



Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie
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September 30, 2019

Biography of Death Notice # 28

The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **William FARRELL**, of the Marianist Community of Cupertino, CA, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 12, 2019 in Cupertino, CA, USA, at the age of 74 with 56 years of religious profession.

Bro. William "Bill" Farrell was a Marianist educator and an advocate of the poor. Dedicated to the corporal works of mercy, he spent much of his life treating others as if they were Christ in disguise. He was a teacher and principal who ensured his students were enriched with the Marianist charism. He campaigned for social justice, worked to show the imprisoned that they are worthy of God's love and spent the last decades of his life reaching out to the impoverished people of Guatemala. He died on the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, the patronal feast of the Marianists.

William Joseph Farrell was born in Butte, Montana, on September 18, 1944. He was the first of two sons in the family of Edna (nee McCarthy) and John Joseph Farrell. His family moved to California where he attended grammar school at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Daly City. He then attended Archbishop Riordan High School where he was first introduced to the Marianists. Inspired by the Marianist brothers, he began thinking seriously about entering religious life in his sophomore year. Bro. Bill entered the Marianist novitiate in Santa Cruz, California, in July 1962 and professed his first vows there in August of 1963.

His formation continued with scholasticate in Honolulu where he earned his bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Chaminade University in 1967 while teaching at Saint Louis High School. He made his perpetual profession in August of 1968 in Santa Cruz, California. Bro. Bill returned to teaching at Saint Louis High School and also worked in administration. He earned his master's degree in theology from St.

Mary's College in Moraga, California in 1973. Bro. Bill was then assigned to take on the crucial role of director of formation for the Province of the Pacific (1980-1982).

Fr. Ted Ley writes, "In Bro. Bill's first teaching years he campaigned for better methods of teaching religion. He was revered by the boys of Saint Louis High School. He served as dean of religious affairs and then dean of student activities. He was then assigned as principal at Chaminade College Prep in West Hills, California. The students sincerely appreciated him and he introduced service and social justice elements in the teaching and activities of the school which resonated with the students."

In 1982, Bro. Bill became more focused on his call to social justice dedicating himself to serving prisoners and their families as director of detention ministry and as a jail chaplain in the Diocese of San Jose, California. He would continue this prison ministry for more than a decade. In a 1984 appeal for the Diocese of San Jose, Bro. Bill wrote, "By dealing with the prisoners with understanding and compassion, we hope to remind that they have dignity as children of God. We offer hope for effective rehabilitation and reintegration into society."

In 1985, Bro. Bill was assigned to the newly established Singleton Road community in San Jose, California. Bro. Bill had advocated for the creation of the residence located in a minority community and founded to serve the poor as well as to aid the St. Maria Goretti parish. As one of the first members of the community, Bro. Bill volunteered with the parish, worked with the homeless and was very active with the immigrant population. He also continued his prison ministry, worked with the diocese and served on several boards and an interfaith council. He was assigned as the community director in 1988.

In 1992, Bro. Bill spent a sabbatical year visiting several missions including Quito, Ecuador; Lima, Peru; Quetzaltenango, Guatemala; and the novitiate in Querétaro, Mexico. This experience further enlivened his passion for the poor and marginalized. Over the next decade, he served as a tireless ally for the poor both in his own community and for many foreign missions.

In 2005, he requested and was granted an assignment to serve at the newly formed Guatemala Marianist Initiative in Guatemala City which was lead by two Spanish Marianists. Bro. Bill pursued his new ministry with great zeal. He taught English to Marist scholastics and brothers as well as at the local church community. He worked with the homeless and those suffering from AIDS. He also taught at a free night school and served the diocese as an active member of the Conference of Religious Men and Women.

Fr. Dave Fleming writes, "In Guatemala, Bro. Bill lived and served young people in a very rough, violent and poor neighborhood. He was, personally, safe because people knew him simply as the 'teacher' at the service of everyone."

Bro. Bill recently returned from Guatemala in 2019 due to his failing health.

We thank God for his life and his tireless dedication to the poor which he offered in service as a Son of Mary as he is united with her and her Son Jesus.