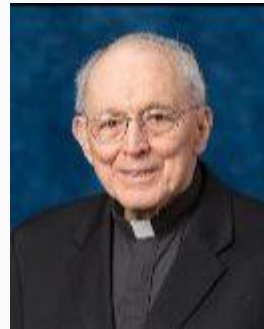




Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Soci t  de Marie
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January 21, 2022

Biography of Death Notice N. 2

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **Joseph John UVIETTA**, priest, of the Marianist Residence Community, San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on January 9, 2022, in San Antonio, at the age of 90 with 71 years of religious profession.

Father Joe was a gentle pastor and an effective administrator, known for his warmth, his spirituality and his love of a good joke. He was a teacher, a chaplain, a popular retreat leader and held top leadership positions in the St. Louis Province. In his seven decades of ministry, he collected innumerable friends, each of whom would attest to his happy grace.

Joseph Uvietta was born on March 30, 1931, in San Antonio, Texas. He was the oldest of five children in the family of Joseph and Palmira (Gerodetti) Uvietta. Young Joseph grew up in a close-knit Italian family in a predominantly Mexican-American neighborhood, factors that likely imbued him with the spirit of fellowship and joy he carried throughout his life. He attended St. Agnes Grade School and went to Central Catholic High School. He later wrote that he "was immediately

and consistently impressed by the family spirit, Brothers of Mary style” at Central Catholic.

“I remember Joe saying, ‘What attracted me to the Marianists was not just how well they treated other people, but also how well they treated each other. That made me feel as much at home with them as I was in my own Italian family,’” said Brother Giancarlo Bonutti, who may know a bit about Italian families.

Joe began considering the possibility of a religious vocation. After high school, he continued his Marianist education at St. Mary’s University in San Antonio. In the summer of 1949, following his second year at St. Mary’s, Joe entered the Marynook Novitiate in Galesville, Wisconsin. He professed first vows on August 15, 1950. He continued his university studies, earning a bachelor’s degree in history from St. Mary’s in 1952.

Brother Joe began his teaching career with a two-year stint (1952 – 1954) at St. Mary’s High School in St. Louis, Missouri. He professed perpetual vows on July 17, 1954, in Galesville. For the following two years, he taught at St. Joseph High School in Victoria, Texas. Then it was on to seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland. Father Joe was ordained on July 16, 1961, in Fribourg. He remained there for an additional year to complete theological studies before returning to the United States.

Father Joe was assigned to teach and serve as a chaplain at Cathedral High School in Belleville, Illinois, in the autumn of 1962, but was there just six months before being called to minister on the postulate staff at Maryhurst in Kirkwood, Missouri. In short order, he was named provincial assistant for religious life, a role he held from 1963 to 1967.

Father Joe was then assigned to Chaminade College Preparatory in St. Louis as a teacher and chaplain. He served there just one year before beginning a five-year term as Provincial Assistant for Religious Life at Marycliff in Glencoe (now Eureka), Missouri. In 1973, Father Joe began ministry as novice master, remaining at Marycliff as the novitiate moved from Galesville to Glencoe. He held this role until 1977.

In the autumn of 1977, Father Joe returned to high school ministry. He taught and was chaplain at St. John Vianney High School through mid-1984. He also

served as community director during this time. Now in his mid-50s, and after a year's sabbatical, Father Joe returned home to San Antonio and to his alma mater, Central Catholic. He served there as president from 1985 – 1987.

In 1987, Father Joe was appointed as provincial of the St. Louis Province, a role he held for two terms, until 1995.

“I didn't know much about the Marianists when I was hired to work for them in 1988, but I soon learned what 'family spirit' meant to the provincial, Father Joe Uvietta,” said Ann Mueller, a long-time provincial staff member. “It showed up in how he treated everyone, especially women. He felt we had incredible gifts to offer the Church and the world, and he was supportive in bringing out those gifts. Working with Father Joe and his provincial council, I found a spirit of ministry,” Ann said.

An astute and deeply Marianist leader, Father Joe served many times as a delegate or secretary at provincial and general chapters from the mid-1960s forward. He also served on boards of directors for a number of Marianist high schools over the years.

Upon completing his service as provincial and using a second sabbatical for theological studies, Father Joe began a new ministry in 1996. He became director of the Marianist Retreat and Conference Center (MRCC), a role that again exercised his skill in administration and his gifts for connecting deeply with groups and individuals. In addition to retreats at MRCC, he was in demand as a retreat leader for numerous religious orders of men and women across the country. Father Joe remained in the role until 2005, when he was 74.

Father Joe began living at the Cure of Ars community on the campus of St. John Vianney High School in 1999, while still serving at MRCC. For him, it was an opportunity to again enjoy a high school community, and he was a welcome presence at school events. He was known for carrying a file folder of cartoons and jokes, which he loved to share with those he encountered.

Dennis Matreci is a long-time teacher and administrator at Vianney who counts himself among Father Joe's fans. “Father Joe was a constant source of joy here at Vianney. I never saw him when he wasn't smiling, and he always had his collection of cartoons to share. He was also a source of inspiration to me – his

long experience in schools enabled him to help me in any situation.” Dennis said.

While Father Joe “retired” from MRCC in 2005, he continued a busy, active ministry. He served as chaplain for the Sisters of Mercy, regularly celebrated Masses at retirement centers, led retreats, was on the board of directors for both Vianney and Chaminade College Prep, and could be counted on to hear confessions and celebrate Mass at local parishes. He loved being part of the Vianney community and was named to its Hall of Fame in 2016.

“It was very important to Father Joe to be seen around campus and to be a Marianist presence – and what a gentle presence he was,” said Vianney teacher Carrie Mitchell. “Father Joe *never* missed acknowledging my birthday or wedding anniversary. And how touched I was that he remembered my dear grandmother's death anniversary each year. Prayers and comic relief were gifts that Father Joe shared every day – simple, yet so profound.”

Father Joe moved to the community at Chaminade College Prep in 2015, where he continued many of the same ministries. He moved to the Marianist Residence in 2018, coming full circle to his hometown of San Antonio. He wrote, “being part of this community gives me the opportunity to continue rejoicing in my life as a Marianist religious.”

The essence of Father Joe Uvietta was “his abiding faith, infectious sense of humor and his ability to see the best in others,” according to his sister, Melba Fisher. “I will always miss him, but I am grateful he enriched so many lives through his love and his absolute commitment to being Marianist.”

May he rest in peace.