

January 28, 2025

Obituary Fr. James Allen DeLong, SM

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother **(James) Allen DeLong**, priest, of the Cupertino Marianist Community of Cupertino, California, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on January 18, 2025, in Cupertino, at the age of 92 with 71 years of religious profession.

Father Allen was a beloved teacher, administrator, chaplain, campus minister, vocation director, and religious formator who cherished the decades he spent in the Society of Mary. While still a novice, he wrote that he could not "conceive of another way of life that could be more perfect, could offer such a high perfection, and could have such a guide as Mary for attaining conformity with Christ." Although much of his ministry would focus on work in California and Hawai'i, he also served for a time in Kenya and India.

James Allen DeLong was born on April 23, 1932, in San Gabriel, California. He was the oldest of two children in the family of James and Constance (Lenzini) DeLong, and is survived by his sister, Joan Gori. Allen attended several different parish grade schools in the San Francisco Bay area. He recalled first experiencing a desire for religious life as a seventh grader, a feeling that would grow during his years at St. Vincent High School (Petaluma, California) and as he began undergraduate studies at the University of California (Berkeley).

Taking the initiative to explore this life-path, Allen joined a Trappist monastery for a brief time in 1950 but soon returned to college. He then wrote a letter to Brother William Shmitt to inquire about life in the Society of Mary – a correspondence that provided Allen's first-ever contact with the Marianists. Thereafter, Allen became a postulate and entered the novitiate at Santa Cruz, California, in August 1952.

After professing first vows in August 1953, Brother Allen pursued scholastic studies at St. Mary's College in Alhambra, California, earning a Bachelor of Physics degree there in 1956. For the next three years, he taught at St. Anthony's School on Maui (Hawaii) and, during this period, professed his final vows (at Santa Cruz) in 1957. Brother Allen was then assigned in 1959 to Archbishop Riordan High School in San Francisco, California. He taught there until 1963 while taking a year on leave to earn a Master of Arts degree in Education at the University of San Francisco.

In 1964, Brother Allen began a new phase in his education ministry when he was named the founding principal for Archbishop Mitty High School in San José, California – a role that included supervision of construction work for the new school. He served at Archbishop Mitty for 10 years and then entered priestly formation at the Marianist Seminary in Toronto, Ontario (Canada) in 1974. Earning a Master of Divinity degree from St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto, Father Allen was ordained to the priesthood on May 14, 1977, at Queen of Apostles Church in San José. He then completed seminary studies the following year at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri.

Father Allen's next move brought him to southern California where he started working at Chaminade College Preparatory High School in Los Angeles (West Hills). Initially serving as a teacher and campus minister there, he was named president of the school in 1986. He continued in that leadership role for the next 10 years. After Chaminade, Father Allen served as Vocation Director for the Province for several years before moving into retreat ministry at the Marianist Community in Cupertino, California. Father Allen returned to Hawai'i in 2000, serving as president of Saint Louis School in Honolulu until 2006.

Taking a brief sabbatical in 2007, Father Allen prepared to serve in a new ministry half a world away – becoming assistant novice master for the Society of Mary in Limuru, Kenya (Africa). He served in this role until 2012, spiritually forming young men as they discerned whether to become Marianists and even spending a summer teaching

physics to young Brothers in India. From Kenya, he returned to Hawai'i, where he served as associate pastor at St. Anthony Parish on Maui until 2015. He then accepted a position as campus minister at Saint Louis School in Honolulu, serving there until his retirement from active ministry. Father Allen returned to his native California in 2021, joining the Marianist Community in Cupertino for his final years.

Glenn Medeiros, current president of Saint Louis School, paid tribute to Father Allen in a recent edition of the school's newsletter. "Father Allen made a positive impact on the lives of many people," Glenn wrote. "His passion for strengthening and supporting a faith-centered education continues today, with many of the practices we have in place now at Saint Louis School. We will dedicate time in school to honor his life and work, and we will pray for all those who are grieving his loss here and elsewhere."

It's a legacy that Christopher Casupang recalls fondly as well. The Director of Campus Ministry at Saint Louis School and coordinator of the Marianist LIFE Pacific program says, "When I started in Campus Ministry in the '90s, I had heard of the name Fr. Allen and his reputation for leadership and ministry. Several years later, he arrived on Kalaepōhaku, and we quickly started the Kairos and Emmaus retreats. Through these retreats, his guidance and mentorship spanned the years as he impacted the lives of many students and colleagues."

Marianist Father Marty Solma reflected on the impact of the years that Father Allen spent at the Marianist novitiate in Kenya. "He was deeply appreciated by Father Joseph Mwaura, the novice director, and the novices," Father Marty says. "And Father Allen recently told me that those five years in Kenya were among the most happy, meaningful, and productive of his ministerial life. High

praise, I think – for both himself and for the African novices he assisted and taught."

Jim Muneno, music director for the Mystical Rose Oratory (MRO) on the campus shared by Saint Louis School and Chaminade University in Honolulu, remembers how he drew both personal and professional strength from Father Allen's counsel. "He was, in some ways, a spiritual father to me," Jim says. "His advice was always practical and encouraging. He would always ask, what is God calling you to now? Once, he said, after telling him some of my struggles and uncertainties, maybe you are right where God wants you. In reference to our music ministry at MRO, he also said that that ministry is the spiritual life of our family. That stuck with me. He always reminded me to stay in tune with the liturgical seasons."

During their years together in Hawai'i, Marianist Father Patrick McDaid grew to appreciate Father Allen's friendship, spirituality, and professionalism. "His love of Jesus and our Blessed Mother was contagious: You only had to be around him for 30 seconds to pick that up!" Father Patrick says. "Allen was a born teacher. Whether teaching physics or religion, as a chaplain or administrator, he was a natural in a school setting. And his preferred setting was any venture that would help the men and women under his care to become saints. Especially in the sacrament of Reconciliation and at Mass, he was like no other. Leading an Emmaus or Kairos retreat was heaven for Allen. How blessed we were to experience his passion and tenderness in sharing the faith!"

May he rest in peace.