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Death Notice No. 30 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Marianist Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **WILLIAM O'LEARY**, of the Marianist Residence (San Antonio, Texas), who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on December 12, 2015, in San Antonio, Texas, USA, at the age of 86 with 67 years of religious profession.

Brother Bill ministered as a teacher for four decades, spending 16 years teaching in Latin America. In his later years, he provided pastoral care to hospital patients. He is remembered for his gentle manner and passion for serving others.

William Daniel O'Leary was born October 15, 1929, in St. Louis, Missouri. He was one of two sons and a daughter in the family of Daniel and Cecilia (Curran) O'Leary.

Brother Bill attended St. Margaret's School and Southside Catholic (now St. Mary's High School). He was attracted to the ministry of the Marianists at Southside Catholic, and he entered the postulate at Maryhurst in St. Louis at age 15. He entered the novitiate at Galesville, Wisconsin, in 1947, and professed his first vows there on August 15, 1948.

Brother Bill earned a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Dayton in 1950. He taught social studies and English at De Andreis High School in St. Louis for just one year before embarking on a long assignment in Latin America. In a letter to the Provincial he wrote, "It has been my desire for some time to carry Mary's devotion to youth not as fortunate as our Americans ... I offer myself as a missionary to the vast field where God is calling forth harvesters."

His desire was answered, and although he departed the United States knowing no Spanish, he began teaching at Colegio Santa Maria in Lima, Peru. He remained there from 1952 through 1957, professing perpetual vows in Lima in 1953. He then spent a year (1958 – 1959) teaching at Colegio San Antonio in nearby Callao.

In 1960, Brother Bill moved to Chile, where he taught at Instituto Linares. Only a few months after his arrival, the country was rocked by the largest earthquakes recorded in the 20th century. "I must confess I thought it was the end of the world," he wrote in a letter. Despite this inauspicious beginning, he remained in Chile through 1963. He spent a year back at Colegio Santa Maria before being tapped to serve as assistant novice master at the Monterico novitiate in Lima, where he continued through 1967.

Brother Bill returned to the United States and taught at Roncalli High School in Pueblo, Colorado, for two years. Father Al McMenemy lived and served with him during this time. "Brother Bill was a very congenial person," said Father Al. "He was always so gracious in meeting people. I appreciated his assistance in working with the Marianist Affiliates when we were in Pueblo." Father Al added that the Affiliates enjoyed Brother Bill's stories of his work in Peru.

In 1970, Brother Bill began ministry in his hometown of St. Louis, Missouri, teaching at St. John Vianney High School until 1972. In addition to his teaching assignments during this period, Brother Bill earned a master's degree in Spanish from Instituto Tecnológico in Monterrey, Mexico, in 1972.

When he was asked to return to Peru, he went happily. Between 1972 and 1977, he taught at Maria Reina Parish School in Lima and was the director at San José Obrero in Trujillo.

Now almost 48, Brother Bill came full circle, returning to his alma mater, St. Mary's High School in St. Louis, to teach Spanish. "Brother Bill was our 'man for all seasons,'" said Kevin Hacker, now the principal of St. Mary's. "He taught Spanish and coached and served on our first school board. I remember him as a very *inviting* man – he was always encouraging people to participate around school. We have at least two alumni who became Lay Marianists because Brother Bill invited them," Mr. Hacker said.

Brother Bill remained at St. Mary's until 1990, when he was called to serve as the director of the Frische Community in St. Louis. He held this post into 1993, while he pursued training for a new form of ministry. Later that year, he began working as a pastoral minister, meeting the spiritual needs of the sick in area hospitals.

Beginning in 1999, Brother Bill was a member of the staff at Our Lady of the Pillar Parish in St. Louis, but that was far from his only role at the time. For a number of years, he continued his pastoral work at area hospitals and also volunteered with Guardian Angel Settlement, a social service agency aiding the poor in St. Louis.

"Bill's passion was serving others," said Father Oscar Vasquez. "He had a knack for knowing which organization had a particular need or how items could be used. He was always delivering items to the poor – food, bread, clothes or furniture items. And he did it with a smile and a kind word. He helped us all see the face of God."

Father Jim Tobin was pastor at Our Lady of the Pillar during much of Brother Bill's ministry there. He noted how Brother Bill could be counted on to help wherever needed. "One day Bill shared with me a quote from Psalm 100 that he had from his novitiate days. It was his approach to life: 'Serve the Lord with gladness,'" Father Jim said. "He always had an upbeat, joyful attitude to life and his ministry. In short, he was a good man and a faithful Marianist."

In 2014, Brother Bill moved to the Marianist Residence in San Antonio where he provided a ministry of prayer for Marianist works and for the young brothers in formation.

May he rest in peace.