



**Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie**  
*Via Latina 22, 00179 Roma*



**January 19, 2023**

### **Biography of Death Notice N. 1**

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother **Michael John GALVIN** of the Marianist Residence Community in San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on January 1, 2023, in San Antonio at the age of 81 with 63 years of religious profession.

Brother Michael was a beloved teacher, linguist, counselor, administrator, and tireless advocate for the immigrant communities he served. He drew energy and strength from his experience of Marianist community life, crediting it as “the key for my happiness” and counting it as “the greatest blessing among many” he’d experienced in his life.

Michael John Galvin was born on August 30, 1941, in Brooklyn, New York. He was the son of Michael J. and Rita (Horan) Galvin.

He attended Our Lady of Perpetual Help Grade School and then first encountered the Marianists as a student at Most Holy Trinity High School in Brooklyn. He considered the Brothers he met there “influential,” recalling, in particular, the impact that Brother Charles Roggemann had on his decision to pursue religious life.

Michael began his formation as a Marianist, becoming a postulant at Beacon, New York, in 1958 and entering the novitiate there a year later. He professed first vows at Marcy in 1959 and then began scholastic studies at Mount Saint John in Dayton, Ohio.

Brother Michael’s love of languages began to flower during his undergraduate studies at the University of Dayton, where he earned a bachelor of arts in French with high honors in 1963, while also completing summer programs at Mineola Language Institute (New York) and the University of Cincinnati (Ohio). Awarded a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, he took up graduate studies in romance languages and linguistics at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, a course of study that concluded in 1964.

During that time, Brother Michael also began a high school teaching career that would ultimately span nearly 30 years, with a first assignment at Cardinal Gibbons High School in Baltimore. He professed perpetual vows in that city on August 20, 1966. Brother Michael next moved to Hollywood, Florida, in 1968, where he was named principal at Chaminade College Prep. He continued in that role for four years, guiding the school through challenging times – characterized by what he called “seismic quakes in society and in the post-Vatican II church [that] produced palpable aftershocks in the school environment.”

Following a sabbatical year in Missouri (where he completed coursework in counseling, German and Spanish at Saint Louis University), Brother Michael moved to San Juan, Puerto Rico. There, he served as a teacher, administrator, and guidance counselor at Colegio San José until 1991.

Brother Michael’s life of ministry took an unexpected turn in 1991 when he enrolled in a summer studies program at the Weston School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Although his original intent was to return to Colegio

San José, he started working with individual immigrant families in the Boston area to ease their transition into the United States. What began as summer volunteer work soon blossomed into a ministerial passion centered on immigrant advocacy.

Over the next 16 years, Brother Michael generously used his gift for languages in a new way – helping to build what came to be known as *Aspotolado Brasileiro* in the Catholic Archdiocese of Boston. In this role, he spent many years working side-by-side with newly arrived immigrants, helping them navigate the legal labyrinth of US immigration courts and speaking authoritatively on their behalf. Through this ministry of presence, Brother Michael’s quiet, warm expertise came to be cherished by the people he served.

In 2008, Brother Michael moved to San Antonio, Texas, where he became a member of the Holy Rosary Parish community. During the next nine years, he continued ministering through his gifts as a linguist – teaching English as a second language at the parish, tutoring students in Spanish at St. Mary’s University, and volunteering as a translator at a local neighborhood center. Due to health concerns, he moved into the Marianist Residence Community in 2017.

Marianist Father Pat Tonry has many fond memories of Brother Michael, in part because they both grew up in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New York. “As members of the (former) New York Province, we attended many meetings and gatherings together and lived together in Puerto Rico,” Father Pat says. “Mike was a very intelligent man, a superb linguist, a devoted Marianist teacher, and a very humorous man. He gave himself completely to whatever he did, as could be witnessed by his dedicated work with the Brazilian community in Boston. He was always friendly, smiling, and ready with a witty comment.”

Having lived with Brother Michael in four different communities over the course of 20 years, Marianist Father Paul Fitzpatrick was always impressed with his competency in languages. “When Mike served in Puerto Rico, he could exchange puns in Spanish with his students before class,” Father Paul recalls. “When he served in Boston, he taught himself Portuguese so he could do social advocacy work in the courts. While there, he also took part in a discussion group in modern Italian where members explored the medieval Italian of (Dante’s) *Divine Comedy*. When I learned that he passed, I thought, ‘When Mike faces God, he will finally know – despite the challenges his inner struggles

presented – how much God loved him, how much good he did with the gifts God gave him, and he will enter into a profound and well-deserved peace.”

In serving as Assistant Provincial and Provincial for many years, Brother Stephen Glodek came to appreciate the fact that Brother Michael “had a brilliant, critical mind that he offered to the search for God and to the service of immigrants who were poor.” On a personal level, Brother Stephen remembers Brother Michael as having had “a kind and generous heart. He loved to discuss the recent insights he had: issues both large and small that occupied his reflections and his ministry. These frequent conversations were peppered with insight, wry humor, and playful use of words. The Marianist mission of our Province will feel the loss of Brother Michael’s presence and ministry.”

May he rest in peace.