



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



**March 27, 2024**

#### **Biography of Death Notice N. 4**

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother **Frank Anthony (Paco) GOMES** of the Cupertino Marianist Community in Cupertino, California, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on March 13, 2024, in Cupertino at the age of 83 with 64 years of religious profession.

Known affectionately as Brother Paco, Brother Frank served in teaching ministries for more than 30 years both in his native Hawaii and in Mexico. He also devoted much of his energy toward promoting Hispanic culture in the schools where he served and in community support organizations. Upon the death of his mother, Brother Frank became, for many years, the primary caregiver for his brother Johnny, who was born with Down syndrome.

Frank Anthony Gomes was born on August 26, 1940, in Makawao, Maui, Hawaii.

He was the second of three sons in the family of Frank Jr. and Lucy (De Rego) Gomes. Baptized at St. Joseph's Church in Makawao, he would go on to attend the parish's grade school, graduating in 1954. Frank first encountered the Marianists as a student at St. Anthony's High School and he remained throughout his life a proud alumnus and supporter of his alma mater, the only Catholic high school on Maui.

Frank entered the Society of Mary in August 1958 at the novitiate in Santa Cruz, California. He professed first vows there a year later and then went to the scholasticate at Maryhurst in Kirkwood, Missouri, to begin his college studies. He returned to Hawai'i in 1960 to attend Chaminade College (now University) in Honolulu, where he was awarded a bachelor of arts in 1963.

Brother Frank began teaching at Honolulu's St. Louis High School in 1963 and continued there for 13 years. He then joined the faculty at his alma mater, St. Anthony High School on Maui, for the next ten years. During these assignments, he taught religion, Spanish, and driver's education – influencing many young people along the way. Even so, he wrote on the occasion of his 50th anniversary as a Marianist that he did not consider high school teaching to be the heart of his vocation.

One assignment, in particular, stood out for Brother Frank as having made the most significant impact on his life – the years he spent (1987-1993) in the Mexican town of Apaseo el Grande, Guanajuato, at Colegio Carlos Navarro. "It was among these caring people that I first learned to live the religious life and to share it with those I touched," he wrote. "It was there I found Christ walking among the poor. Christ lives in Mexico." While he reluctantly left that ministry in 1993, for the rest of his life, he found himself "searching for the people of God that pray in Spanish."

This desire took Brother Frank next to St. Maria Goretti Church in San José, California, where he served as director of the parish's Hispanic ministry. Working with a group of volunteers from the parish, "el padrecito Paco," went door-to-door visiting some 500 families in the low-income Tami Lee Drive and Santee area, beginning in 1993. At times, the volunteers were intimidated by gunfire between rival gangs, but their prayerful presence helped bring a measure of peace to the neighborhood. Together, they established the Santee Mission, offering support

services and meeting the sacramental needs of the hundreds of Mexican and Vietnamese immigrants who lived in the area.

In 1996, Brother Frank returned to his beloved Hawai'i and took on leadership roles in the Hispanic ministry at two parishes – St. John the Baptist in Honolulu and Christ the King in Kahului. He left parish work in 1999, and for the next several years, Brother Frank served in ministries focused on the needs of Spanish-speaking communities in Honolulu. Embracing the opportunity to do “creative work in Hispanic ministry,” he taught Spanish, English as a second language, and adult education classes and served in prison ministry – all in connection with the outreach efforts of Chaminade University and the McKinley Community School for Adults.

With his mother's death in 2003, Brother Frank began a new phase of ministry in which he became the primary caregiver for his younger brother Johnny. Brother Frank knew that he was benefiting from an excellent role model: “Watching my mother care for [Johnny] daily taught me that love and service are one,” he wrote in 2008. “Having Johnny in the family made us more tolerant of people who were different. I attribute my vocation to Johnny. He has always been an inspiration. His faith is strong, and I know that he prays daily for me. With him, I learned what generosity looks like.”

Marianist Father Roland Bunda recalls fondly the years he spent working with Brother Paco at St. Anthony School and Parish on Maui. In his role as pastor of St. Anthony's from 2007-21, Father Roland had many chances to witness Brother Frank's “great love for the school and the parish.” However, even more than this focus on ministry, “what impressed me about Paco was his love and care for his younger brother Johnny,” Father Roland says. “He always took care of him as a loving parent – always there to help and be there for Johnny. It disturbed his heart when Johnny passed away; he was always reminiscing about Johnny and his life.”

Marianist Father Ted Ley met Brother Frank when both were novices at Santa Cruz, and they worked and studied together in several locations through the years. Father Ted remembers Brother Paco in particular for his connection to and affection for Spanish culture. “Once, in Honolulu, he sponsored a student body concert by a La Tuna collegiate folkloric band all the way from Spain,” Father Ted says. “This past year in Cupertino he showed the same initiative

setting up cultural activities for the brothers.” He also recalls how a creative gift for administration flowered in Brother Frank when he became Headmaster at Colegio Carlos Navarro in Apaseo el Grande, Guanajuato, Mexico. “The school came to be known locally for its cultural events and family spirit,” Father Ted says. “Years after the Marianists left the school, Frankie was able to visit and renew many friendships.”

Father Ted also admired the fraternal love Brother Frank displayed as a caregiver for many years. “Generosity showed up along the way in the heroic care of his brother Johnny.” And to honor a life of service that began in Hawai'i, Fr. Ted says, “It is fitting that his remains will be interred at Diamond Head with so many of our Brothers of the Pacific.”

May he rest in peace.

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