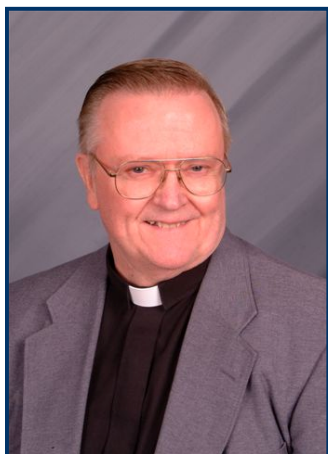


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October 31, 2012

**Death Notice No. 26 (To all Unit Administrations):**



The Province of the United States of America, recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **EUGENE SWEENEY**, priest of the Marianist Residence Community, San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on October 27, 2012 in San Antonio, Texas, USA, at the age of 79 with 60 years of religious profession.

Eugene Raymond Sweeney was born to John and Adele (Lopinot) Sweeney on Sept. 22, 1933, in East St. Louis, Illinois. He had three brothers and two sisters. After graduating from Central Catholic High School in East St. Louis, Gene entered the Marianists' novitiate and professed first vows on Aug. 1, 1951.

After earning a degree from St. Mary's University in 1955, Gene spent most of the next 20 years teaching at St. Joseph High School in Victoria, Texas, and Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth, Texas. During this time, Gene earned a master's degree in English from the University of Notre Dame and professed perpetual vows on July 13, 1957.

Between 1975 and 1978, Gene attended the Marianist seminary at the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto in Toronto, Canada, part of the Toronto Theological Consortium. Fr. Gene was ordained on June 10, 1978, at St. Peter's Church in Kirkwood, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri.

After teaching for one year at Thomas More High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Fr. Gene served for three years as a retreat minister at the Marianist Retreat and Conference Center in Eureka, Missouri. Fr. Gene said he loved giving retreats and continued to do so after leaving Eureka.

Fr. Gene served as a campus minister at Daniel J. Gross Catholic High School from 1982 until 1984. He then spent the next 10 years as a campus minister and community director at St. Mary's University.

Between 1994 and 2004, Fr. Gene served at St. Mark's Parish in Denton, Texas. He said enjoyed his time as a parish priest and that the most rewarding ministry was giving reconciliation because of the trust bestowed on him and the positive results of many confessions.

One parishioner said Fr. Gene was kind and encouraging when she decided to convert to Catholicism. "He is a loving example of everything a priest should be," she said.

Fr. Gene was beloved by many parishioners at St. Mark's. As a gift at his 50th jubilee, they raised nearly \$8,000 to refurbish Fr. Gene's bass fishing boat.

Another parishioner, Deanna Michelis, told the *North Texas Catholic* in 2002 that when she first met Fr. Gene, “I was immediately taken by his warmth, hospitality and genuine concern for people. The insightful homilies he prepared proved his love of God, the Blessed Mother, and God’s people. I felt that teaching the Word of God was his greatest joy.”

Fr. Gene returned to the Marianist Retreat and Conference Center in Eureka to serve between 2005 and 2011. Bro. Joe Markel, who lived in community with Fr. Gene during those years, said he was a generous man who loved to cook. Bro. Joe also recalls how energized Fr. Gene was by the priesthood.

“The priesthood was the most important thing in his life,” Bro. Joe said. “It didn’t matter if it was a knock on the door at a late hour, or a Mass was needed in a nursing home, or someone needed a confession, Fr. Gene was available and would do it joyfully. He would always say, ‘That’s why I’m here.’”

When Fr. Gene retired to the Marianist Residence in San Antonio in 2011, Fr. Martin Solma, provincial, said he was a “shining example” of an older brother transitioning gracefully to a next stage of life.

“The Society of Mary is my mother and I love her fully,” Fr. Gene said at his 50th jubilee. “She has always taken care of me. The Church also has taken care of me and I hope in the past 50 years I have responded to God’s love and concern for me.”

May he rest in peace.