



Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie
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Biography of Death Notice N. 16

The Region of France recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother **Patrick GIRAUD**, priest, of the community of the Madeleine, Bordeaux, France, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 1, 2025, in Bordeaux, France, at the age of 92, with 71 years of religious profession.

Patrick Giraud was born on January 15, 1933 in Caudéran (now a district of Bordeaux) and grew up in the family home located in the "Entre-deux-Mers", between Bordeaux and Libourne. In the Giraud family, the boys continued their education at the Jesuit college in Bordeaux, but after a conflict with the director of this establishment, his father enrolled Patrick in the school run by the Marianists. Thus, the young Giraud attended high school at the Collège Sainte-Marie Grand Lebrun, where he became friends with his classmate, Jean-Claude Délas – the future Father Délas. The two boys were accompanied by the chaplain of the collège, Father Cazelle. Patrick Giraud recounted: "As a boarder at Grand

Lebrun, I used to come every Thursday to take my piano lesson at my teacher's house who lived in the district – the center of Bordeaux – and I used to take advantage of it to go to the Madeleine to go to confession. It was on Thursday, December 8 of my fourth year that the Virgin Mary invited me to become like my college chaplain: a Marianist priest". After obtaining his baccalaureate, Patrick Giraud headed for the Marianist novitiate in La Tour-de-Scay, in Franche-Comté. Father Cazelle wrote to Father Kukn, master of novices: "He is very sensitive, hence a certain inconstancy. Note that this does not seem to me to be very problematic because of his very serious background and great piety... ". At a time when one entered the novitiate at the age of 16, Patrick Giraud was more mature than his fellow novices. Later, when he was critical of this year of novitiate, he said that he had been "bothered by this difference in age." Nevertheless, at the end of this year of novitiate, he wrote to the Provincial: "I already felt very deeply that the Blessed Virgin was calling me, and from then on, I have not ceased to feel it ever more surely... ". The novice clarifies his desire: "For me, I only see this life through the vocation of a Marianist priest. »

Having made his religious profession on September 12, 1953, on the occasion of the Solemnity of the Holy Name of Mary, the newly professed was sent to the scholasticate of Antony, where he began higher studies at the Sorbonne (University of Paris). He then continued his studies in music at the Gregorian Institute in Paris. After his years of scholasticate in Antony, Patrick Giraud returned as a teacher in Caudéran for the 1956-1957 school year.

At the beginning of September 1957, Patrick had to satisfy military service. Like the other French people of his generation, he was caught up in the turmoil of the Algerian war; During this period, conscription was raised to 30 months. Like all the conscripts of that time, he met other men from different backgrounds. As a religious, he helped the chaplain, but he wrote that he experienced spiritual poverty. During this period, he questioned himself about the Church and the principles of religious life: he opened up about it in all frankness to the Provincial of the time. When he became an officer, he first received from the army the mission of creating educational and social works in Cherchell (Algeria) in order to pacify and allow the development of the local populations. Then he went to the Aurès (mountainous region of Algeria) where attacks were frequent, he was given provisional command of a Company. With his Company, he was also caught in an ambush prepared by the fellaghas (fighters in favor of independent

Algeria) who killed some of his men. These thirty months of military life shook him up, but strengthened his vocation as a Marianist religious.

Freed from military obligations, he went to Fribourg, at the beginning of 1960, to prepare for entry into the Marianist seminary Regina Mundi. While he was in the seminary, Patrick Giraud made his perpetual vows in the Society of Mary on November 2, 1960. In these pre-conciliar times, he was involved with the preparation and execution of the liturgy at the seminary. As a musician, he was in charge of polyphony... The Superior described him as a seminarian who was not very easy: "He is difficult, he realizes it, he has improved, but there is still a long way to go. [...] We don't remain indifferent to him. In addition to his studies in theology at the University of Fribourg, he was pursuing a thesis with the Gregorian Institute in Paris. On April 22, 1965 in Bordeaux, Father Giraud was ordained at the same time as Father Délas. Cardinal Richaud, Archbishop of Bordeaux was the bishop who ordained them.

In September 1965, Father Patrick Giraud, known as "PG", was at the Stanislas College in Cannes (Côte d'Azur), a school founded in 1866 by Father Lalanne. He was a chaplain, teacher of music education and religious instruction. The Mediterranean coast was not an easy pastoral terrain, the provincial commented in 1967: "an environment that is both easy and very difficult: a morality particular to the Coast; fortunately Fr. Giraud is not too offended by this and knows how to react to and understand these people." But the Society of Mary decided to withdraw from Cannes for good at the end of the 1969-1970 school year. Father Giraud was then asked to go to Antony. He did so, but without much enthusiasm on his part.

