



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



**July 1<sup>st</sup> , 2024**

### **Biography of Death Notice N. 1**

The Region of Japan recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **Joseph Noriyuki IKEDA**, priest, of the Chaminade Marianist Community, Tokyo, Japan, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on February 6, 2024, in Tokyo, Japan, at the age of 83 with 64 years of religious profession.

Born in Fukuoka on May 11, 1940, he entered Taisei Junior High School, then a school administered by the Society of Mary, in 1953, and continued on at Taisei High School. On June 16, 1956 at the age of 16, he was baptized at “Our Lady, Mother of the Lord” Catholic Church (Yoshizuka Catholic Church) receiving the baptismal name “Joseph.” He professed his first vows as a Marianist religious on March 21 in 1959 at Gyosei in Tokyo and his perpetual vows on August 12 in 1965 at Kaisei in Nagasaki. After completing his theological studies (1967 – 1971) in the Theology Department of Jochi (Sophia) University in Tokyo, he was

ordained to the priesthood on July 4 in 1970 at the Tokyo Cathedral in Sekiguchi.

He served as a teacher for many years at Sapporo Kosei School (Hokkaido), Osaka Meisei School (Osaka), Taisei School (Fukuoka), and Kaisei School (Nagasaki). He was popular among the students at each of these schools.

He devoted his efforts to the training of young Marianist candidates by serving as the director of the Kaisei Postulate in Nagasaki at various times in his life. There were many young candidates at that period in time. He especially focused on teaching the high school students. He was close to the high school students and taught them about the Society of Mary while accompanying them.

Shortly after priestly ordination he served as a nursing assistant at the National Sanatorium Tama Zenshoen (1974 – 1976). This was one of the 12 national sanatoriums in Japan and was the base hospital for the country. There were 12,000 patients in the system. He took care of patients who had been detained there from an early age due to various forms of discrimination existing against those with Hansen's disease. This facility had facilities to respond to the religions professed by the respective patients. The spiritual accompaniment of the Catholic patients there was originally initiated by a priest from the Paris Foreign Mission Society. Many seminarians visited this hospital because of this relationship with the Church. As a seminarian Fr. Ikeda visited as well, tending to the patients and listening to their stories. Though starting out as a volunteer, he began working there as a full-time employee in 1972. During this period, he became friends with the head of the Tama Zenshoen Catholic group and others there and he maintained these friendships throughout his life. He felt that he had acquired a deep spiritual holiness through his experiences there. He sought answers in prayer as he witnessed human and other forms of suffering.

For a year (1983 – 1984) he studied pastoral theology in the Philippines, as part of the EAPI (East Asian Pastoral Institute) program in Manila. Fr. Ikeda spent the following year (1984 – 1985) in St. Louis in the USA studying about religious candidate formation. He applied these studies as the Director of Novices for the Province of Japan for several years: at Chaminade in Tokyo (1985 – 1987), at Sanwacho in Nagasaki Prefecture (1987 – 1992) and then at Mariazan in Kannami, Shizuoka Prefecture (1993 – 1995).

From 1997 to 2007, he also ministered as the pastor of "Immaculate Conception"

Catholic Church (Kogakura Catholic Church), then a Marianist parish in Nagasaki where he was beloved by many parishioners and became a role model for them as he nurtured their faith through his many experiences. From 2010 – 2011, he served briefly as the chaplain at the Daughters of Mary Immaculate Convent in Chofu and during that same period as the Regional Assistant for Religious Life. He was appointed the Director of the Kaisei Marianist Community in 2015 but due to physical decline, he retired from that post in 2019 and lived first at Catholic Nibuno Villa in Himeji and then from 2022 at the Society of Mary's Chaminade Community Residence in Tokyo. He was obedient, gentle, and always smiling. He was not one to speak much, but his words carried strength. In his later years, he continued to live a life of dedication and, with a Rosary in his hands, he offered everything to God, even as he battled various illnesses. May he rest in peace.

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