



**Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie**  
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**May 7, 2021**

### **Biography of Death Notice N. 8**

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother **Raymond Bernard GOHRING**, of the Marianist Residence Community of San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on April 21, 2021, in San Antonio, Texas, USA, at the age of 88 with 68 years of religious profession.

Brother Ray was a mathematics and science teacher who ministered in New York, Puerto Rico, and most notably at Matero Boys Secondary School in Lusaka, Zambia, where he taught for 40 years. A quiet, reserved man, he was nonetheless an excellent teacher who was beloved and respected by his students.

Raymond Gohring was born on March 14, 1933, in Cleveland, Ohio. He was one of four children in the family of Stephen and Anna (Gorg) Gohring. Two uncles, Father Ralph Gorg and Brother Jerome Gorg, were Marianists who provided models of religious life. Young Ray attended Gesu Catholic School and Cathedral Latin School. Cathedral Latin, the font of many Marianist futures, affirmed Ray's vocation. After three years at the venerable institution, Ray entered the postulate at Mount Saint John in Dayton, Ohio, in the autumn of 1950, to complete his high school studies.

He entered the novitiate at Marcy, New York, and professed first vows there a year later, on September 5, 1952. Brother Ray earned a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Dayton in Ohio, in 1955. He began his long teaching career with a year at Hamilton Catholic High School in Hamilton, Ohio. He professed perpetual vows on August 15, 1956, in Dayton.

For the following six years (1956 – 1962), Brother Ray taught biology, chemistry and earth science at Chaminade High School in Mineola, New York. Even during these years, young Brother Ray was eager to serve abroad, writing in a letter to his provincial, “I repeat my request for work in the missions as soon as an opportunity where I can be of use presents itself.”

The opportunity did present itself, and Brother Ray was sent to serve at Colegio Ponceño in Ponce, Puerto Rico, which was a mission field at the time. For three years, he taught math and science, coached volleyball and served as athletic director. Still, he believed he was called to an even greater challenge. “If my contribution to the Society and the Church could be better fulfilled in Australia, Africa or Japan, I would welcome the opportunity,” he wrote to his provincial.

After a six-month segue for a second novitiate, Brother Ray was sent to Matero Boys Secondary School in Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia, in January 1967.

With a few breaks for sabbaticals, retreats and continuing education, Brother Ray served at Matero for the following four decades. He taught math and science and served as coach and athletic director. He established himself as a demanding but fair teacher.

“Brother Ray was an excellent teacher, he loved his job and he did it with one heart. He won Matero’s best teacher award almost every year,” said Brother Erik Otiende, who served with Brother Ray. “He helped every student in his class to not just pass the exams, but also to grasp the concept of what he taught. If Ray had 80 pupils in his classroom, 80 of them passed (the required government exams). And out of the 80, more than 70 would pass with distinctions,” Brother Erik said.

“Brother Ray was known for religiously going to his classes come rain or sunshine. If a teacher was going over his time the period before, he would kick him out so he could

begin. His students loved him,” said Fr. Gabriel Kirangah, regional superior of Marianist Region of Eastern Africa.

Brother Ray’s students always ranked highly in national competitions. So distinguished was his record that students from other schools came to Matero to obtain Brother Ray’s teaching notes. And Brother Ray’s dedication was repaid by the respect his students showed him. “Once, during a school strike, students refused to go to any of their classes over their grievances,” said Father Marty Solma, “except they went to Brother Ray’s earth science class.”

Brother Valentine Chola Mulenga recounted another story illustrative of Brother Ray’s approach: “One day the Matero headteacher went to see Brother Ray while he was teaching. Brother Ray resisted opening the door because he did not like people disturbing him in the classroom. He said to the headteacher, ‘When I am with my students, they are in charge of me. If you want to see me, ask them.’ And he closed the door in the headteacher’s face.”

In community, Brother Ray was a quiet, reliable servant. He had a respect for life that extended to the plants and flowers around the school and community, ensuring they were always well-tended. “He did this not just for the beauty, but because he saw life in every creation. He saw it as part of being prolife,” said Brother Erik, noting also that Brother Ray was known for his commitment to energy conservation and was forever reminding his fellow brothers to turn off lights.

By 2007, it became clear it was time for the aging brother to return to the United States. “Brother Ray called me to his room, and it was the first time I’d ever seen him cry,” recounted Brother Chola. According to Brother Chola, after Brother Ray gathered himself, he said, “Very soon I’ll return to the USA. The USA will be my residence, but my heart will always be in Zambia.”

Brother Ray returned to Ohio and lived at the Alumni Hall Community on UD’s campus. Then, for health reasons, he moved to the Marianist Residence Community in 2010. In a reflection for his 60<sup>th</sup> jubilee in 2012, Brother Ray wrote, “I am amazed when I consider my life. It seems that every step along the way I have been guided by God’s plan for me. God assured that I was given the gifts I needed to reach his goals for me.”

May he rest in peace.