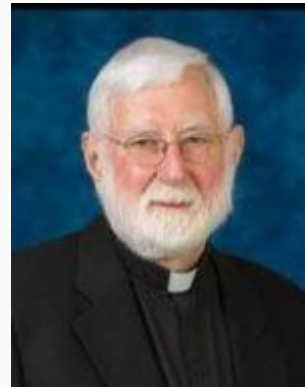




Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie
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October 6, 2020

Biography of Death Notice N. 28

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **John J. MANAHAN**, priest, of the Marianist Residence in San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 16, 2020, in San Antonio, Texas, at the age of 87 with 66 years of religious profession.

Fr. Manahan was a pastor, a retreat director, a teacher and a loyal friend to many; who enjoyed his great sense of humor, unequivocal homilies, encouragement for participation and keen sense of observation. He welcomed diversity and accepted others on their life journeys without apprehension, prejudice or judgment. Throughout his life, Fr. Manahan had a strong commitment to peace and justice issues. Fr. Timothy Dwyer recalls, "Fr. John was a loyal friend to many. He was a generous donor to social justice causes and a 'soft touch' for those in need."

John Joseph Manahan was born on August 31, 1933, in St. Louis, Missouri. He was the only child of Andrew and Bridget (Earnor) Manahan. He attended St. Cronin's Grade School in St. Louis. On the occasion of his 60th jubilee of ordination, he remarked, "I almost attended the Jesuit school close to my house, but God spared

me and sent me to the Brothers of Mary at McBride for my freshman year." Due to some changes in the St. Louis Archdiocese, he was then switched to another Marianist school, De Andreis High School, from which he graduated in 1951.

As a junior in high school, Bro. Bill Chewning asked him to consider life as a Marianist, but he was reluctant. When Fr. Charles Blasen, the principal, asked him again, he was still hesitant. But the seed had been planted, and, after two years at St. Louis University, he left for the novitiate in Galesville, Wisconsin. He professed first vows on August 15, 1954, and had three years of scholasticate formation in Galesville, followed by a final year of scholasticate in San Antonio, Texas. In 1957, he earned a bachelor's degree in English from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, while teaching sixth grade at St. Joseph Grade School in Victoria, Texas. He professed perpetual vows on July 13, 1958, in St. Louis.

In 1958, he was called to the stockyards and steel mills of East St. Louis, Illinois, to teach at Assumption High school for five years. He then entered seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland, and was ordained in 1968. During this time, he continued to study; he received a masters degree in Religious Education from St. Mary's University in 1977 and a masters in Counseling from St. Louis University in 1986.

Fr. Manahan was ordained shortly after Vatican II. In his remarks on his 50 anniversary of profession, Fr. Manahan recalled, "I had returned to a strange new world that I had never known." For the next decade, the young priest returned to teaching English and Religion and serving as a Chaplain at McBride High School St. Louis (1968-1970), Assumption High School, East St. Louis, IL (1970-1972), Nolan High School, Fort Worth, TX (1972-1975) and St. Michael's High School, Chicago, IL (1975-1978).

From 1978 to 1980, he served as a retreat director and counselor and conducted the Marriage Encounter program at Marynook retreat center in Galesville, Wisconsin. He continued this ministry at the Marianist Retreat Center in Eureka, Missouri, from 1980 to 1983 as the director of adult programs and youth retreats. Kay Tally-Foos, executive director of Tecaboca: A Marianist Center for Spiritual Renewal, where Fr. Manahan hosted women's retreats, says, "Fr. John Manahan's work with Tecaboca Women's Retreat Program will forever be in our most-loved stories and memories. His sense of humor, his keen interest in understanding the women's lives, and his connection to the women at the retreats were remarkable. Fr. John's mixture of humor with his explanation and reflections on the Gospel enriched the Women's

Retreat program."

In 1983, Fr. Manahan returned to teaching at Chaminade College Preparatory in St. Louis, where he also served as a counselor and director of the Waldron Marianist Community. He returned to Assumption High School in East St. Louis, Illinois, from 1988 to 1989 to serve in campus ministry and teach. He then moved to the Marianist Formation Community in San Antonio, where he was community director, director of formation and vocation director from 1989 to 1995. During that time, he also served as a member of the campus ministry team at St. Mary's University.

In 1995, Fr. Rudy Vela invited him to try his hand at parish ministry at Holy Rosary Parish in San Antonio. He liked it so much that he stayed there for eleven years. Fr. Manahan enjoyed parish work and was known to be an excellent homilist. Maria A Smith, minister for pastoral music and faith formation at St. Mary's University and her husband, Paul Smith, who were good friends in a faith-sharing group with Fr. John recalled, "Fr. John had little tolerance for 'feel good' sermons. This was always the case with his homilies and even in our faith-sharing group. He always pushed his listeners out of their comfort zones when explaining the gospels. He made you uncomfortable with his message in such a way that you had no other choice but to live it out because he modeled the very thing he would challenge you to do."

In 2006, he took a sabbatical semester at Oblate School of Theology's Ministry to Ministers program. Following the sabbatical, he returned to Nolan Catholic High School to serve as the chaplain. In May of 2008, Fr. Manahan requested to return to parish ministry; this time at St. Francis de Sales in Cincinnati, Ohio, to help the pastor Fr. Edward Jach, who was recovering from surgery. After two years, he retired to the Marianist Residence in San Antonio, where he served as chaplain. In his later years, he was actively involved at both Holy Rosary Parish and St. Mary's University.

Mary Lynne Gasaway Hill, graduate program director for the Department of English Literature & Language at St. Mary's University says, "Fr. John Manahan has been a life force of keen observation, direct conversation and dry humor through the course of my life and the lives of so many others touched by his kind gruffness. For my dad, Jim Gasaway, who taught with Fr. John at Assumption High School in the 1960s; for the families of Holy Rosary Parish, who were nurtured by Fr. John in the 1990s; and for our community at St. Mary's University, who has been challenged by Fr. John to live the Marianist Charism from a courageous love, during his tenure at the Marianist Residence, we thank God for Fr. John. "

On the occasion of his 60 jubilee of profession as a Marianist, Fr. John said, "I have done many things I never expected to do and met many people I never expected to meet. The ride, though far from over, has been a good one. I'd do it again if given the chance. God has blessed me in many ways, especially through the people I have met along the way. I am rich in ways I never dreamed of, ways that few, today, count as wealth. Many people have made my life sparkle like a diamond, and I thank them for all that has been, and for all that is yet to come."

May he rest in peace.