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Death Notice No. 5 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **AUGUST BIEHL**, priest of the San Antonio Marianist Community, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on February 10, 2013 in San Antonio, Texas, USA, at the age of 88 with 65 years of religious profession.

Fr. Gus Biehl was a teacher, retreat center administrator and chaplain, serving mostly in the St. Louis area. He will be remembered for his outgoing personality, his sense of humor and his love of writing. His legacy includes several collections of poems and essays.

August J. Biehl was born to August and Mary (Hennig) Biehl on February 23, 1924, in Chicago, Illinois. He was the second of four children.

Fr. Gus attended St. Francis Xavier grade school. He went on to Lane Technical High School for two years, and then transferred to St. Michael Central High School, which was his first encounter with the Marianists. Upon graduating, he obtained a clerical position and attended night school to strengthen his skills in shorthand, typing and other business subjects.

Those skills served Fr. Gus well when he was drafted into military service in early 1943. He spent nearly all his service as secretary to commanders, working in India, the Philippines, China, Burma and Egypt.

It was during his service in India that Fr. Gus experienced the apostolic zeal of an Augustinian priest, Fr. Joe Shannon. Fr. Shannon encouraged Fr. Gus to think hard about his life after the war and to plan for how he would make the world a better place.

When Fr. Gus was honorably discharged with the rank of staff sergeant in April 1946, he returned to Chicago and called on Bro. William Hamm, then director of St. Michael Central. With Bro. William's guidance, Fr. Gus found himself at the Marynook novitiate in Galesville, Wisconsin.

Fr. Gus made his first profession of vows on August 15, 1947, assigned to the scholasticate at Maryhurst in Kirkwood, Missouri. From there, Fr. Gus continued his studies at the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio, where he earned a bachelor's degree in education.

Fr. Gus' first teaching experience was at McBride High School in St. Louis, Missouri, beginning in August 1950. He professed his perpetual vows on July 10, 1951, in Galesville.

In 1954, Fr. Gus was assigned to the Marianist International Seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland. On July 20, 1958, Fr. Gus was ordained to the priesthood. He spent an additional year in Fribourg to complete a bachelor's degree in sacred theology. He then spent a year in Rome to earn a diploma in spirituality.

After six years in Europe, Fr. Gus returned to the United States. During the 1960s, he served as a teacher and chaplain at the Maryhurst postulate, at Cathedral High School in Belleville, Illinois, and at Chaminade College Preparatory in St. Louis. In 1967, Fr. Gus became part of the leadership team at the new Marianist Apostolic Center (now Marianist Retreat and Conference Center) in Glencoe, Missouri. He served as chaplain and subdirector there from 1967 to 1970, and as the facility's director until 1973.

At the request of the community, and armed with experience in retreat center administration, Fr. Gus returned to Galesville to help the facility transition from novitiate to retreat center. He stayed there through 1989, helping the site transition again to an ecumenical retreat house as the Society of Mary withdrew from its ownership.

“Fr. Gus was a very outgoing person, and I believe that his military service gave him important skills and maturity. This combination made him a good administrator at the retreat centers,” said Fr. Joe Uvietta.

During the early 1990s, Fr. Gus served as chaplain to the brothers at Chaminade College Prep. In 1993, he was asked to be chaplain for the Marianist community and the Christian Family Living Retreat Center in Cape May Point, New Jersey, where he served through 1995.

Now in his seventh decade, Fr. Gus returned to familiar geography, serving as a volunteer and as chaplain for the East St. Louis community. He remained there for the next 10 years. A colleague in the community, Bro. Norbert Karpfinger, recalled a German expression taught to him by Fr. Gus: “After one eats, either one should sleep or take a thousand steps.” With this invitation from Fr. Gus, Bro. Norb would join him for a walk through East St. Louis every evening after dinner.

For much of his life, writing was both a tool for reflection and a channel for Fr. Gus' creative energy. Here is a section of a poem called “To my friends while I am on retreat”:

My prayers rise like incense.
My hands like the evening offering
I lift you up this night on hands of flesh
And call upon the living God to seize you and hold you
As captives of an incredible love, divine.

Fr. Gus published collections of his writings, including one called *Walking, Waiting, Loving* in 1998.

Fr. Gus retired to the Marianist Residence in San Antonio, Texas, in 2005.

May he rest in peace.