



Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie
Via Latina 22, 00179 Roma



January 29, 2019

Biography of Death Notice # 06

The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **LeRoy VIERA**, of the Marianist Community of Cupertino, CA, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on January 20, 2019 in Cupertino, CA, USA, at the age of 92 with 65 years of religious profession.

Bro. LeRoy was a veteran, a skilled carpenter and an artist who dedicated his life as a working brother serving in maintenance and construction positions in Marianist schools and ministries. He found great joy in everything he did in dedicated service to Mary.

LeRoy Lewis Viera was born in Antioch, California, on December 28, 1926. He was the fifth child in the family of Ruth (nee Dunn) and Joseph Viera. He had three older brothers and an older sister. Growing up in the wake of the Great Depression, LeRoy's family reestablished themselves through hard work, planning and determination. Bro. LeRoy would carry these characteristics with him throughout his life.

At the time, Antioch was a grape growing and ranching area. Bro. LeRoy helped his family doing odd jobs and working the vineyards. It was during this time that God moved into his life in a significant way and he said he often spent his time working in the vineyards talking with God. He attended Antioch High School but left when he turned 18 to serve in the Coast Guard during World War II. When he returned home, he worked at Dow Chemical in Pittsburg, California while using his G.I. Bill to take carpentry classes in night school. He got a job as a carpenter at the local paper mill where one of his friends was killed in an accident. It was this tragedy and the subsequent injustices by the management to the survivors that caused LeRoy to reflect on his life and what he wanted to do in the future.

He began discerning the calling of becoming a Religious Brother but had never met a Marianist until he happened to pass by the community of Chaminade in Santa Cruz. On a lark, he decided to pay a visit and

found the religious community he would be identified with for the rest of his life. The Marianists would take Bro. LeRoy to new and unexpected places. Upon reflection of his 50 jubilee, he wrote, "I joined the Navy and saw a lot of water; then I joined the Marianists and saw the world."

He entered the novitiate on August 14, 1952 at the age of 26. He professed first vows in August 15, 1953 and perpetual vows in on August 15, 1957. From the time of his entrance he stayed at the novitiate for nine years, first as a postulate, then as a novice and finally as a working brother taking care of the 300-acre property. In 1963, he went to second novitiate in Glencoe, Missouri. He was then assigned to work in maintenance first at St. Louis School in Honolulu, Hawaii (1963-1966) and later at Chaminade Cheviot Hills (1966-1969).

He was assigned to the General Administration in Rome where he was chauffeur for the Superior General (1969-1972). He was assigned to do maintenance at DeSales High School in Walla Walla, Washington in 1972.

Fr. Allen DeLong remembers, "Bro. LeRoy was a deeply spiritual man. He was sensitive and caring. He loved his religious community and his fellow Brothers. He was generous to a fault and never said 'no.' He was patient and kind. He was always welcoming, warm and friendly. He made friends easily. He was humble and recognized the abilities and accomplishment of others. He had a great devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and to the Society of Mary, who accepted him and made it possible for him to serve God and God's people."

From 1976-1981, Bro. LeRoy was able to use his carpentry skills working on the province construction crew in Cupertino, California. He worked with four other Marianists to construct a retirement home for elderly Marianists and a novitiate. In 1979, a creative avocation emerged shortly after he sustained a severe eye injury on the construction site. During his convalescence, a nurse encouraged him to explore art therapy. That spurred his interest in ceramics which he would master later in life.

After construction, he was assigned to do maintenance at the Marianist Formation Community in San Antonio (1981-1983). He then spent three years at Sangre de Cristo Retreat Center in New Mexico, working with the Christian Brothers as a member of their staff (1983-1985). He then spent six years at Junipero Serra High School in Gardena California. In 1992, he was assigned to Chaminade College Preparatory in West Hills, California where he would continue his work for the next 23 years.

In all his years of ministry, Bro. LeRoy touched countless lives. Fr. Ted Ley writes, "I have known brother LeRoy since I was 14. We would play volleyball after school at the old Chaminade in West Los Angeles. Then, when I was a novice Brother in Santa Cruz. In the 1960s, a bunch of us young Brothers helped him build the dorm extensions to the Brothers' House in West Hills. When he was a custodian of Serra High in Gardena, he helped me with activities for troubled youth in the LA County strip. As head and then senior custodian at Chaminade he was identified with and beloved by everyone. No one knew the campus better than he did. He was the quiet heart of the school. In all the years I have known him, I never once saw him frown. I am convinced he was one of the wisest man I've ever known. He was everything a Marianist should be, a lifetime example."

Robert Webb, president of Chaminade College Preparatory in West Hills writes, "Bro. LeRoy was our hero. The most dedicated and hardest working member of our staff in the 66-year history of our beloved Chaminade. In the time he served our school there wasn't a set-up, Mass, drama production or handyman

project without his stamp on it! He was the kindest, most humble servant of God I have ever known. His quiet, steady way and attention to detail was a wonderful example for many generations of the Chaminade Players stage crew team. Brother LeRoy's legacy is, as we would expect, tied to our Blessed Mother. He crafted each of the over 200 statues of the Blessed Mother that sit reverently in each classroom, office and school building on both of our campuses. The statues are so cherished that upon receiving the honor of Chaminade Founder, I present each honoree with one of the statues. Bro. LeRoy created additional statues in his 80's to ensure the tradition would be kept going long after he was gone."

In 2015, Bro. LeRoy retired to the Cupertino Marianist Community. He continued to occupy his time in retirement in work and prayer. Bro. Jack Dempsey writes, "Bro. LeRoy was an outstanding 'semi-retired' and extremely busy working Brother. An exemplary prayerful religious, Bro. LeRoy was always the first one in chapel for our daily prayer. An excellent property manager, Bro. LeRoy kept a running "TO DO" list for minor property projects and assisting everyone as requested. I especially enjoyed working with Bro. LeRoy in community group vocation presentations with Chaminade religion classes. The students appreciated his witness and presence. He always was smiling and friendly with everyone. He earned our respect because he was so respectful."

We thank God for his life, his dedicated service to Mary and for always giving a joyful 'yes' in everything he did. May he rest in peace.