

May 20, 2008

Death Notice No. 10 (To all Unit Administrations)



The Province of France recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear Brother, Jean-Baptiste Armbruster, priest, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin May 16, 2008, at Pessac, France, in the 86th year of his age and the 68th of his religious profession.

On December 4, 1922, an Alsatian newborn discovered the world, under the name of Jean-Baptiste Armbruster, at Wolxheim (Bas Rhin) as fit as a fiddle. The future looked promising for him from the very beginning.

His formation period stretched from 1943 to 1954, the year he was ordained priest in Fribourg by Bishop Haller.

With a License in literature, he was sent to the following houses in succession: La Rochelle, Art-sur-Meurthe, Antony, where he founded the Legion of Mary among the postulants with the help of Jean-Claude Délas. After some years of teaching in the schools, his provincial gave him other missions: vocation director, assistant provincial, French director in the Fribourg seminary, chaplain and superior at the Madeleine in Bordeaux.

A man of research, from the seminary onwards he showed a very clear desire to familiarize himself with the documents of our Marianist family. Some works from his pen included: *Marianist Direction* (4 vols.); “*To Know, to Love, to Serve Mary*,” commentaries on *The Letter of 24 August, 1839*, and many others....

He would teach courses at the novitiate of Art-sur-Meurthe and would confide research projects to some of the novices and young religious, or to lay persons.

He sowed widely. Among his activities were the foundation of the Fraternités Marianistes, a Family of Mary branch which continues to grow today. Jean-Baptiste was industrious, learned, precise and rigorous in his work. He had all the qualities of an historian, and became one of the most knowledgeable scholars of Chaminade’s charism.

We shall remember certain of his character traits, such as: “He was about as flexible as a lamp glass” (Colette Sécheret) “A dollar is a dollar....” He had humor at his command and his laugh was remarkable. Early on he took to computing and vaunted its merits until his last breath.

He was a hands-on Brother more than an arm-chair type. A handsome man, he knew how to mobilize people who willingly put themselves at his service. His familiarity with the writings of Blessed Chaminade formed his spiritual life, in which silence played an important part. His zeal for study and prayer made him wear the austere skullcap which made him look like a copy of our Founder, who now has received him with open arms.

May he rest in Peace!