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Death Notice No. 21 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **MELVIN MEYER**, of the Curé of Ars Marianist Community (St. Louis), who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on October 12, 2013 in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, at the age of 85 with 65 years of religious profession.

A gifted and commercially successful artist, Bro. Mel produced an estimated 10,000 works of art – both sacred and secular – over his long career. His creations adorn churches, parks, corporate headquarters, hospitals, schools and other venues in St. Louis, across the United States and in several international locations.

Bro. Mel was born to Harry and Margaret (Heidotten) Meyer on June 5, 1928, in Florissant, Missouri. He was the second of seven children. He attended Sacred Heart Grade School and William Cullen McBride High School, a Marianist school.

In 1947, Bro. Mel entered the novitiate at Marynook in Galesville, Wisconsin. He professed his final vows on July 19, 1952, also in Galesville.

It was during his time at the University of Dayton that Bro. Mel began to develop a passion for art. While working on a bachelor's degree, he attended evening classes at the Dayton Art Institute.

For nearly 20 years following his graduation from UD in 1951, Bro. Mel taught art at three Marianist schools: Central Catholic High School in San Antonio, Texas, McBride High School and Chaminade College Preparatory in St. Louis. He also taught young men in formation at Marynook, at Maryhurst in St. Louis and at the scholasticate in San Antonio.

During this period Bro. Mel also pursued further education that was key to his development as an artist. For a year beginning in 1957, he traveled throughout Europe, experiencing fine art first hand. He logged more than 14,000 miles on a motor scooter visiting nine countries and learning from internationally recognized artists. In addition, by studying during the summers, Bro. Mel earned a master's degree in fine arts from the University of Notre Dame in 1960.

In the fall of 1969, Bro. Mel was given the opportunity to devote himself to his art full time. The Marianists provided him with space for a studio and gallery on the campus of St. John Vianney High School in St. Louis.

For the next 40-plus years, Bro. Mel worked six days per week, 52 weeks per year, at the studio known as the Marianist Gallery. "Art is not easy work. Art is an every day, all-day work," Bro. Mel once said.

Bro. Mel's creations include metal sculptures, watercolors, stained glass, frescoes and acrylic on canvas paintings. He also worked in handmade paper and textiles. For many, his most familiar works are large,

often colorful, abstract metal sculptures. It has been suggested that Bro. Mel's work appears in more public places in St. Louis than the work of any other single artist.

Bro. Joe Barrish, also an artist, was a friend of Bro. Mel's for 65 years. "We traveled and painted together all over the United States and many parts of Europe," Bro. Joe said. "Bro. Mel's expertise lay in his ability to block out all competing distractions. I used to call him 'the fastest brush in the West' because he could finish a 20-by-30-inch watercolor as I would struggle with one half that size."

"Bro. Mel was humble, yet he was confident and driven to the core," said Bro. Brian Zampier, Bro. Mel's assistant and a fellow artist whose work also is displayed at the Marianist Gallery. "His personality and love of creating give me a glimpse of what my Creator is like: kind, devoted, prolific and diverse," Bro. Brian said.

A book titled, "Brother Mel: A Lifetime of Making Art," was published in 2009 by The Arts Company Press of Nashville, Tennessee. Bro. Mel received an honorary doctor of fine arts degree from Saint Louis University on May 21, 2011.

In recent years, Bro. Mel worked almost exclusively on commissioned pieces. At the time of his death, he was creating a glass-and-metal sculpture for a St. Louis hospital.

While Bro. Mel enjoyed great commercial success, he never lost sight of its source. "People ask if what I do is religious. Everything I do is religious because of the inspiration behind it, the motivation for doing it and the impact it has on people. My faith and art are inseparable," he said.

May he rest in peace.