



Obituary Paul Edmund Fitzpatrick

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother **Paul Edmund Fitzpatrick**, priest, of the Sawmill Marianist Community in Dayton, Ohio, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 23, 2026, in Dayton at the age of 80 with 61 years of religious profession.

Father Paul was a beloved teacher and professor, linguist, scripture scholar, religious formator, campus minister, and parish priest. First sensing the call to a religious vocation as a third-grader at his parish school, he would later find in the Marianists “the best means for me to give myself totally to Mary. Then I will decrease, and Christ will grow, as Mary forms me into Christ ... [working] through me fully to save souls.”

Paul E. Fitzpatrick was born on August 17, 1946, in Brooklyn, New York. He was the youngest of three sons in the family of Walter E. and Mildred (Donahue) Fitzpatrick. Baptized in 1946 at Our Lady Help of Christians parish in Brooklyn, he first encountered the Marianists at Chaminade High School in Mineola, before finishing his high school studies at Marianist Preparatory in Beacon, New York.

Paul entered the postulate as a junior at Beacon, graduating from that school in 1964. He then entered the novitiate at Marcy, New York – and professed first vows there on February 11, 1965. Next, Brother Paul completed scholastic studies at Dayton, Ohio, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from the University of Dayton in 1969.

Over the next five years, Brother Paul launched his classroom career at high schools in Ohio, Maryland, New York, and Florida – where he taught religion and French and

served as a campus minister. He professed perpetual vows on August 15, 1972, at Chester, Pennsylvania. Called to the priesthood, Brother Paul began seminary studies in 1974 at St. Basil's College in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He earned a Master of Divinity degree there in 1977, following on to the Master's in Religious Education he had earned from Seattle University in 1975. He was ordained to the priesthood at Marriottsville, Maryland, on May 28, 1977.

After serving for a year in parish work in Baltimore, Maryland, Father Paul returned to the classroom – taking posts as a teacher and campus minister at high schools in Florida and Puerto Rico. Beginning in 1984, he pursued additional graduate studies, earning a Master of Science in Pastoral Counselling from Loyola College of Maryland in 1986. For the next nine years, Father Paul worked in parish ministry, serving at churches in Connecticut and Maryland.

In time, this experience of parish life helped Father Paul realize that “my greatest gift was teaching ... [so] I was given permission to pursue doctoral studies at 45 years of age,” he would later write. In particular, he felt a call to focus on scripture – a decision that would ultimately provide the chance to enroll at renowned graduate programs in Boston, Massachusetts; Rome, Italy; and Jerusalem, Israel. In 1998, Father Paul earned an STL (License of Sacred Theology) degree from Weston Jesuit School of Theology and completed his STD (Doctorate of Sacred Theology) in 2001 at Gregorian University in Rome. Along with studying at these pontifical universities, he developed and taught courses focused on biblical topics such as the prophets, wisdom literature and the Synoptic Gospels.

In 2010, Father Paul was invited to take on a key role in diaconate formation for the diocese of Honolulu, Hawaii. He was named coordinator of academic preparation for permanent deacon candidates at the diocese, and would serve in that capacity for the next five years. On the occasion of his golden jubilee, he wrote this about his work in Hawaii: “What a gift God has given me as a ‘final act’ in my career in full-time ministry. It seems to me the most rewarding ministry in which I’ve been privileged to serve. In all

the desires of my heart and life, which I strongly believed God wanted for me, my Marianist superiors have supported me; and for this, I am grateful.”

Stepping back from full-time ministry in 2014, Father Paul remained active for the next 11 years – offering the sacraments and pastoral support at several different Marianist communities in Hawaii, New Jersey, and Ohio. Due to declining health, he retired from all ministerial roles in 2025 and joined the Sawmill Marianist Community in Dayton.

Marianist Brother Michael O’Grady remembers Father Paul for his warm personality and his academic achievements. “Paul was skilled at languages, both modern and scriptural,” Brother Michael says. “He was admired for his efforts with the diaconate community in Hawaii, where he taught for a number of years. I will miss his gentle sense of humor. He laughed well.”