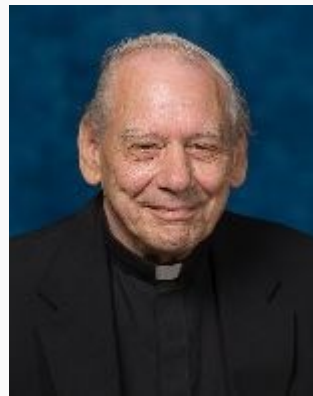




**Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie**  
*Via Latina 22, 00179 Roma*



**October 8, 2025**

### **Biography of Death Notice N. 19**

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother **Robert Emmet HUGHES**, priest, of the Marianist Center Community in Cupertino, California, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 24, 2025, in Cupertino at the age of 93 with 76 years of religious profession.

Father Bob was a beloved chaplain, researcher, community director, pilgrimage leader, pastor, and teacher. Drawn to Marianist spirituality at an early age, Father Bob often referred to himself as a “permanent knight in Mary’s army,” one who also found himself drawn to admire the wonders of biology (with a particular interest in reptiles).

Robert Emmett Hughes was born on February 12, 1932, in Washington, D.C. He was one of nine children (four brothers and four sisters) in the family of Clarence

and Agnes (Faherty) Hughes. Baptized as an infant, Bob first attended grade school at St. James in Mount Rainier, Maryland, before enrolling at Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. as a fourth grader. It was there that Bob had his first contact with the Brothers – and experienced, he would later write, “the first signs of an ethereal semblance of a religious vocation.”

With the encouragement of Marianist Brothers Thomas Brennan, Al Kreipl, and Joseph Weber, these stirrings continued in Bob’s heart throughout his grade school years. The only real question, he said, was whether to enter the Society of Mary or follow two of his older brothers into the diocesan seminary. But struck by “an odd certain conviction” in early 1944, he applied to join the Marianist Postulate as a high schooler – much to the consternation of Monsignor Cartwright, the diocesan priest who’d guided his brothers into the seminary and “proudly chose me as another likely candidate.”

Bob began his postulate studies as a 13-year-old at Mount Saint John in Dayton, Ohio. Next, he entered the novitiate at Beacon, New York, in August 1948, and professed first vows there on August 24, 1949. Brother Bob then began scholastic studies at Maryhurst in Kirkwood, Missouri, before returning to Dayton to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in education at the University of Dayton in 1952. He professed perpetual vows on August 15, 1953.

In the early 1950s, Brother Bob served as a classroom teacher – first at Chaminade High School in Dayton, and later at St. John’s High School in Philadelphia. Called to the priesthood, he then began seminary studies in 1956 at Fribourg, Switzerland. He was ordained a priest on July 19, 1959, in Fribourg.

Returning to the United States, Father Bob served primarily as a chaplain at high schools in California and Hawai'i for the next ten years. In addition, he was named the first director and chaplain for the Newman Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz when it opened in 1965. In the 1970s and '80s, Father Bob served various Marianist communities in California as chaplain and director, while also working to establish the Ave Maria Community Book Center in San José. Father Bob spent several years in parish work in the 1990s, serving as Parochial Vicar at Queen of Apostles Parish in San José.

Long devoted to a ministry centered on creating and facilitating lay prayer groups, Father Bob led many pilgrimages to Medjugorje, a village in Bosnia and Herzegovina that's been the site of reported Marian apparitions since 1981. Writing on the occasion of his 75<sup>th</sup> jubilee, Father Bob noted that he typically "stayed next door to the place where the visionaries lived, [who] spoke to me about the messages of the Virgin Mary, many of which focused on Mary's call for the formation of lay prayer groups. I felt this message affirmed my ministry back in California."

Stepping back from active ministry in the late 1990s, Father Bob returned to Dayton and began turning his attention to Marian studies. He devoted the next 15 years to research activities at Alumni Hall. Then, upon his full retirement from active ministry, he returned to Cupertino in 2014.

Former director of the Marianists' Cupertino retirement community, Brother Jack Somerville remembers Father Bob as a notable Marian scholar who "was deeply devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary." He was impressed by Father Bob's ability to develop and nurture "a vast network of prayer communities under her patronage" and by his faithful work as a pilgrimage leader through the years. "For some reason unknown to me," Brother Jack smiles, "he was fascinated by reptiles."

Bro. Tom Oles, a long-time friend, remembers Father Bob both for his preaching and for leading a Christ-like life. "When he celebrated Mass, he often spoke about leaping into the arms of Mary," Tom says. "We often say, 'Do whatever Jesus tells us.' Bob did that by teaching, campus ministry, working at a Catholic bookstore, and running prayer groups, among other things."

Marianist Father Ted Ley got to know Father Bob well when they lived together in community. "His sonorous speaking voice served him well as a celebrant and in the classroom," Father Ted says. "He became well-known in Northern California as a spiritual director, and amazingly, was still directing a weekly prayer group as recently as this past month. In his latter years, Bob became (as he put it) 'disabled in every direction.' But he could still converse as knowledgeably as ever. In recent months, he began to sleep through Mass and at the dinner table – a sign that his fullness of sleep was just around the corner,"

Father Ted says. "I will miss his sheer 'class' and even the antics of his old age. I pray that this wonderful pioneering Marianist will enjoy the eternal reward so deserving of one whose devotion to Mary was so evident in all his years of vocation and ministry."

May he rest in peace.

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