



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



**June 10, 2020**

### **Biography of Death Notice No. 13**

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **Lawrence Bernard DOERSCHING**, priest, of the Woodlawn Marianist Community in San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on May 27, 2020, in San Antonio at the age of 74 with 55 years of religious profession.

Father Larry was a servant leader who was deeply devoted to Marianist education. Over the course of more than five decades of ministry, he served as a teacher, high school president, and university lecturer and campus minister. He was also a reliable and effective member of countless committees and commissions within the Society of Mary.

Lawrence Bernard Doersching was born on September 19, 1945, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He was one of three children in the family of Howard and Francis (Mueller) Doersching. Larry first encountered a Marianist as a boy of about 11. Brother Raymond Mantsch was a family friend whose example planted the idea

of a religious vocation in young Larry's mind. Larry entered Don Bosco High School in his hometown, and the Marianists there deepened this conviction. He later wrote that his high school years among the brothers were so wonderful he decided to continue them by joining the Society of Mary.

He entered the novitiate at Galesville, Wisconsin, and professed first vows there a year later, on August 22, 1964. Three years at the scholasticate at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, followed, during which Brother Larry earned a bachelor's degree in theology/mathematics. He was quickly put to work teaching summer math classes at Central Catholic High School in San Antonio.

In the autumn of 1967, Brother Larry began teaching at Assumption High School in East St. Louis, Illinois. He professed perpetual vows on August 18, 1968, in St. Louis, Missouri. He returned to his alma mater, Don Bosco, and taught for a semester in early 1970 before entering the Marianist North American Seminary in St. Louis.

Brother Larry earned a master's degree in moral and pastoral theology from Saint Louis University in 1973 as part of his seminary studies. He was ordained to the priesthood on November 17, 1973, at his home parish, Holy Ghost in Milwaukee.

Father Larry was called to St. John Vianney High School in the autumn of 1974. There he taught religion, served as the religion department chair and was the director of campus ministry until mid-1978. For two summers during this time (1976, 1977), he returned to St. Mary's University as campus minister to graduate theology students.

For the next two years, Father Larry was the administrator and retreat director of the Marianist Apostolic Center (now the Marianist Retreat and Conference Center) in Eureka, Missouri. He then returned to educational ministry in 1980, working at Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth, Texas, as a teacher, religion department chair and head of campus ministry. He remained at Nolan until mid-1985, and then spent a year earning a certificate in theological studies at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California.

In August of 1986, Father Larry was called back to St. Mary's University. He wrote that he found ministry among college students "life-giving," and he was gratified to be able to provide witness to Marianist life. He served in campus ministry for 10 years, eight of those as the ministry team's director. He was also a lecturer in theology for much of that time, and led committees including the Student Judicial Committee and the Student Task Force on AIDS. During this busy decade, he also earned a doctor of ministry (D.Min) from Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis.

Lay Marianist Paul Combest first met Father Larry as a student at St. Mary's, and the two remained close friends. "Over the years he was my spiritual director, confessor, fellow liturgy geek, poker opponent and frequent dinner companion," said Paul, who has made a career in Marianist education. "I learned much of what I know about being a Marianist and a member of the Church from him."

Father Larry spent the next few years as rector of the Marianist American Seminary (1997-1998) and as co-director of the Center for Marianist Lay Communities and Lay Spirituality (1998-2001). During this time, he also celebrated Mass regularly at St. Joseph's Parish in Firebaugh, California. "Fr. Larry's presence, his quality preaching and his ability to preside calmly in often harried circumstances served us all well," wrote the pastor, Father Craig Harrison, in a thank you letter to provincial administration. "Father Larry represents your congregation very well ... he will be sorely missed," the pastor added.

Valued for his skill as an administrator and his passion for Marianist education, Father Larry was next charged with leading Nolan Catholic High School as its president. He held this post from 2001 to 2008. He then served in the same top role at Chaminade-Madonna College Preparatory in Hollywood, Florida, from 2008 until 2014.

Father Larry returned to San Antonio. He ministered as chaplain for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and served on the board of directors at Central Catholic High School.

Father Sean Downing lived with Father Larry in his later years in San Antonio. “Larry’s love for Marianist education inspired those he worked with,” said Father Sean. “He wanted all students from our Marianist institutions to be instruments of transformative change in our society.”

Father Larry was also a dedicated servant within the Society of Mary. Over the years, he was director of six communities. He was recognized in 2017 for serving as recording secretary for provincial chapter meetings (St. Louis and U.S. provinces) a remarkable 55 times. He served on numerous assembly and retreat committees, and assisted in the consolidation that created the Province of the United States.

“In his many roles and many jobs, Larry was first and foremost in love with the priesthood, the Marianist priesthood,” said Brother Tim Pieprzyca, who lived in community with Father Larry. “Larry loved the Marianists, he loved his community and he viewed his role as one of service to his brothers and to the people of God.”

May he rest in peace.