



Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie
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September 2, 2025

Biography of Death Notice N. 18

The Region of France recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother **Désiré CADAS**, of the community in Requista, France, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 19, 2025, in Requista, France, at the age of 93 with 74 years of religious profession.

Désiré Cadas was born on July 26, 1932 in Puech de Gos, northeast of Toulouse. His father Jules and his mother Andrée were farmers. They raised sheep and pigs. Désiré was the 8th child of a large family, a total of 14 brothers and sisters. Several children responded to a religious vocation: Two of his sisters, Bernadette and Thérèse, entered the Franciscans in Rodez, another sister Andrée was a daughter in the Foyers de Charité of Marthe Robin.

It was in his childhood that Désiré heard God's call to religious life. As a child, he

was sensitive to souls who were lost in the world, often for lack of priests. But what attracted Désiré to religious life was above all the apostolate of the brothers. Désiré entered the postulate at Fiac on September 15, 1946. His superiors noted in this young man a right judgment, an open-mindedness and a certain frankness. Even if on occasion he seemed a little irritable, Désiré was very devoted and listened attentively to suggestions for improvement.

A little later, Désiré entered the novitiate at the Tour de Scay in the department of Doubs. He pronounced his first vows there on September 12, 1951. He wrote to his Provincial when he asked to make his first profession: *"I believe that being a working brother on a farm is what will be most successful for me, because being the son of farming parents, I have always been interested in everything that involves working the land and I have a special taste for it. I believe that in this field, everything that is agriculture and gardening will do well for me."* He continued in his letter of request by mentioning the greatest obstacle: *"I believe that the greatest obstacles I foresee for my future will be to strengthen my will and my energy, but with the grace of Mary, I am quite willing to overcome myself in this respect."*

He was then sent to a small community in Gy at the Menan school in Haute-Saône, within the Province of Franche-Comté, being himself from the Province of Midi. Provinces that would soon merge to become the Province of France. Désiré worked in carpentry to prepare for the C.A.P, a vocational training certificate. Désiré did not stay long in the East, he was appointed to Caudéran, to the Sainte-Marie Grand Lebrun establishment in Bordeaux for the start of the school year in September 1952 where he spent a year. He continued his preparation for the C.A.P.

Then it was military service. At the beginning of November 1953, Désiré went to Castres and joined a colonial artillery regiment. He said of his service that he enjoyed associating with people of all conditions, of all ranks, because it opened up new horizons and taught him to adapt to many different personalities. He took the opportunity to take his driving licence. He was liberated for the first time on February 11, 1955, the day of Our Lady of Lourdes. A reservist, he was in fact recalled to the army by the decree of August 24, 1955 to go to North Africa. The reservists left for Tunisia in October 1955. Désiré wrote the following in a letter to his superior: *Going on this pleasure trip when you know why you're going*

doesn't bring joy to anyone. It's true that there's no need to be alarmed before it's time, although we know too well what awaits us, in fact it may not be that bad. In fact, I still feel privileged compared to many others in view of their civil situation, and moreover it is by faith that we abandon ourselves to the designs of Providence and under the auspices of one's Blessed Mother. They stayed there for two months and their regiment returned to France on December 23, 1955.

The summer of 1957 would be important for Désiré. At the end of a 21-day retreat in Switzerland in Middelstalden in the canton of Fribourg, he made his perpetual profession in the Society of Mary. Here is what he wrote to his Provincial: *I now place myself entirely under the maternal protection of Mary, and besides, what should we fear when we know that we are the sons of such a mother, so tender and so powerful at the same time? I am confident that on August 22 she will be willing to grant me many more graces in return for my act of generosity and to benefit not only me, but also my dear family, all those who have prayed or are praying for me, all those who have done me good, the Society of Mary itself.*

In September 1957, he was assigned to the the Saint-Louis community in Requista. He stayed there for nearly 20 years! Désiré would be involved in multiple maintenance tasks, in carpentry, bees, but also in the life of the school through driving the bus for the students, the garden to supply the students, especially the boarders, and the brothers.

