



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



**October 11, 2024**

### **Biography of Death Notice N. 16**

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother **Kevin R. WHELAN** of the Cupertino Marianist Community, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 27, 2024, in Cupertino, California, USA, at the age of 83 with 65 years of religious profession.

Brother Kevin was a beloved teacher, guidance counselor, vocational mentor, social worker, and driver's education instructor who devoted his professional career to shaping young lives, and who cherished the opportunity to help people embrace a path of salvation in Christ. Brother Kevin took to heart the motto he chose upon taking first vows – "*Duc in altum*" (Launch out into the deep) – joyfully accepting every assignment he was offered as a Marianist, even those he found personally challenging.

Kevin Raymond Whelan was born on February 20, 1941, in Jersey City, New

Jersey. He was one of four children in the family of John F. and Katherine (Bauer) Whelan. Shortly after his birth, the Whelan family moved to Mineola, Long Island (New York), where he and his siblings attended Corpus Christi Grade School. His two brothers eventually entered the seminary and were ordained as diocesan priests serving on Long Island. In addition, his sister married and raised her family there.

As for Kevin, he enrolled at Chaminade High School in Mineola, where an administrative quirk helped to shape his Marianist vocation. He recalled not doing well on the entrance exam for Chaminade, a result that led to his being assigned to “the only freshman class that didn’t take Latin.” While this gap may have prevented him from considering the diocesan priesthood, it also kept his eyes open “to the quality of life among the Marianists and their dedication to teaching.” During his senior year, a Marianist priest asked if he’d like to join the Society of Mary. “I simply said ‘yes,’” Kevin later wrote. “And that ‘Yes’ has taken me on a journey that I never believed possible.”

In the summer of 1958, after graduating from Chaminade, Kevin entered the novitiate at Marcy, New York. He professed first vows there a year later. Brother Kevin then began scholastic studies at the University of Dayton, earning a Bachelor of Arts in English in 1962. He took perpetual vows in the Society of Mary in 1963 at Beacon, New York.

Brother Kevin began his teaching career at St. James High School in Chester, Pennsylvania, and then, after two years, had his first taste of launching “into the deep” when he accepted a mission assignment at Colegio San José in Río Piedras, Puerto Rico. He taught English there for the next six years in all grade levels while also serving as moderator for several clubs and activities. Returning to the United States in 1970, Brother Kevin served at two high schools in the New York area – Most Holy Trinity HS in Brooklyn and St. Agnes Cathedral HS in Rockville Centre, Long Island. He also pursued graduate studies during this time, earning a Master of Arts in English from St. John’s University, and a Master of Science in Education and Counseling from Queens College.

In 1975, Brother Kevin stepped into a new phase of ministry when he became director of the St. John’s Home in Rockaway Park, New York. Shifting from his role as a teacher, he developed and shared his gifts as a counselor and program manager. For 11 years, he headed up the staff at St. John’s – serving both as

supervisor of the apartment community and vocational counselor to the teenage boys who resided there. Along the way, he became certified as a driver's education instructor because he wanted the residents to be able to develop this life skill. He also worked with local officials to develop an emergency housing program at St. John's. Over time, this program would come to give hundreds of youths a place to stay for a few nights while they awaited placement into other facilities.

In 1986, Brother Kevin returned to Colegio San José and served as a guidance counselor and teacher for the next nine years. He moved in 1995 to Hollywood, Florida, and there focused on college placement counseling for juniors and seniors at Chaminade-Madonna College Preparatory High School, before retiring from active ministry in 2011.

Myron Achbach, Director of Admissions Emeritus for the University of Dayton, recalls how he developed a strong friendship with Brother Kevin when visiting Puerto Rico to recruit students. "He was so welcoming to me, and caused many of his students to choose UD," Myron says. "He was a joy to be around, and I still consider him a special friend."

Marianist Brother John Campbell crossed paths with Brother Kevin many times through the years, first as high school students, then during their formation years, and later on as members of the Marianist Community at Chaminade-Madonna. "I always found him very humorous, someone with great jokes," Brother John says. "He was always kind, an excellent teacher of English, and a very fine high school counselor. The students loved him, and found him funny, caring, and professional."

While recognizing Brother Kevin's talents as a teacher and counselor, Marianist Brother Jack Ventura found another skill especially memorable – that of master grill. "Whenever there was a faculty, staff or Lay Marianist gathering, you would find Brother Kevin there at the grill, flipping burgers and turning over franks," Brother Jack says.

Marianist Father Pat Tonry fondly recalls Brother Kevin as a friendly, welcoming, and enjoyable person. "He was a creative and clear teacher and a very competent, helpful, and careful counselor," Father Pat says. "He loved the sun, cigars, his fellow Brothers – and was very proud of his New York roots."

Kristi Tucker, Director of Guidance at Chaminade-Madonna College Prep, deeply valued Brother Kevin's contributions as a colleague when they worked together from 1999 to 2011. "He was a true delight," Kristi says. "Incredibly funny, bright, and articulate, with a sense of humor that charmed both adults and students alike." She marveled at the fact that in their decade together, "he never lost his temper, never spoke a harsh word, and always showed patience with our students." Another indelible memory for Kristi: "Brother Kevin had a distinct voice, and I very much enjoyed singing with him in our school choir."

Marianist Brother John Collins knew Brother Kevin to be an excellent teacher and a dedicated guidance counselor, one who'd lost count of the number of letters of recommendation he'd sent out through the years. He also remembers Brother Kevin as an excellent driver who took pride in his certification as a driver's ed instructor. "But this did not prevent him from being responsible for a very expensive box of donuts," Brother John smiles. "On his way to purchase some Krispy Kremes, he was stopped on Hollywood Boulevard for exceeding the 30 MPH speed limit – and had to pay a stiff penalty."

Through the years, Marianist Father Paul Fitzpatrick had many opportunities to enjoy the family spirit that Brother Kevin brought to community gatherings. "Kevin's gift was being present to us in a manner that allowed us to turn off the motors and just relax," Father Paul says. "He created a fraternal space, an inclusive space where anyone was welcome. He was present to the group in a way that brought us together in a brotherly way. Cigar in hand, he was always a fair partner in a discussion and had a laugh that was contagious. Some of us would laugh at his favorite jokes, some would groan, and some would wave a white hanky in surrender. I wonder if he's now telling those same jokes over and over again in heaven, with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit also waving their white hankies – but loving every minute of it?"

Brother Kevin himself remembered with great affection the decades he'd spent in the Society of Mary. "As I reflect back upon these 60 years," he wrote on the anniversary of his first profession, "I realize how blessed Marianist life has been for me – truly, I am grateful." May he rest in peace.

---