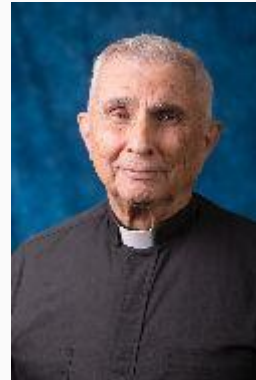




Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Soci t  de Marie
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March 2, 2023

Biography of Death Notice N. 6

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother **Francis Walter Schorp**, priest of the Marianist Residence Community of San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on February 19, 2023, in San Antonio, at the age of 91 with 70 years of religious profession.

Father Franz was a beloved teacher, chaplain, and passionate advocate of life-long learning. Remembered for his deep knowledge regarding a wide variety of topics, he influenced generations of students, colleagues, family members, and friends to relentlessly pursue what he called “ultimate truth.”

W. Francis Schorp was born on December 3, 1931, in Pearsall, Texas. He was the eldest of three children in the family of Francis J. and Mildred L. (Teal) Schorp. He attended the local public and parish schools through high school. After enrolling at St. Mary’s University in San Antonio, Texas, he encountered the Society of Mary for the first time. At the suggestion of a Marianist Brother, he

met there in 1950, Francis entered the novitiate the following year. He would go on to profess first vows at Marynook in Galesville, Wisconsin, in 1952. He then began scholastic studies at Maryhurst in St. Louis, Missouri, before returning to St. Mary's to earn bachelor's degrees in philosophy and mathematics in 1955.

Over the next several years, Brother Franz served at high schools in San Antonio (Central Catholic), St. Louis (McBride), and Chicago (St. Michael's), teaching classes in religion, math, languages, and science. He professed perpetual vows in the Society of Mary on July 13, 1958, in St. Louis. Called to the priesthood, he began seminary studies in 1959 at Fribourg, Switzerland, and was ordained there on March 14, 1964.

Father Franz celebrated his First Mass of Thanksgiving in his family's ancestral hometown of Bieringen, Germany – an event that was cause for great celebration by his extended family members and their neighbors. Shortly thereafter, he returned to teaching positions in Fort Worth, Texas (Nolan Catholic) and on the Marianist seminary staff in St. Louis. Then, following several years of graduate studies, Father Franz joined the faculty at St. Mary's University in 1973. Except for brief assignments in Mexico, he would live and minister at St. Mary's University for the rest of his life.

Along with serving for a time as director of the men's residence hall at St. Mary's, his long teaching career in the philosophy department at the university provided a setting that permitted him to pursue varied interests – including cooking, violin, and cello, and the mechanical shop and manual labor. Father Franz wasn't simply a hobbyist, however. Family members recall how his talents were often turned toward major projects – including the extensive work he and his brother James did around their parents' home: installing a metal roof; hand-sawing large logs into roof beams; and fabricating doors, hinges, locks, fences, gates, and concrete troughs for the ranch.

A similarly expansive view characterized the mindset of Father Franz's priestly ministry and academic disciplines. He often advocated – both in his conversations and in thoughtful essays – a desire to integrate the things of the world and the things of God. As he wrote in one piece, “We need a clear grasp of how to believe our professional work integrates with the *via ad aeternitatem* (road to eternity) so that professional secular life becomes ONE

with divine life; failure in doing this results either in no faith or a flawed, wounded faith unable to support either hope or *agape* in this world.”

A St. Mary’s University colleague, Professor of Engineering Winston Erevelles, recalls the first time he met Father Franz in 2009: “He was carrying pruning shears, walking around campus, and trimming away!” Dr. Erevelles says. “[Our] casual conversations quickly evolved into discussions about the philosophy of science. Father Franz was deeply interested in faculty formation in this area to better prepare our students to take on the challenges of life with a deeper understanding of science and its role in serving humankind.” He also knew him to be “a warm, funny, caring, and deeply generous man.”

Longtime friend Rosemary Sheridan recalls how Father Franz shaped the lives of many youths – including her sons, whom Father Franz helped guide into a Spanish language immersion program in Querétaro, Mexico, many years ago. “I always had confidence in his wisdom, academic acumen, and experience,” she says.

Simone Glénat met Father Franz in 2003 when she traveled from Bieringen, Germany, to enroll at St. Mary’s University. “Studying there for one semester was the plan,” she says. “But instead, it turned out to be a life-changer for me. I loved St. Mary’s, living in Texas, and studying my passions...all accompanied by the precious regular meetings with Father Schorp in his office. It was transformative.” Ultimately earning a degree in international business with minors in French and Spanish, Simone moved back to Europe in 2007 – but made it a point to visit her mentor almost every year since. “I always give myself the birthday present to have lunch with Father Schorp,” she says. “Depending on where my work took me, I have arrived from Paris, Grenoble, Stuttgart, or Munich to have lunch with him. No words can describe what it meant having Father Schorp in my life. Our talks, his guidance, his incredible ability to put everything in perspective, sharing his love for life-long learning, his outstanding teaching, his humble being – I will miss him so much!”

Father Franz’s family members also have many fond memories of the interest he took in their lives and the sometimes-challenging guidance he offered. James Schorp, a nephew, recalls how his prayerful presence blessed many family events, such as weddings and funerals, through the years. “Every time we saw him during our college years, he would quiz me about math and calculus,” he

smiles. “And my wife Terri says he would always let you ask for help with problems – but you had to allow plenty of time because he’d also give you a long explanation about why it was done that way, along with a history of the thought processes behind it.”

Great-nephew Eric Schorp remembers “slightly dreading” his visits as a grade-schooler. “Anytime I would see Uncle Walter (as we knew him), I could count on him quizzing me on a math-related subject and me awkwardly not remembering anything half the time,” he says. In later years, he grew to appreciate his uncle’s amazing intellect. “I do fondly remember having very deep discussions on the connections between Humpty Dumpty and political uprisings,” Eric says, “so I can only imagine what sort of interesting discussions he could be having with the saints right now!”

Another great-nephew, Michael Schorp, remembers his Uncle Walter encouraging him to remain intellectually rigorous. “ ‘Never be afraid to question what you know or think you know in the pursuit of truth,’ he’d say. And this message caught me off guard one day when thinking critically about what he’d just said,” Michael recalls. “He came back and told me, ‘Good, you’re thinking deeply, but what I’m getting at now is not meant for that. Get out and enjoy the little things.’ What did he mean? His example was to appreciate the transition from winter to spring and the blooming of wildflowers along the roads and highways. That was his way of enjoying little things in this beautiful creation, especially when he traveled to say Mass.”

Fr. Al McMenemy, who was in seminary with Father Franz, recalls admiring the scope of his expertise. “He was very studious, totally committed to his classes in theology. So, I was quite surprised to see him and a compatriot lead a team of several brothers to completely renovate one of the other buildings in the seminary. He could do it all, working during weekends and free periods. He knew how to stay focused.”

Thomas Mengler, President of St. Mary’s University, praised the impact of Father Franz’s vision and long-term presence on campus. “In the 11 years I knew Father Franz, he dedicated himself, including through his patrimony, to securing St. Mary’s future as both Catholic and Marianist,” he says. “Generations of students in the coming years will benefit from Father Franz’s ardor for St. Mary’s mission.” May he rest in peace.