At the end of the summer of 1970, the "PG" returned again to Antony, but this time in the new Institution Sainte-Marie which had just opened its doors two years earlier. It was in this suburb in the south of Paris that he gave the best of himself, the great work of his life! He was a music teacher, a teacher of religion, and a chaplain. He participated in the dynamism of the youth ministry in connection with the parish chaplaincy. Above all, he created the Manécanterie des Petits-Chanteurs de Sainte-Marie d'Antony, which in 1989 became the "Maîtrise d'Antony": "In Antony, I was able to fully carry out this project with a great mastery which involved provided music for the Sunday mass. In addition, this group gave

concerts of great sacred works. He was responsible for the construction of the organ and the fresco of the collège chapel. Recognized in the Parisian liturgical music community, he rubbed shoulders with some great organists and composers of sacred music. The "Manécanterie" was invited to participate in the major liturgical events of the Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral (Mass of Pope John Paul II during the apostolic journey to Paris in 1980). Active in the Federation of Pueri Cantores, he was elected president of the French Federation in January 1992.

The "PG" is an organist, composer, choir director: "So I was a bit of a musician and I have always attached great importance to making young people discover the Lord through the practice of great musical works". His musical direction was demanding, although sometimes comical. Hyper-sensitive as well as being an aesthete, the "PG" regularly repeats: "God is not discovered in ugliness, or even in mediocrity. In fact, in the 1970s and 1980s, the masses at Sainte-Marie d'Antony attracted a certain influx of faithful, often young: "The taste for the beautiful liturgy and the practice of the great masterpieces of sacred music has borne fruit". The PG's homilies are often improvised, but they have meaning and heart. On the other hand, the spontaneous prayers that he leads are dense and powerful... Although he initiated many pilgrimages (Lourdes, Rome, Holy Land), and camps or concert tours, the "PG" was not an orderly man. In 1967, Father Le Mire, provincial, described him: "poorly organized, and fails to finish projects on time; On the other hand, he is an excellent improviser, but this does not suit everyone. »

He had a pastoral audacity that was striking. However, this did not please everyone, especially among some Marianist religious. Father Cazelle, the provincial, who had to intervene in a climate of community and pastoral tensions at Sainte-Marie d'Antony in January 1978, wrote: "Choices must be made. But it's impossible to reason with him, and when he invents something else, everyone will have to comply... He was, however, followed in the pastoral adventure by several religious of the community who appreciated him. Because Patrick Giraud does not leave anyone indifferent: if some did not like him, others idolized him. Although it is the Lord who calls and puts in hearts the desire to follow Him, it was with the "PG" that many boys matured their priestly, monastic, or religious vocation. Today, eight of these boys are Marianist religious – among them is a certain André Fétis... There are also the many Christian vocations of men and

women who have found their way thanks to the "PG". Learning of his death, several former Antony and Bordeaux alumni wrote: "Without the PG, I would not be who I am. I owe him a lot! Remaining attached to his family all his life, the "PG" also made great friendships with many families.

In 2004, he was sent to Bordeaux, to the Madeleine chapel. This move created a revolt in Antony: many people did not understand this change. They verbally attacked several religious. Although this return to Bordeaux was painful for Father Giraud, he later acknowledged that he had great graces at the Chapelle de la Madeleine, despite the physical difficulties that sometimes diminished him: a small stroke in 2004, osteoarthritis, cancer. He returns to "his" Grand-Lebrun collège where he celebrated the liturgy. In addition, he regularly helped the priests of Bordeaux. His life as an artist and his thirst for musical culture extended to the Chapelle de la Madeleine: he had the organ rebuilt and he initiated organ recitals. He saw his religious vocation revitalized and he rediscovered the importance of the daily recitation of the rosary. He experienced community life more intensely: in 2007, he was appointed director of the Community of La Madeleine and carried out this service for 6 years; Moreover, as a handyman, he regularly ran errands and cooked, as well as many household chores when necessary. Enthusiastic and full of energy, he was often considerate and welcoming. Of course, sometimes, when he was tired, he became hot-headed and difficult. Residing in the House of Blessed Father Chaminade, he strengthened his attachment to the Marianist Family and was happy to accompany fraternities; he retained his preferential affection for the marginalized and the young. Refocusing on his priestly life, he experienced the depth of Reconciliation as a minister of the sacrament: "My first desire to be a priest was not primarily centered on the Eucharist but rather motivated by the ministry of forgiveness: to be a dispenser of the mercy of Jesus Christ" (April 2025).

At the end of April, 2025, celebrating his 60 years of priesthood, the "PG" gave a beautiful homily during the Mass which was a thanksgiving for a life well lived. On Saturday, September 6, the funeral of Father Giraud, presided over by Bishop James, Archbishop of Bordeaux, brought together many relatives of the deceased in the chapel of Notre-Dame des Grâces of the collège Sainte-Marie Grand-Lebrun.

