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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 PAYNE**, of the Cupertino Marianist Community, Cupertino, California, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on November 3, 2017 in Cupertino, California, USA, at the age of 72 with 53 years of religious profession.

Brother Tom had a gift for helping people in times of need. He served in myriad roles, including prison ministry, police and fire department chaplaincy, and property and facilities management. Ever eager to serve, he said that he awoke each morning and prayed, “Lord, who do you want me to be today?”

Thomas Arthur Payne was born on August 3, 1945, in Cleveland, Ohio. He was the only child of Arthur and Martha (Stemberg) Payne. He attended Catholic elementary schools.

Tom encountered the Marianists at an early age. His father and uncles had attended Cathedral Latin School in Cleveland, and members of the Society of Mary were often guests in the Payne home. It was natural that young Tom would attend a Marianist high school, and he entered St. Joseph High School (now Villa Angela-St. Joseph High) in Cleveland.

Tom had long envisioned himself in engineering and dreamed of learning to fly. He took flying lessons and, toward the end of high school, had been accepted at several aeronautical engineering schools. A Marianist-sponsored vocation retreat convinced him otherwise, however, and sharply altered his plans.

Shortly after his 18th birthday, Tom entered the novitiate at Chaminade Preparatory in Marcy, New York. He professed first vows there on August 22, 1964. He earned an associate’s degree in mechanical engineering technology at University of Dayton in 1968 and professed perpetual vows on August 24, 1969, at Mount Saint John.

Brother Ron Overman, a member of the same vow class, remembers Brother Tom as outgoing from the first day of their novitiate experience. “He was an extrovert — friendly with everyone, and he used his many skills and friendly personality in all his ministry experiences,” Brother Ron said.

During his first two years of ministry, Brother Tom taught science and engineering drawing at Memphis Catholic High School in Tennessee, where he also established the new school’s maintenance and janitorial program.

In 1970, he moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, and trained with the Diocesan Council of Churches to serve troubled youth as a chaplain in the juvenile court system. Over the next 10 years, he implemented a

police clergy crisis team for the Cincinnati Police Division, served as chaplain for the division, and provided crisis intervention and bereavement services, assisting the officers and the neighborhoods they served.

“To us, he was a wonderful exemplar of what it means to be a Christian and a son of Mary,” said Phyllis Lipker, a secretary for the former Cincinnati Province. “He shared his faith with tremendous joy and a kind heart.”

Brother Tom earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering technology at the University of Dayton in 1976. He earned a master’s degree in religion —focusing on evangelization through crisis intervention — at The Athenaeum of Ohio in Cincinnati, in 1980.

Returning to Memphis, Brother Tom served the diocese as a prison chaplain and director of ministry to the imprisoned, coordinating volunteers at six state and federal penitentiaries. In 1984, he began a distinctly different ministry at Bergamo Center for Lifelong Learning, an assignment that developed into 10 years as director of maintenance for the Mount Saint John campus. From 1994 to 1999 he was director of Marianist property management for the Cincinnati Province while also serving as director of the Meyer Hall Community.

During those 15 years, Brother Tom was chaplain for the fire department of Beavercreek (a Dayton suburb); he earned certification in basic firefighting and emergency medical training to strengthen his relationships with firefighters and their families.

In 1999, Brother Tom was called to Kenya, where he served as property manager for the Marianist Region of Eastern Africa. After four years, he returned to the U.S. to serve as property manager and vehicle and insurance coordinator for the recently formed Marianist Province of the United States.

“My favorite thing about Brother Tom was the extraordinary gift he had in working with people who were hurting. In the fire department, prison ministry, as a hospice volunteer or among students or coworkers. He was there for everyone,” said Mary Ellen Garcia, director of human resources for the province. She recalled Brother Tom’s kindness as the “true spirit and charism of a Marianist.”

In 2008, Brother Tom moved to Hawai’i to serve as the environmental safety officer at Chaminade University of Honolulu. He upgraded the university’s safety procedures, wrote emergency evacuation and sheltering plans, and coordinated with government authorities to help ensure the safety of the university community.

“Tom was present all over the campus, interacted with many more people than most of us could and was meticulous to a fault,” said Father George Cerniglia, his community director and a CUH faculty member. “Tom had a great sense of humor but was especially sensitive. In his last year here, he trained to be a hospice caregiver. He touched many lives here.”

Brother Tom celebrated his 50th jubilee in 2014 and took a one-year sabbatical. He returned to Honolulu in 2015, planning to work again in prison ministry. Shortly after his return, however, he was diagnosed with cancer. He was treated in Honolulu, and then moved to Cupertino, California, for further treatment. He entered hospice care in October.

Brother Tom’s reflection at each day’s end resounded with the joy of having lived a life of service devoted to Mary: “My life is a gift from God ... I have no regrets; I would happily do everything over again. My blessing has been the friends I’ve made during my life.”

May he rest in peace.