

FATHER GERALD (JERRY) PLEVA, SM

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **GERALD PLEVA**, priest, of the Marianist Residence (San Antonio), who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 25, 2013, in San Antonio, Texas, USA, at the age of 74 with 55 years of religious profession.

Fr. Jerry was a teacher, counselor, campus minister and pastor. He held three master's degrees and touched thousands of lives during his long and varied career.

Born on June 15, 1939, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Fr. Jerry was the older of two sons of Frank and Madeline (Pfister) Pleva. He attended Sacred Heart grade school and Don Bosco High School (later Saint Thomas More High School) in Milwaukee, where he first encountered members of the Society of Mary.

Fr. Jerry professed his first vows on September 8, 1958, at Marynook Novitiate in Galesville, Wisconsin. He professed his perpetual vows on August 19, 1962, in St. Louis, Missouri.

In his early career, then-Bro. Jerry taught religion, English and history at St. Mary's High School and St. John Vianney High School in St. Louis. He returned to Marynook in 1968, where he served as assistant novice master while teaching classes and working toward his first master's degree.

In 1969, Bro. Jerry was awarded a master's degree in theology from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas. He quickly added two more advanced degrees: a master's in counseling from Winona State College in Winona, Minnesota, and a master's in religious education from Seattle University in Seattle, Washington, both in 1972.

In the fall of 1972, Bro. Jerry began a two-year term as a teacher and guidance counselor at Central Catholic High School in San Antonio. During this time, he asked to serve the Society of Mary as a priest. He entered the Marianist seminary in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and was ordained on May 28, 1977, in Milwaukee.

Fr. Jerry then returned to Central Catholic, where he spent the next six years as chaplain, teacher and community director. He later recounted these as "good years working in beautiful San Antonio as a newly ordained priest ... I enjoyed working with the students and families at Central."

In 1983, Fr. Jerry was called back to his hometown. He spent the next six years as a teacher and chaplain at Thomas More High (now Saint Thomas More High).

Following a sabbatical year, Fr. Jerry was called to a distinctly different place and role. He spent 1990 doing formation work in Bangalore, India. While his time there was short, it offered him a chance to meet his hero: Mother Teresa of Calcutta. "I met with her personally for more than an hour – an experience I will never forget," Fr. Jerry later said.

Upon his return to the states, Fr. Jerry served as associate pastor at Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in Helotes, Texas, ministering to many families familiar to him from his time at Central Catholic. He remained at the parish through 2006.

In 2007, he became associate pastor at St. Anthony parish in Wailuku, Maui, Hawai'i, where he celebrated his golden jubilee as a Marianist.

Bro. Jim Vorndran lived with Fr. Jerry during his service in Maui. "I think one of the most important statements in Scripture about Mary is 'The mother of Jesus was there.' That was Jerry ... available for anyone at any time," said Bro. Jim. "He was especially in his element ministering in the hospital emergency room or intensive care unit. He was truly *there*."

In late 2010, Fr. Jerry was diagnosed with inoperable cancer, and following chemotherapy treatment, he moved to the Marianist Residence in San Antonio in 2011. Bro. Joe Grieshaber lived with Fr. Jerry at the residence. "Jerry's life since his cancer diagnosis illustrates that, like Mary, he listened to God and was attentive to Him. Like Mary, he accepted what God asked him to do, and he did it. He is not resting in peace; he is lavishly celebrating it," said Bro. Joe.

May he rest in peace.