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Death Notice No. 29 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Marianist Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **JOSEPH PATRICK TEDESCO**, priest, of the Siena Woods Community (Dayton, Ohio), who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on December 2, 2016, in Dayton, Ohio, USA, at the age of 64 with 44 years of religious profession.

Father Joe was a teacher and counselor who ministered at high schools including Archbishop Moeller, Villa Angela-St. Joseph and Chaminade Madonna. He also served in formation roles and was assistant for religious life in the former Cincinnati Province.

Father Joe was born on November 7, 1952, in Connellsville, Pennsylvania. He was one of three children in the family of John and Teresa (Robertucci) Tedesco. He attended secondary school at Cathedral Latin School in Cleveland, Ohio, where he first met the Marianists.

He entered the novitiate at Mount Saint John in Dayton, Ohio, in 1970, and professed first vows there on December 5, 1971. For the next few years, he continued his studies at the University of Dayton, earning a bachelor's degree in psychology and philosophy in 1974.

Father Joe began his teaching career at Archbishop Moeller High School in Cincinnati, Ohio. His responsibilities increased at Moeller each year, and by 1979, he was teaching religion and psychology, ministering as a guidance counselor and serving as chair of the religious studies department. He professed perpetual vows on August 13, 1978, at Mount Saint John.

In 1979, Father Joe entered the seminary at the University of St. Michael's College in Toronto, Canada, where he earned a master's of divinity degree in 1982. He was ordained on January 15, 1983, at Mount Saint John.

That same year, Father Joe returned to Archbishop Moeller High School, where he added "chaplain" to his responsibilities as a teacher and counselor. A Moeller alumnus, Rob Schwing, posted a remembrance on Facebook: "Fr. Tedesco was a great teacher and amazingly funny! His humor and good nature made him approachable ... He had a profound impact on his students."

In 1989, Father Joe moved to Cleveland, Ohio, to serve at St. Joseph High School. He helped guide the school through a merger with a historic girls school, Villa Angela, the following year. He remained at Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School through 1996.

An eager and adroit student, Father Joe had earned a master's degree in applied spirituality from the University of San Francisco (California) in 1986. He earned a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor designation from John Carroll University (Cleveland, Ohio) in 1988, and gained his third master's degree – this one in mental health counseling – from John Carroll University in 1996.

The following years were busy and multi-layered for Father Joe. From 1996 to 1998, he was a counselor at Chaminade-Julienne High School in Dayton, Ohio. He returned to his alma mater, the University of Dayton, this time as an adjunct professor of psychology from 1996 to 2002. He also served as the assistant for religious life for the former Cincinnati Province from 1997 - 2002.

From 1998 – 2002, Father Joe was the director of novices for the former Cincinnati Province. He continued in that role during the transition as the four provinces in the United States consolidated in 2002.

For the next several years, Father Joe continued as an adjunct professor at the University of Dayton while also lending a hand in local parish ministries. For a time, he was a counselor at Catholic Charities.

Although Father Joe struggled with his weight most of his adult life, he was passionate about sports, particularly lacrosse. He was a high school coach, and served as Commissioner of Ohio Boys Lacrosse. He was inducted into the Ohio Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 2006.

Virginia Joyce was a friend of Father Joe's for nearly 30 years. She said that the man known to many as "Father Teddy" had "an innate spirit of love for all people." She recounted having dinner with Father Joe at a restaurant when a young man came to their table, greeted them and rolled up his shirt sleeve. "Teddy's face was tattooed on (the young man's) arm," Virginia said. "He said, 'Father, you saved my life. I was headed down a very bad path and you told me I would be perfect on the lacrosse field.'"

Father Joe returned to high school ministry in 2011 as a counselor at Chaminade-Madonna College Preparatory in Hollywood, Florida. Although he remained there only a few years, his impact was significant.

A Chaminade-Madonna alumnus, Jonathan DeWain, wrote on Facebook: "(Father Joe) was a beloved Marianist priest who was a mentor to all he met. He was a kindhearted, humorous, intelligent Teddy Bear. The world will miss this wonderful man." Another former CM student, Kaitlyn Preston, also wrote on Facebook: "All I can say is he wasn't just our priest, he was our friend. Thank you for making our years at CM so incredible."

In 2014, Father Joe returned to Dayton to become part of the Siena Woods Community, ministering to elderly Marianists and receiving treatment for his own health issues.

"Teddy was one of kind," said Bro. Ron Luksic. "He was a teacher, counselor, homilist, brother, friend, magician, chef, coach and more. There was always humor with Teddy, and he prided himself on the idea that he would never let a few facts get in the way of a good story."

Father Joe's health problems increased in the final year of his life and he did not return to full-time ministry.

"Joe will be deeply missed in the Church," wrote Brother Stephen Glodek, who had been Father Joe's provincial. "He pitched his tent at the edges and welcomed those who are marginalized to love, mercy and inclusion. He will be deeply missed in the Society of Mary."

May he rest in peace.