



The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **JAMES MIFSUD**, priest of the Cupertino Marianist community, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 29, 2010, in Cupertino, California, USA, at the age of 75 with 57 years of religious profession.

James was born in San Francisco, California, on February 6, 1935. He was the oldest of seven boys born to James and Mary Ann (Azzopardi) Mifsud. Jim first encountered the Marianist brothers when he was 10 years of age at St. James Grammar School.

Jim graduated from Riordan High School in San Francisco in 1949 and entered the postulate in September 1950 and the novitiate in August 1952, both in Santa Cruz, California. Jim did exceptionally well academically while at the novitiate and was described as “quite a sport enthusiast.”

Jim was an avid fan of the San Francisco Giants baseball club and the San Francisco 49ers football team. According to a recent tribute in the *San Jose Mercury News*, Jim was friends with former Giants manager Dusty Baker and former 49ers coach Steve Mariucci. He was also quite musical, playing the piano, trumpet and organ, and liked to sing.

Jim took his first vows on August 15, 1953, in Santa Cruz. Three years later, he graduated from St. Mary’s College of California in Moraga, California, with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy. Following his graduation, Jim worked as a teacher and guidance counselor at Saint Louis School in Honolulu, Hawai’i. He facilitated many activities around Saint Louis School and also coached basketball. His motto was, “We lead, others follow!”

After five years at Saint Louis School, Jim left Honolulu in 1961 for the Marianists’ Regina Mundi Seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland. While in the seminary, he earned a Licentiate in Philosophy from the University of Fribourg. Fr. Jim was ordained in Switzerland on April 3, 1965, with his parents in attendance.

Fr. Jim returned to the United States after the seminary and worked as a chaplain for three years at Archbishop Mitty High School in San Jose, California.

In 1968, Fr. Jim embarked on the biggest journey of his Marianist life when he took an assignment in Seoul, South Korea. While in Korea, Fr. Jim raised funds to build a Marianist residence and also helped build Mokpo High School in Mokpo, Korea, along with a formation center in Seoul. Fr. Jim loved children and taught night classes for disadvantaged students in Korea. He also was instrumental in building Marianist Lay Communities there.

He was eventually appointed district superior and proudly wrote at his 50-year jubilee, “The Marianists are the only religious congregation to create and then turn over the entire operation to the native Koreans.” Fr. Jim recalled his time in Korea as “13 years of challenge and joy.”

Fr. Jim returned to northern California in 1981 and helped the Marianists with recruiting until 1985 when he became assistant pastor at Queen of Apostles parish in San Jose. Fr. Jim’s time at Queen of Apostles was extensive and successful and he later served as pastor and director of the Marianist community. Fr. Jim’s sermons were well received in the San Jose area and were broadcast on local television stations. His homilies will live on because of *YouTube*, where they have received thousands of views. In one, Fr. Jim talks about the meaning of his favorite phrase, “Never Give Up.”

“Never give up on yourself,” Father Jim said. “Never giving up means (never) giving God a break. Don’t give up on God. If you do, he will never give up on you. Because in heaven, where he lives, Never Give Up is plastered all over the place. People in heaven never give up on us down here.”

He also started the Ascent Program while at Queen of Apostles. The program began as a way to assist former inmates and others with difficult pasts find jobs. Eventually, the Ascent Program served anyone who was unemployed and has helped 7,000 people find employment, according to the *San Jose Mercury News*.

“Fr. Jim was an extremely prayerful, positive and compassionate man,” said Fr. Jack Russi, SM, former provincial of the former Marianist Province of the Pacific. “He was also dynamic and competitive.”

After 23 years at Queen of Apostles, Fr. Jim retired in 2008 as he suffered from Parkinson’s disease. Last May, Queen of Apostles opened the “Fr. Jim Mifsud Community Center” as it celebrated 50 years as a parish.

Fr. Jim passed away at the Marianist Center in Cupertino, California. He is survived by four brothers, all of whom live in northern California. His Marianist brothers remember him fondly: as a passionate preacher with personal charm and wit; as the face of Christ to each person he encountered; as a remarkable man of faith with a twinkle in his eye.

“When I remember Jim, the Spanish word *chispazo* comes to mind,” said Bro. Bill Farrell, SM, who lives in Guatemala. “A person who is a *chispazo* is like a bright spark from a fire, like an electrical spark, a hot ember. Jim was a vital animating force, an activating factor in so many things.”

May he rest in peace.