Then came the great departure for Côte d'Ivoire in September 1986 where Brother Désiré responded generously to the call of his superiors. It would come after a long time of questioning and discernment: *I have just recovered from the announcement you made to me of my change to Africa. The superiors trust me to bear witness to the gospel in distant lands and I feel so small. When I leave Réquista, it is probably a very happy life that I am abandoning, but will I cross the desert to reach the promised land here? I don't know, I think I can tell you that here I have tried each time to adapt to the needs and circumstances. In the end, it is not without a certain anxiety that I say yes, in a religious spirit and in fidelity to my commitments.*

Désiré arrived at the community of the Collège Notre-Dame d'Afrique in Abidjan to take charge of the carpentry of the college where there was so much to do. A

few years later, he joined the team of formators of the Pre-Novitiate. Among other things, he would be in charge of accounting.

Désiré had a capacity for wonder, while feeling a little disconcerted: *everything is so different here because of the climate and the way of life of the people. I would mention in particular the aggressiveness of mosquitoes: the rascals, they attack hard sometimes especially at the end of the evening in the workshop.*

Désiré knew how to listen to the young people who were applying for religious life. He knew how to accompany them well, to help them find their way, whether they were in the Society of Mary or elsewhere. Some brothers in Côte d'Ivoire do not forget this. Let's let one of them speak: *Brother Désiré CADAS, whom we affectionately called in Côte d'Ivoire, "YAYA Désiré" or "YAYA dès", was my brother master at the postulancy (pre-novitiate) of Abidjan in 1991-1992. Very respectful and attentive to everyone, he took care of each person entrusted to him like a good family man. He had a great concern for our material and spiritual well-being. I can still see him amazed to discover in the middle of the forest, the fields of cocoa, coffee, pineapple... I also appreciated on the occasion of these visits, his simplicity, the respect for others that led him to share the meal that very poor families could offer. Brother Désiré Cadas had that touch of humor that characterized him. It was with him that I learned that when the tropical storm announced itself with the rumblings of thunder, it was nothing more than a game of pétanque in the sky between Jesus and his Father. An excellent carpenter, Brother Désiré was the last Marianist brother to run the carpentry workshop of the Collège Notre Dame d'Afrique created by Brother Alphonse Edel. He wanted each tool to be returned to its place after use. He was demanding of the workers he employed in terms of safety, in order to avoid accidents on the machines. I remember how Mamadou and his nephew who could neither read nor write, he made them qualified carpenters capable in the end, of reading, writing, making calculations, and making furniture for the establishment and for outsiders.*

During the summer of 1993, Brother Désiré moved from the Collège Notre-Dame d'Afrique to the novitiate in another district of Abidjan. This change did not go very well for Brother Désiré and he opened up to his superiors during the canonical visit to Côte d'Ivoire. Several suggestions were made to him and Désiré, after a time of personal discernment, reiterated his availability to exercise his humble services for the Society of Mary. His superiors asked him to return to

Réquista in September 1994. Désiré was very happy to return to Collège Saint-Louis and the proximity of his family, even if it was not, he wrote, without a small regret that he left Côte d'Ivoire. Once again, he entrusted himself to the Virgin Mary to help him do God's will.

Désiré returned to Réquista to the community of the Collège Saint-Louis where he resumed many of the activities he had left behind when he left for Africa. He would be able to exercise his talents as a handyman and get closer to his family, some of whom were ill. When the headmasters of schools at the Collège Saint-Louis succeeded each other, Désiré would be faithful to the post and will help each of these headmasters of schools find their feet and serve the mission.

He would see his brothers in the community join the Lord. Désiré was the last brother to remain in the community at Saint-Louis. He went to the Jean Baptiste Déflau retirement home in Réquista in October 2017.

During the first years in this house, Désiré will still be able to shine and communicate, accompany residents or visitors who could no longer communicate with their loved ones. But the last few years were difficult for Désiré. Already handicapped by his deafness, Désiré will see his eyesight gradually diminish until he is unable to read. Communication became extremely difficult. The stroke in the spring of 2023 will cut him off from the world.

On Friday, September 19, during the Eucharist which was celebrated in the Jean Baptiste Déflau residence, Désiré left to join the Lord and all his siblings whom he had seen leave before him.

Thank you Désiré for all that you have given us to live and shared with you. Thank you for these good times, your warm relational simplicity, your ear-to-ear smile, your singing accent and the laughter. Thank you Désiré for your unconditional yes to the service of Mary. The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen
