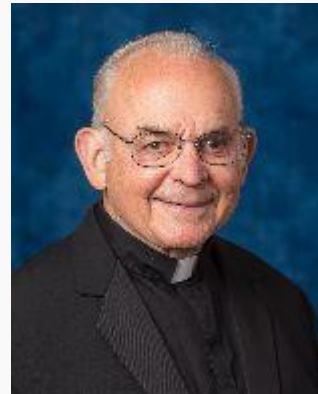




Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Soci t  de Marie
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March 30, 2021

Biography of Death Notice N. 5

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **James Joseph MUELLER**, priest, of the Marianist Residence Community of San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on March 19, 2021, in San Antonio, Texas, USA, at the age of 86 with 67 years of religious profession.

Father Jim was a beloved teacher, chaplain, administrator and community director known for his warm, welcoming ways. He ministered for more than 20 years at schools in Japan and also taught and served as chaplain at schools across the United States. He particularly enjoyed ministering during summer camp sessions at Tecaboca, a Marianist camp and retreat center in Texas. He taught countless young boys how to fish, and he shared with them his love of the outdoors and the Blessed Mother.

James Mueller was born on October 22, 1934, in San Antonio. He was one of seven children in the family of Edwin and Nellie (Salter) Mueller. He first met the Marianists by attending Mass at St. Mary's University with his family. His father was a doctor, and three of his brothers also entered the medical field. Jim had a different calling.

He attended St. Peter Prince of Apostles parish school and went on to Central Catholic High School, where the family spirit of his Marianist teachers echoed his own family culture and affirmed his vocation. Young Jim entered the novitiate in Galesville, Wisconsin, upon graduating from high school and professed first vows there a year later, on August 15, 1953.

Brother Jim attended St. Mary's University, earning a bachelor's degree in history in 1956. He taught religion, Latin and history for the following three years at Assumption High School in East St. Louis, Illinois. He professed perpetual vows on July 13, 1957. In 1959, he was sent to Provencher High School in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, where he taught and assisted with the athletics program. An eager athlete, the young brother from sunny south Texas also learned to play ice hockey.

In 1962, Brother Jim went to Fribourg, Switzerland, and spent a year as a teacher and the prefect to boarding students at Villa St. Jean School. He enjoyed the adventure of taking students on weekly ski outings in the winter months. For the following four years, Brother John attended the Regina Mundi seminary, also in Fribourg. He was ordained on March 17, 1967, in Fribourg.

That autumn, Father Jim returned to the States and once again served at Assumption High School for one year before returning to Fribourg. Once more at Villa St. Jean, he taught French, algebra and geometry while continuing studies at the seminary. He earned a licentiate in sacred theology in 1969.

Father Jim spent the next several years back in the States, ministering as a teacher and chaplain at Daniel J. Gross High School in Omaha, Nebraska (1970-1971); Chaminade College Preparatory in St. Louis, Missouri (1971-1972); and back home in San Antonio at Central Catholic (1972-1977).

In 1977, Father Jim received an opportunity to teach "for a year" at St. Joseph College (later known as St. Joseph International School) in Yokohama, Japan. The year stretched on, and by 1986, he was named principal of the school. For several years during the 1980s, he would bring a few Japanese boys to experience summer camp at Tecaboca, enabling them to build their English skills while enjoying a unique slice of American culture.

In 1990, Father Jim was named president of the Japan Council of International Schools. He remained at St. Joseph in Yokohama until 1993, when he took a sabbatical year to

study in Rome. He then returned to St. Joseph to resume as principal for two more years.

But Father Jim's "year" in Japan was not yet complete. From 1996 to 1999, he taught English at Meisei Gakkoen School in Osaka.

Now nearly age 65, Father Jim returned to the United States. For the next six years, he taught and was chaplain at Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth, Texas, and also served as the director of his community there. He spent many of his summers at Tecaboca, celebrating Mass outdoors along the river, teaching archery and fishing, and even doing magic tricks by the campfire. "Our son loved fishing with Father Jim and enjoyed his homilies at camp," wrote one parent on Tecaboca's Facebook page. "Not only was he great at teaching fishing and archery, he was a great spiritual coach," wrote another fan.

"Father Jim was an important presence at Tecaboca boys camp for many years," said Kay Tally Foos, director of Tecaboca. "He taught boys how God speaks to us through nature. Many men who attended Tecaboca as boys can attribute their devotion to Mary and her son to their time spent with Father Jim."

Father Jim remained at Nolan Catholic until 2005, when he was called to serve at Chaminade College Preparatory in Chatsworth, California, again ministering as chaplain and all-around welcoming Marianist presence for nine years. He then spent one more year (2014-2015) in active ministry as chaplain at Chaminade Julianne High School in Dayton, Ohio.

Later in 2015 and now age 81, Father Jim came full circle, returning to San Antonio and his high school alma mater, Central Catholic. He served as community director and was a substitute teacher, as well as a cheerful ambassador at countless school functions.

"Father Jim was so proud to be an alumnus of Central Catholic," said current principal Stephen Walswick. "From cheering from the endzone at football games, to saying Mass and hearing confessions, to driving out to Tecaboca for retreats, he brought life, hospitality and a warm smile to all he encountered."

After spending a final summer at Tecaboca, Father Jim moved to the Marianist Residence in late 2020.

“Even with failing health, Jim remained cheerful and thankful for his Marianist vocation,” said longtime friend Brother Jim Burkholder. “He was a man of faith and prayer with a fine sense of humor.”

In a reflection for his 60th jubilee, Father Jim wrote: “I am joyful to give that which I have received. God has truly blessed me with my various assignments, and it’s been a great and interesting time to be able to walk with Jesus.”

May he rest in peace.