



Bro. Kenneth Thompson, SM

Celebrating 70 years of Profession

I was born and raised in Detroit, MI, where I attended St. Francis de Sales grade school before entering the Marianist Preparatory School in Beacon, NY, in 1952. I spent two years there before moving to the Marianist Prep in Dayton, OH, for one year, and returned to the novitiate in Marcy, NY, for my final year, where I professed First Vows on September 8, 1956.

I went on to study at the University of Dayton from 1956 to 1958 and graduated in absentia with a BS in Education in 1959, as I had already begun my teaching career a year earlier at St. John's Residence for Boys in Rockaway Park, NY. Upon earning my degree, I taught Latin, English, and religion at Chaminade High School in Dayton and Covington Catholic High School in Covington, KY, for three and four years, respectively.

My most fruitful years were the three decades I spent in Africa after volunteering for the African missions in 1966. I was privileged to spend 15 years teaching at Mang'u High School in Kenya and another 15 serving in Nigeria, Zambia, and Malawi. The African people accepted me as a friend, and I am still in touch with many of my former students and teachers with whom I taught.

My experience with the way African culture values the elderly members of society inspired the next two decades of my ministry. I returned to the United States in 1995 and attended Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in Terre Haute, IN, where I completed a four-month intensive course to earn a certificate in gerontology. I spent the next 22 years helping our elderly brothers in support communities in San Antonio, TX, and in the Dayton, OH, area until my retirement in 2017. My life has been greatly enhanced by serving these brothers.

Following my retirement, I was appointed to the community at Meyer Hall in Dayton, where I lived for four years until my own aging body could no longer traverse the four-story building that lacked an elevator. At the advice of my physician, I moved to Siena Woods in 2021 and was asked to serve the community wherever I could, which I did until 2023, when the entire community moved to St. Leonard's, where I currently reside.

I am thankful to God and to our Blessed Mother for calling me to the Society of Mary—which has been my mother and father since I left my parents to begin my Marianist journey—and for giving me the grace to persevere for the past 70 years.