University of Chicago in 1973.

After working in secondary education for 30 years, Father Chris began a second phase of his ministry at the University of Dayton, where he taught theology and was soon named director of campus ministry, a position he held for the following 10 years (1988-1998).

“Father Chris was a joy!” said Audrey Toohey, who was his assistant for many years at UD. “That Irish sense of humor and his wonderful smile greeted us each day. His welcoming spirit was truly a sign of what it means to be a Marianist,” she said.

Now age 63, Father Chris began a new ministry as the Marianist liaison to the school of business administration and the school of engineering at the University of Dayton, serving as chaplain to students and faculty in these programs. He also regularly celebrated Mass on campus during the week and on Sunday.

Although he was known for his love of a good joke, Father Chris was “serious about liturgy,” according to Father Gene Contadino, who served with him at UD. “Chris was a very good and thoughtful homilist, and he was always prepared,” Father Gene said. “Chris stayed well-tuned for a double meaning in word or phrase, which he loved to slip in when least expected.”

Father Chris served for many years on the Provincial Chapter for the former New York Province. He continued this role as the consolidation into the Province of the United States took place in 2002. He received a commendation from the new Province for his work in facilitating the transition. In a 2002 letter, new U.S. Provincial Brother Stephen Glodek referred to Father Chris as the “Provincial Assistant for Sanity and Creativity!” as he thanked him for the energy and leadership he devoted to the unification process.

Beginning in 2006, and in addition to his role at UD, Father Chris co-authored a series called “Living Liturgy” for Liturgical Press, a leading Catholic publishing company. He continued working on these resource books through a 2013 edition.

Now nearly age 78, Father Chris moved to the Cupertino Marianist Community in California in 2013, where he rekindled several friendships built over 55 years of active ministry. He also was able to pursue his love of photography, focusing on the beauty of God's creation.

May he rest in peace.