



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



October 15, 2019

Biography of Death Notice No. 32

The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **John SAMAHA**, of the Marianist Community of Cupertino, CA, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 27, 2019 in Cupertino, CA, USA, at the age of 88 with 70 years of religious profession.

Bro. John lovingly offered his life in service to Mary, always saying “yes.” He was a teacher, author, administrator and formator. He was a prolific writer, specializing in public relations and communications. He was also a Marianist pioneer, helping to found a Marianist school in Lebanon.

John Marad Samaha, Jr., was born in San Francisco, California, on December 5, 1930. He was the youngest of four children and the only boy in the family of John and Anna Samaha, both immigrants from Khonshara, Lebanon. He attended St. James Boys School in San Francisco where he first met the Marianists in fourth grade. Nearing graduation from St. Ignatius High School in San Francisco, Bro. John requested entrance into the Society of Mary. At the time of Bro. John’s entrance, the Pacific Province was newly formed and he was the province’s first candidate.

Bro. John entered the Marianist Novitiate at Beacon, New York on August 22, 1948. He professed first vows on August 23, 1949 at Beacon, New York. As a scholastic, he studied from

1949-1950 at Maryhurst, Kirkwood, Missouri, and then at the University of Dayton from 1950-1952. He graduated from the University of Dayton, Ohio, in 1952 with a bachelor's degree in education. He professed perpetual vows in Santa Cruz, California, on August 15, 1953. Bro. John received a master's degree in religious education from Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

Bro. John began his teaching career in August 1952 at St. Joseph High School in Alameda, California. In November 1952, he was assigned to Chaminade High School in Los Angeles until 1955.

Bro. Bill Bolts writes, "I first met John as he was completing his perpetual vow retreat in 1953 and I had just started the novitiate in Santa Cruz. We were both native San Franciscans and had much in common. He was unique to be Lebanese and later had an assignment there. He used his varied talents well, including being a prolific writer. I would summarize that he was a true friend and fellow Brother, but above all, a real Son of Mary."

From 1955-1956, Bro. John was the assistant novice master at the novitiate in Santa Cruz, California. He then moved to Archbishop Riordan high school as teacher (1956-1959). In 1959, he entered the second novitiate in Glencoe, Missouri. He was then assigned to the San Francisco Archdiocesan Department of Education as an assistant to the Superintendent of schools from 1960-1963.

Bro. John was a Marianist pioneer in the opening of St. Joseph School in Cornet Chahwan, Lebanon in 1963. He taught grade school and English as a second language to adults. Upon his return from Lebanon in 1965, he was assigned to the Marianist novitiate in Santa Cruz, California, as the assistant novice master. In 1966, he was the ETV coordinator for Department of Radio and Television for the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

In 1970, Bro. John served as the Catholic school representative for the Western Division of the Foreign Study League in Cupertino, California. In 1975, he served in public relations and admissions for Chaminade University of Honolulu while living at Archbishop Riordan High School in San Francisco.

Bro. John returned to teaching in 1976 at DeSales High School in Walla Walla, Washington. Following this assignment, he attended the School of Applied Theology in Berkeley, California for one year. In 1979, he worked for the Catechetical Ministries Office for the Diocese of Oakland, California and, in 1980, was on the staff of *Our Sunday Visitor*. From 1981-1983, Bro. John was United States liaison for the University of the Holy Spirit, Kaslik, Lebanon. Once again, in 1984, he was assigned to the Marianist novitiate as the assistant novice master in Cupertino, California.

In 1988, Bro. John provided public relations for the Shrine of Our Lady of Peace in Santa Clara, California, and the Cupertino Provincialate.

In 1990, Bro. John was assigned to Villa St. Joseph, Cupertino, California, to assist the elderly and infirm retirees. Bro. John continued serve on and chaired various committees in the Archdiocese of San Francisco and the Diocese of San Jose. He assisted with projects for the Marian Library/International Marian Research Institute, the Mariological Society of America, Eastern Catholic Churches, the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Marianist causes for canonization. Bro. John contributed to many newspapers, periodicals and magazines on the Blessed Virgin Mary, Marianist spirituality, our Marianist Saints and the Eastern Catholic Churches.

In his 70th jubilee biography, he stated, "Thrust into such a variety of assignments, I was a jack-of-all trades and a master of none, and generally ill-prepared for the challenges. But God's grace was sufficient for survival. A redeeming feature in all these instances was working with many truly wonderful people, some of whom became lifelong friends.

Fr. Ted Ley remembers, "Bro. John's devotion to Mary was 24/7. His motto, *Maria Duce*, (Latin for, *With Mary as our Leader*) became the motto of Chaminade High School in Los Angeles, California. Later, he co-founded the American Mariological Society. He was also an instrumental cause of my vocation. When he proctored the entrance exam at Chaminade High School in California in 1954, he was so welcoming to us and correctly fraternal. He exemplified leadership to us. All his life, he exemplified Marianist leadership, generous welcome, affirmation and family spirit. He was an unforgettably great man."

We thank God for his life, his leadership and for his unyielding dedication to Mary as he joins her in the divine presence of her Son, the Holy Spirit and the Father Almighty in eternal glory.