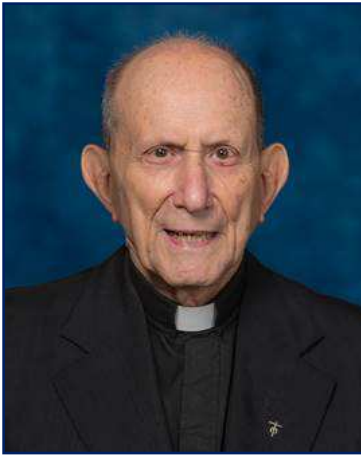


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Death Notice No. 22 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **JOSEPH STEFANELLI**, priest, of the Cupertino Marianist Community, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on August 17, 2018 in Cupertino, California, USA, at the age of 96 with 77 years of religious profession.

Fr. Joe was a Marianist historian, author, teacher, mentor, translator, novice director, pastor, and Provincial for the former Marianist Pacific Province.

Bro. Bill Bolts says, “The passing of Father Joseph Stefanelli is a milestone in the annals of United States Marianists. May this great Marianist rest in peace.”

Joseph Michael Stefanelli was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on November 24, 1921. He was one of three children (2 sisters) in the family of Michael and Cesarima (Cambi) Stefanelli, Italian immigrants. He was baptized at Sacred Heart Church and attended Holy Angel’s grammar school. He first met the Marianists while attending Purcell Marianist High School and entered Marianist Novitiate at Mount Saint John in Dayton, Ohio on August 14, 1939.

Fr. Joe professed first vows in 1940 and continued his religious studies at Maryhurst in Kirkwood, Missouri before returning to Mount Saint John. He earned his bachelor’s degree in social studies from University of Dayton in 1940. He professed perpetual vows in 1944.

His first teaching assignments took him to Hamilton Catholic High School in Hamilton, Ohio (1943-1946) and Chaminade High School in Dayton, Ohio (1946-1947). He then attended seminary at Regina Mundi in Fribourg, Switzerland and was ordained in 1951.

Upon returning to the United States, he was assigned as a chaplain and teacher at Junipero Serra High School in Gardena, California (1952-1953) and then Chaminade High School in Cheviot Hills, Los Angeles, California (1953-1954). Then followed a long service in the Marianist religious formation in Santa Cruz, California, beginning with an assignment as director for the Villa St. Joseph Marianist Scholasticate for Working Brothers (1954-1956), then as the novice director at the Marianist Novitiate (1956-1964) and finally returning to Villa St. Joseph as the Head of Zeal (1964-1966). His formation work continued in Rome, Italy, as the Head of Zeal for the General Administration from 1966-1967.

Fr. Ted Ley remembers, “We novices called him, “Fr. Joe”—an unheard of informality in the 1950s. We revered him—the most knowledgeable person I have ever known. Over the years, I have heard some exceptionally articulate speakers but none have equaled Fr. Joe. His intelligence was complemented by a quietly supportive affection, which later rendered him a great Provincial.

He was an exemplary man of prayer. But quietly, like everything else, for “the essential was the interior.”

He returned to the United States in 1967. Besides fulfilling priestly duties, Fr. Joe worked in a variety of areas over the following years. He served as director of Marianist communities, pastor, province archivist and as the Provincial Superior of the former Pacific Province (1973-1981). He also fostered the development of the lay branch of the Marianist Family in this country.

Fr. Joe was a gifted writer and researcher who dedicated his many talents as a Marianist historian. He first started writing in the 1980s. When he retired in 1996 to the Marianist Center in Cupertino, California, he was able to dedicate much of his time to research and write in collaboration with North American Center for Marianist Studiers (NACMS).

Dan Jordan, NACMS Editor, wrote, “‘Author, translator, mentor, friend,’ are the four words listed on the plaque that bears Fr. Joe’s name outside of the conference room dedicated to him at NACMS. These four words are a fitting tribute to his life and legacy. He is the author of the popular trilogy on the lives of our Marianist forebears, full-length biographies on Adèle and Marie Thérèse and *Our Marianist Heritage*, a work on key aspects of the Marianist charism. In addition, he translated numerous texts, primarily out of French into English. While he gave us so many words, we cannot fully express our gratitude for all of the intellectual and spiritual gifts he gave to us and to our Marianist Family.”

Within weeks of suffering a stroke in 2002, he was back home putting together a 5,000 piece puzzle, a hobby at which he excelled. Fr. Joe continued his researching and translating of Marianist heritage and the life of Fr. Chaminade. Bro. Bill Farrell writes, “Fr. Joe’s keen intellect and discerning spirit allowed him to serve. The lasting image I have of Fr. Joe was when he was 94 years old and pushing a brother to the chapel in a wheelchair. This “walking giant” had achieved a degree of consciousness and inner freedom which is beyond all. He now belongs to eternity.”

We give thanks to God for his life, his leadership, his faith and for his beautiful gift of making Marianist history come alive so that it can continue to inspire the world as he joins Our Eternal Father in heaven with Blessed Chaminade and all the Saints.