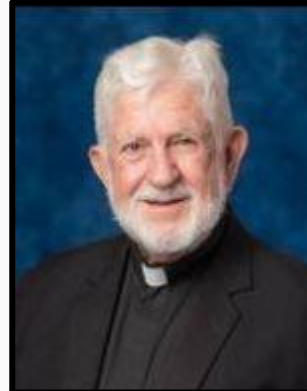




Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Soci t  de Marie
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February 14, 2020

Biography of Death Notice No. 3

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **Bernard LEE**, priest, of the Marianist Residence Community in San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on January 26, 2020, in San Antonio at the age of 87 with 64 years of religious profession.

Father Bernard was a distinguished theologian, a prolific author, a university professor and administrator, and a staunch promoter of small faith communities.

Bernard James Lee was born on July 14, 1932, in San Antonio, Texas. He was one of three children (sister, Patricia, and brother, Bob) in the family of Bernard J. Lee Sr. and Mary (Marsch) Lee.

Young Bernard was taught by Marianists at Central Catholic High School in San Antonio and continued a Marianist education at St. Mary's University. He entered the novitiate at Galesville, Wisconsin, in 1952, left, and then requested readmission in 1954 after graduating from St. Mary's with degrees in philosophy and English. He professed first vows on January 22, 1956, in Galesville.

A strong and eager student, Brother Bernard continued his education at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., earning a master's degree in Latin and Greek in 1958. He professed

perpetual vows on July 19, 1959, in St. Louis. His first assignment was at William Cullen McBride High School in St. Louis, where he taught religion and Latin. He remained at McBride through the spring of 1963 and entered the Marianist seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland, later that year.

At Fribourg, Brother Bernard earned a bachelor's degree in theology and a licentiate (Ph.L.) in contemporary philosophy. He was ordained in Fribourg on March 17, 1967. Upon returning to the States, Father Bernard taught at St. Mary's High School in St. Louis for two years. He then continued his own education at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, earning a doctoral degree in systematic and philosophical theology in 1972.

Father Bernard then began serving as a professor, author and lecturer at the university level. It was a ministry that would nourish his mind and soul – and those of countless others – for the next 36 years.

He started as associate professor at Maryville College in St. Louis (1972-1975). Overlapping with that, he served as an adjunct professor at Saint Louis University from 1974 – 1976. In 1977, he moved to Collegeville, Minnesota, to teach at St. John's University. He remained at St. John's until mid-1985, serving part of that time as chair of the school of theology. A colleague at St. John's wrote that Father Bernard “combines the acumen of a scholar with the gentle passion of a vitally concerned Christian ... He handles himself with a calm confidence rooted in the very apparent possession of competence.”

Father Bernard then returned to San Antonio and to his alma mater, St. Mary's University, where he taught theology for the following three years. In 1988, he accepted an offer to teach at Loyola University in New Orleans, Louisiana, and just a year later, he was named chair of the religion department and director of Loyola's Institute for Ministry (LIM). In a New Orleans newspaper article from 1992, Father Bernard described the LIM approach as “practical theology.” He said it's “a charged way of living the Christian life in the world. We work with a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other.” It was during his time in New Orleans that Father Bernard directed a three-year research project on small Christian communities in U.S. Catholic Church. With the approval of the St. Louis Marianist Province, his vision became a lived reality with the creation of the Madeline House Community, where vowed Marianists and Lay Marianists lived in a duplex but as one spiritual family, as a House Church. He wrote extensively on the spiritual benefits of living in small faith communities.

Father Bernard remained at Loyola until mid-2002, also serving two terms as president of Loyola's faculty senate. As he turned 70, Father Bernard returned to San Antonio and to St. Mary's University to serve as vice president for mission and identity. While this was a top administrative role, Father Bernard continued to teach graduate and undergraduate theology

with some regularity. He stepped down from the vice president role in 2008 but remained a member of St. Mary's theology faculty until May of 2017.

Over the course of his long academic career, Father Bernard also authored and co-authored more than a dozen books, contributed chapters to compilations, and wrote articles for scholarly journals. His books include "The Catholic Experience of Small Christian Communities;" "Habits for the Journey: A Mystical and Political Spirituality for Small Christian Communities;" and "The Beating of Great Wings: A Worldly Spirituality for Active, Apostolic Communities."

He lectured widely across the United States, as well as in the United Kingdom, Australia, India and Sweden. He addressed audiences as varied as the Lutheran Pastoral Institute, Southern Baptist Convention Religion Professors and the Catholic Health Care Association.

"Fr. Bernard Lee was blessed by God with many gifts and talents. He was a theologian, philosopher, author and lecturer," said longtime friend Father Jim Tobin. "Bernie helped so many people in their faith journey, whether in the classroom or by organizing small Christian communities."

Father Bernard served as director of his communities in St. Louis, New Orleans and San Antonio, and was a delegate to St. Louis Provincial Chapters in the mid-1990s. His fellow brothers considered him a wise and challenging mentor, a generous colleague and a great cook.

"Bernie was all heart. He was always reaching out to grasp the meaning of life, scholarship, and relationship with God," said Father Rudy Vela. "To him, being dialogic meant listening not just with your head, but with your heart, like Mary. Bernie embraced a joy for living and for life; he celebrated the exultation of the human and Godly spirit."

May he rest in peace.