



Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie
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January 16, 2019

Biography of Death Notice # 01

The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **William CHEWNING**, of the Marianist Residence, San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on January 7, 2019 in San Antonio, Texas, USA, at the age of 94 with 76 years of religious profession.

Bro. Bill was a teacher, high school administrator and professor whose great love for science was only eclipsed by his much greater love of faith and prayer.

William Joseph Chewning, born July 9, 1924, in Decatur, Illinois, was one of four children (two boys, two girls) in the family of Edwin and Mary (nee Crayhon) Chewning. He was named after his grandfather, a doctor who drowned while visiting a patient. During the depression, the Chewnings decided to migrate to St. Louis, Missouri to be near relatives. Upon graduation from St. Rita's grade school, he was one of a select few allowed to enter McBride High School. Influenced by Bros. Arnold Wurzel and Robert Buss, he entered the postulate in 1939. His first profession was on August 15, 1942.

After graduating from the University of Dayton in Ohio with a major in mathematics, he was assigned to teach at Messmer High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; a year later taught at the new Don Bosco High School in the same city. He then taught at DeAndreis High School in St. Louis (1947-52). He professed final vows on July 1, 1946. That same year, his father, touched by his son's perpetual vows and suffering from a terminal illness, became a Catholic. His father's conversion was a source of great happiness and fulfillment for Bro. Bill.

Subsequent teaching assignments found him at various high schools in the St. Louis area

including Maryhurst, St. Mary's High School, Assumption High School and, his alma mater, McBride High School. He was also assigned to St. Boniface, in Winnipeg, Canada for a year in 1956. He was named principal of Vianney High School in St. Louis (1967-73). When his term was over, he returned to teaching at St. Mary's High School (1972-1977).

During the first three decades of his apostolic work, Bro. Bill taught religion, Spanish, mathematics, and chemistry. He served in administrative capacities as well as coaching and serving as department chairman. He also moderated cafeteria, bookstore, kitchen and student council. Bro. Bill collaborated with his friend Bro. Fred Weisbruch in authoring semi-micro chemistry manuals. He earned his Master's in education from St. Louis University in 1955.

In 1977, Bro. Chewing began a long tenure on the staff of St. Mary's University in the chemistry department. He was departmental chair, member of the faculty senate and on many other committees. He also served on the Board of Trustees. In addition to his academic work, he served as community director (1978-84) and was an active and enthusiastic participant in the Marianist Forum. Dr. Thomas Mengler, President of St. Mary's University, wrote, "All of us at St. Mary's University, especially generations of chemistry students and golf buddies, were blessed to know Bro. Bill Chewing and to enjoy his dry wit. Bro. Bill's energy and passion for St. Mary's never waned."

On the occasion of his 75 Jubilee, he wrote, "Every day is a 'thanksgiving' day for me. My life as a Marianist has been guided by the Benedictine motto, 'Ora et Labora' (prayer and work)." Fr. Bill continued, "Dedicating myself to the salvation of all through education (labora) has been the center of my apostolic life. Becoming a Son of Mary has been the center of my spiritual life (ora)."

In 2005, Fr. Bill retired from teaching and began what he considered his third phase of apostolic life. In retirement, he played golf twice a week, continued reading, helped with many services for his community and did as much as he could to support the ministry at St. Mary's University. Most importantly, his retirement opened a new and rich dimension of contemplative prayer life.

Fr. John A. Leies remembers, "We have been close friends since we taught at Don Bosco in 1944 and have lived in community several times throughout the years. Bro. Bill was a strong advocate for the school apostolate and for prayer."

Bro. Paul Metzger, remembers, "Bro. Bill was always faithful to his prayer and the *Rule of Life*." Bro. Bill believed that the vision of Fr. Chaminade for Marianists called him to a deeper silence, a more contemplative prayer life and a deeper sense of God's transformative work in him. He often reflected on *Article 2* of the *Marianist Rule of Life*: "In calling us to be Marianists, God asks us to follow in a special way Jesus Christ, Son of God, become Son of Mary for the salvation of all. Our goal is to be transformed into His likeness and to work the coming of His kingdom."

We thank God for Bro. Bill, for his life, his prayer and his labor, dedicated to the salvation of all, as he joins the Holy Family in eternal grace.