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Death Notice No. 25 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **THOMAS STANLEY**, priest of the Mercy Siena Woods Community (Dayton), who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on November 15, 2013 in Dayton, Ohio, USA, at the age of 91 with 73 years of religious profession.

Fr. Tom was a significant figure in the Society of Mary in the second half of the 20th century. He served in the Marianist Generalate, as area coordinator for Africa and as rector of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico. He was the first provost of the University of Dayton. Fr. Tom was recognized as an important writer, a skilled and creative homilist, and an avid bridge player.

Born on December 19, 1921, in Cleveland, Ohio, Fr. Tom was one of four children of Frank and Catherine (Fuerst) Stanley. He first encountered members of the Society of Mary at Cathedral Latin School in Cleveland. Fr. Tom completed his high school studies at Mount Saint John Preparatory in Dayton in 1939.

Fr. Tom professed his first vows on August 26, 1940, at Mount Saint John in Dayton and his perpetual vows on August 16, 1944, also at Mount Saint John. During these years, he earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Dayton.

After teaching high school for a few years in Long Island and Brooklyn, New York, Fr. Tom entered the seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland. Over the course of a few quick years, 1949 to 1952, he earned STB, STL and STD theological degrees from the University of Fribourg, attaining *magna cum laude* for each degree. He was ordained on July 23, 1950.

“Fr. Tom’s 1952 doctoral thesis, ‘The Mystical Body of Christ according to the Writings of Father William Joseph Chaminade,’ was a major contribution to understanding Fr. Chaminade,” said Bro. Tom Giardino. “It helped spur other such writings.” The work remains an important reference.

When Fr. Tom returned from Switzerland, he spent several years as chaplain at the postulate at Mount Saint John, and as director of the Marianist retreat house there. In 1956 he was called to Ponce, Puerto Rico, to serve as rector (president) of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico, where he remained for five years.

In June 1961, Fr. Tom returned to the University of Dayton as provost, in charge of the college of arts and sciences, and the schools of business, education and engineering. He held the post through 1965. He then became director of institutional studies at UD and served as a special adviser to the university’s president. At the same time, he served as religious superior at Mount Saint John, overseeing the activities and personnel at the busy scholasticate, retreat house and Marianist community.

In recognition of his skilled and insightful leadership, Fr. Tom was elected to serve in the Marianist Generalate in Rome, assuming the role of assistant for zeal in August 1967. He held this key role for five years, focusing on the spiritual life of members and traveling extensively throughout the Society's 13 provinces.

Upon finishing his assignment in Rome, Fr. Tom returned to the University of Dayton. He spent the next three years as director of the newly formed campus ministry office, while also serving on the president's advisory council.

Following a sabbatical year, Fr. Tom headed for Nairobi, Kenya, to serve as the first Africa area coordinator, beginning in May 1974. His task was to organize the Marianist communities in Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria and Zambia into a single administrative unit. His work laid the foundation for the current Region of Eastern Africa.

"I remember Fr. Tom coming to my scholasticate community and speaking about the growing Marianist mission in Africa," said Fr. Marty Solma. "He emphasized the need to form intercultural communities, which was an essential first step to building a vibrant Marianist life there," Fr. Marty said.

Fr. Tom returned to the Marianist Provincialate at Mount Saint John in August 1977 and spent the next four years as assistant for religious life.

In late 1981, Fr. Tom began what would be his longest single ministry, serving as pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Portage, Michigan, for 15 years. So beloved was Fr. Tom that, in 1994, the parish named a new youth facility – the Stanley Centre – in his honor. During his time there, and at the request of the bishop, he also served on the board of priest consulters for the Diocese of Kalamazoo.

Now in his mid-70s, Fr. Tom moved to Hollywood, Florida, where he served part-time as a chaplain at Nativity Parish from 1996 through 1998. He returned to Dayton to live in 2000.

During his retirement years, Fr. Tom used his fluency in French to work on translations of important Marianist heritage documents. Always a writer, he published a final work in December 2012. "The Garden Way of the Cross" is an illustrated meditation on the Stations of the Cross, drawing on religious legends and flower names associated with the Blessed Mother.

Fr. Tom also will be remembered as an expert bridge player. In his later years, he enjoyed competing online with an international community.

"From early on in his Marianist life, Tom made major contributions to the life of the Society of Mary," said Bro. Tom Giardino. "He was a giant figure in many ways."

May he rest in peace