



Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie
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February 25, 2021

Biography of Death Notice N. 3

The Province of the USA recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **José Peter DEGORIO**, of the Marianist Hall Community, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on February 15, 2021, in Cupertino, California, USA. at the age of 82 with 63 years of religious profession.

Brother José served many years in administrative support positions in California and Hawaii, and also taught high school business courses, a role he greatly enjoyed. He will be remembered as a gentle, humble man with a cheerful heart.

José Degorio was born on November 19, 1938, in a sugar plantation village in Lahaina, Maui. His parents, Lucio and Martha (Ablat) Degorio, were Filipino immigrants to the Hawaiian Islands, which were then a U.S. territory. José attended Sacred Heart elementary school in Lahaina and St. Anthony School in Wailuku. "At St. Anthony's, the Marianists dedication to Mary and their charism influenced my vocation to religious life," Brother José later wrote.

Young José entered the Marianist novitiate at Santa Cruz, California, upon

graduating from high school and professed first vows there a year later, on August 15, 1957. He earned a secretarial certificate from Honolulu Business College and began serving as business manager for the novitiate community in Santa Cruz in 1959. He professed perpetual vows on August 25, 1960, in Honolulu.

Over the following year, Brother José served as treasurer to the Honolulu Marianist Community and then as a secretary in the provincial office in Santa Cruz. For the next seven years (1962 – 1969), he was back in Honolulu, serving in the business office of Saint Louis School and Chaminade College (now Chaminade University of Honolulu).

In 1969, Brother José was called to serve as secretary in the provincial office, which had moved from Santa Cruz to Cupertino. He ministered in this role with calm skill and diligence for five years. Then, eager to return to Maui to be near his aging parents, Brother José embarked on a new ministry in 1974. Although he'd never pictured himself as a teacher, he found joy and fulfillment teaching typing courses at St. Anthony School. He continued to teach typing and, later, shorthand at St. Anthony for 12 years. "It was rewarding because some of my students became secretaries, and one became a court reporter," Brother José later wrote. He was unabashedly proud of his students and their successes. During these years, he also served as bookkeeper and director of his community.

Later in 1986, Brother José moved back to Honolulu and attended Chaminade University in pursuit of a long-held dream. He earned a bachelor's degree in 1989, at age 50. During this time, he also began teaching at Saint Louis School as typing classes evolved into word processing classes. "Being in the classroom and working with students has been the greatest joy of my ministry," he wrote in a jubilee reflection. Brother José taught at Saint Louis School until mid-1999.

Now, Brother José returned to his ministerial roots, serving in the registrar's and records offices at Chaminade University, where his efficiency and attention to detail were blessedly useful. "He worked long and hard for Chaminade University, including digitizing some of their pre-computer records, which was a great service," said Brother Tom Spring.

Brother Bernie Ploeger was president of Chaminade University during many of the years of Brother José's service there. "Brother José was a wonderful person to live with in community – always cheerful, positive and prayerful. His colleagues in the office of the registrar reported the same to me."

Brother Gary Morris, who also lived in community with Brother José, said his friend treasured his Filipino culture and his island roots. Brother José enjoyed strumming his ukulele, singing Hawaiian songs and eating traditional island dishes, according to Brother Gary. “After his retirement, he relished going over to Saint Louis School and reading stories to the kindergarten boys. The children looked forward to Bro. José’s visit each week, as they revered him as their *kupuna*, or honored elder, who took the time to talk to them about his life growing up in Hawaii,” said Brother Gary.

“Using my God-given talents in my work as a Marianist has fulfilled my life,” Brother José wrote at the time of his 60th jubilee in 2017. Leaving his beloved Hawaii, he moved to Cupertino for health reasons shortly before his death.

May he rest in peace.