



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



**March 22, 2024**

### **Biography of Death Notice N. 2**

The Region of Italy recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **Arnaldo CANTONETTI**, priest, of the Marianist Community of Valle Amendolea, Condofuri, Italy, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on February 12, 2024, in Rome, Italy, at the age of 87 with 69 years of religious profession.

It was in a hamlet of Poggio Nativo in the Province of Rieti, Monte Santa Maria, that Arnaldo was born on June 20, 1936, to his father Sestilio and his mother Cesira Filippi, the fourth child of a family consisting of five brothers and a sister. The village nestled in the hills of Sabina is renowned for its olive trees and vines, and it was to that activity that the family dedicated itself on its own land.

In 1947 Arnaldo entered the Postulate of Giove where, in 1953, he was admitted to the Novitiate. On August 16, 1954, he professed his First Vows in Giove. In

the same year he began his scholasticate in Pallanza where, in 1957, he obtained his classical high school diploma.

On September 12, 1959, he arrived in Brusasco, the seat of the Postulate where he had been sent as prefect of young candidates. Later, in 1959 he joined the community of the Collegio Santa Maria in Rome, where he took care of the boarders and began courses in philosophy at the Lateran University. This was followed in 1961 by his years at the Seminary of Fribourg, Switzerland, where he obtained a licentiate in theology in 1965. He was ordained a priest in 1965 in Rome in the great chapel of the Collegio Santa Maria.

For two years he exercised his ministry in the Marianist Parish of the Most Holy Name of Mary in Rome, and then returned to the Santa Maria. He followed up with his students. For years already, our confreres had been engaged in summer activities in camps and outings that accompanied the growth of the students. Families saw the Marianists' collegio as a great educational opportunity that accompanied their children throughout the year. Father Arnaldo devoted himself to it with enthusiasm.

In 1971 he returned to the parish in Rome as an assistant pastor: Father Arnaldo participated in the liturgical activities of the parish and accompanied the life of the various groups in an era of great ferment and innovation. From 1973 to 1977 the Province asked him to take care of the scholastics who resided in the parish and who, in addition to their studies, were engaged in its apostolic activities.

In 1978 he was appointed pastor of the Mater Ecclesiae Parish in Campobasso where he remained until 1989, leaving his mark both in the redevelopment of the premises and for his attention to the liturgy. It was during that period that he became involved with the Neocatechumenal Way, which would engage him in the following years as a priest and spiritual director in various communities. In 1989 he returned to Rome in the community of the Marianum, as chaplain to the university students who resided there. In 1991 he was again in the parish of Rome as assistant pastor.

In 1996 he was called to Via Latina as director of the communities of the General Administration, where he remained for three years.

In 2000 he began a new pastoral ministry in the Amendolea Valley. That mission

was also a choice: that is, to share one's life with that of the people who live in one of the most peripheral and difficult lands of the Calabrian territory. Those were not easy years, often his approach and his ideas clashed with the harsh character of the inhabitants and with the different ideas of the confreres with whom he lived. He was appreciated for his organizational skills. Through the liturgy and his homilies he guided the parish community of Mary Queen of Peace to a maturity that allowed them to acquire a new way of understanding their belonging to the Church and to the community. He did not abandon his attachment to the Neocatechumenal Way, which, his being unable to propose it for his parish, led him to collaborate with other communities in the diocese.

In the summer of 2023 began his ordeal which would come to be severe joint pain. Initially interpreted as discomfort due to age, more accurate examinations, first in Reggio Calabria and then in Rome, highlighted the presence of a tumor in the esophagus with a metastasis that had already reached the joints. The chemotherapy he underwent did not achieve results and on February 12, 2024, while he was preparing for a blood sample, he died in the infirmary of the Institute Santa Maria in Rome, still officially pastor of the Parish of Mary Queen of Peace in Condofuri.

Father Arnaldo may have suffered in life because of his strong and decisive character, but he lived intensely until the end his missionary commitment, always available to reach out to the communities in which his work was required. At the funeral, a friend remembered him with these words: "The disease falls on you and from one day to the next you have to deal with inactivity, with suffering, with death even if apparently far away. What matters is what we have given. The Love we will have given will be our eternity. You have worked in Rome, in Campobasso, in Condofuri. I don't know what you left to those communities, but I certainly know what you gave to my family."

May he rest in peace.

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