



Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie
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March 31, 2022

Biography of Death Notice N. 8

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother **Francis (Frank) Theodore SPAETH**, of the Marianist Community in Cupertino, California, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on March 16, 2022, in Cupertino at the age of 98 with 72 years of religious profession.

Brother Frank was an accomplished teacher, administrator and coach whose career in education spanned more than 50 years. He was also a World War II veteran. Upon moving to Cupertino, he became an avid rosary-maker, hand-fashioning more than 1,000 rosaries in the course of a decade. He made many other contributions to the daily life of the community, prompting the brothers at the residence to write: "Brother Frank will be remembered as the salt, light and soul of our Marianist Community."

Francis Theodore Spaeth was born on May 17, 1923, in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was one of six children in the family of Theodore and Irene (Delaney) Spaeth. Baptized at his home parish in Hyde Park, Ohio, young Frank attended St. Mary's grade school and would go on to encounter the Marianists at Purcell High School

in Walnut Hills. After graduating, Frank enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1942, during World War II. He served for four years as a radar and radio technician.

During his military service, Frank recalled thinking and praying often about his future life—and about the good experience he'd had with the brothers in high school. After an honorable discharge from the Marines, he reconnected with the Marianists who'd taught him at Purcell and inquired about becoming a brother himself. He entered the Marianist Novitiate in August 1948, at Beacon, New York.

Brother Frank professed first vows there in 1949 and completed his scholasticate years at Mount Saint John in Dayton, Ohio. He made his perpetual vows on August 24, 1952, at Cheviot Hills Military Academy in Los Angeles, California.

Brother Frank earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from the University of Dayton in 1951. He spent most of the next 57 years teaching and coaching at high schools on the west coast and Hawaii, with assignments that included St. Joseph (Alameda, CA), Archbishop Riordan (San Francisco), Junipero Serra (Gardena, CA), Chaminade College Preparatory (Canoga Park, CA), DeSales (Walla Walla, WA), St. Anthony (Maui, HI) and Saint Louis (Honolulu, HI).

During his time at Chaminade, Brother Frank held positions as Principal and Athletic Director. He also spent two years as a working brother at Villa St. Joseph (Cupertino, CA) and in formation at the Marianist Scholasticate in Honolulu. He earned a Master of Arts degree in Education from the University of San Francisco in 1961.

Brother Frank was known as a gifted teacher of math, mechanical drawing and physics – with the latter subject holding a special place in his heart. As he once put it, “We did some forty experiments in the classroom throughout the year, and the boys and girls generally liked them very much.”

Although not an athlete in his younger years, Brother Frank became quite fond of distance running and bicycling as an adult. Among his accomplishments were three marathons and two triathlons, along with many 5K and 10K races through the years. He was also known for biking home from various summer school assignments – including a ten-day trip from Dayton to Cape Cod, Massachusetts; and two different trips from San Francisco to Los Angeles.

When the time came in 2008 to retire from the classroom, Brother Frank resolved to remain active – and kept himself busy for many years by serving as a community driver and part-time janitor for the Marianist Community at Cupertino, along with volunteering as a physics lab assistant at a local high school.

Soon enough, Brother Frank also discovered a new passion – teaching himself to repair and assemble rosaries. He quickly developed a reputation for making beautiful, strong and durable rosaries. One special touch he often included were beads made of “Job’s tears,” a natural grass seed that he himself grew in the community garden. Brother Frank once estimated that he’d made more than 1,000 rosaries through this ongoing labor of love.

Even 60 years after they taught together at Junipero Serra High School, Brother Bill Bolts gratefully recalls how Brother Frank mentored and encouraged him. “As principal, he was most supportive of me and was instrumental in recommending me to deliver addresses at teacher conferences,” Brother Bill says. “He was a 100 percent Marianist!”

Marianist Father Ted Ley met Brother Frank when he became Director of Student Brothers at the scholasticate in Honolulu in the early 1960s. Brother Frank “immediately began a personal relationship with each of the young men, over 40 of us in number,” recalls Father Ted. “We knew he cared about each one of us. It was a great example, which I have tried to emulate. Because his starting point was empathy, Brother Frank could reach a meeting of minds with anyone.”

Brother Stanley Murakami of the Cupertino Marianist Community tended to notice the little things about the way Brother Frank went through an ordinary day. “I was always impressed with Brother Frank’s generosity in meeting the needs of his fellow brothers. He would drop what he was doing and accommodate himself to our requests,” Brother Stanley says. “May the good Lord reward him for this spirit of love!”

As Brother Frank, himself said on the 70th anniversary of his first profession, “I see my Marianist life as a very special gift from God. It has been a super experience working with so many great men. If I had a second life, I would gladly do it all again.” May he rest in peace.

