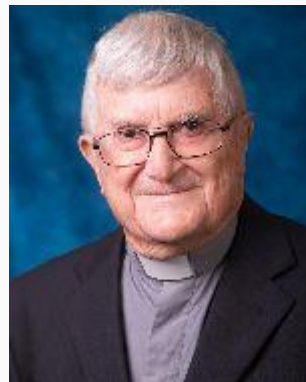




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Biography of Death Notice N. 3

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **Anthony Gerard JANSEN**, priest, of the Marianist Residence Community, San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on January 27, 2023, in San Antonio, at the age of 98 with 79 years of religious profession.

Father Tony was a cheerful, tireless Marianist who ministered as a teacher and chaplain for more than six decades. For 40 of these years, he was a pillar of Matero Boys Secondary School in Lusaka, Zambia, a community that captured his heart and filled him with joy and purpose. He called his time at Matero “wonderful years and a challenging mission.”

Anthony Gerard Jansen was born on May 13, 1924, in Long Island, New York. He was the third of four children in the family of Bernard and Frances

(Kemethere) Jansen. Young Tony attended St. Pancras Grade School, and, as a youth came to know and admire Marianists through his cousin, Brother John Jansen. Tony spent two years at St. Francis High School in Brooklyn, New York. Then, in 1940, at age 16, he said goodbye to his parents and boarded a Greyhound bus for the 600-mile journey to Mount Saint John in Dayton, Ohio, to enter the Marianist postulate.

Two years later, Tony continued on to the novitiate at Beacon, New York, and professed first vows there on August 22, 1943. He attended scholasticate in St. Louis, Missouri, and Dayton and earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Dayton in 1945. In a path common for a young brother of the time, Brother Tony's early ministry involved a number of short teaching stints. These included Hamilton High in Hamilton, Ohio (1945-1946); Cathedral Latin in Cleveland, Ohio (1946-1948); and North Catholic High in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (1948-1950). He professed perpetual vows on August 25, 1946.

In 1951, Brother Tony entered the Marianist Seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland. He was ordained on July 24, 1954. He spent another year studying in Fribourg before returning to the States.

Now age 31, the young priest was assigned to Chaminade High School in Mineola, New York. He taught English, religion, and Latin and served as the school's chaplain for the next 11 years. It was a busy, challenging tenure that spanned the Vatican II era.

"I was in Father Jansen's senior religion class at Chaminade in 1955-1956, and I remember this year very profoundly," said Father Ted Cassidy. "Father Jansen was a very determined teacher, and despite the fact that we joked and teased with him, we deeply respected what he stood for. Five members of our class entered the Marianist novitiate."

In 1966, Father Tony was called to serve at Cardinal Gibbons High in Baltimore, Maryland. He later wrote that the pace of life at Cardinal Gibbons was not as intense as at Mineola and that he found the "southern influence" of the school culture to be renewing. He remained there for three years.

The death of Father Tony's father in 1968 (his mother had died years earlier) was an event Father Tony called "freeing" and inspired him to seek a new challenge.

He asked his Provincial to consider him for a missionary posting outside the United States. The Provincial told him to reflect for several months and ask again if he was certain. Father Tony said yes, and yes.

In mid-1969, Father Tony was sent to Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia, to serve at Matero Boys School. Matero had been founded by the Marianists just a few years earlier to serve boys from one of Lusaka's most impoverished townships. The country itself was emerging from British colonial rule, which ended in late 1964. It had one of the most poorly developed education systems of any former colony.

It was in this context that Father Tony came to Matero. Before long, the school captured his heart and soul. For more than 40 years, Father Tony ministered at Matero. He was a teacher, chaplain, and a proudly successful volleyball coach. He returned to the States only for brief visits and for two separate years of advanced study (1975 and 1983), earning masters degrees in counseling and in religious studies.

"It was always a joyous occasion to have Tony with us when he passed through our community in Kenya on his way to Zambia," said Brother Steve Grazulis. "Wherever Tony went, he carried with him his bag of laughter, smiles, joy, and goodness. He was positive and humble, the kind of Marianist one would hope to become," said Brother Steve.

Not surprisingly, life at Matero could be challenging. Events like cholera epidemics, strikes, and riots in Lusaka occasionally disrupted school operations. Still, over the years, Matero earned a reputation for academic excellence, with nearly 100 percent of students passing national exams.

Knowing that athletics could be a powerful way to influence young lives, Father Tony pushed the development of Matero's volleyball program, and under his coaching, the school produced championship-winning teams. He is credited with helping create secondary school leagues and boosting the popularity of the sport in Zambia. In 1997, he was named "Patron" of Zambia's National Volleyball Association.

In addition to his tireless work at Matero, Father Tony was also instrumental in the creation of a shrine to Our Lady in Lusaka. The effort took years of fundraising

and endless hours of planning and committee meetings. Today, the shrine is a landmark in Lusaka and draws thousands of pilgrims each year for the Feast of the Assumption.

“It is a wonderful experience to be here in Zambia,” Father Tony wrote at the time of his 60th jubilee. “I wish to continue working here as long as the Lord gives me life. I won’t mind dying here in Africa.”

Father Tony was not to get this wish. In 2012, at age 88, he returned to the United States for the last time. While he was reluctant to leave his beloved Zambia, he said that “my brother and sister want me to be a support for them now.” He lived for a year on the campus of Mount Saint John in Dayton, where his Marianist journey had begun 72 years earlier. He then moved to the Marianist Residence in San Antonio.

Christine Willant was a relative of Father Tony’s who corresponded with him for many years. She wrote in remembrance: “Father Anthony loved Zambia, and he worked tirelessly to build the Church there. I remember his joy at serving God and his people. He did his best to be Christ among us. What better can you say of anyone?”

May he rest in peace.