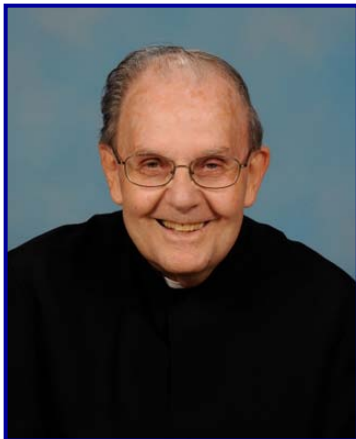


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September 29, 2010

Death Notice No. 15 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Province of Meribah, recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **FRANCIS THOMAS KEENAN**, priest of the Kellenberg Memorial Marianist Community, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 20, 2010 in Uniondale, New York, USA, at the age of 78 with 59 years of religious profession.

Francis Thomas Keenan was born August 14, 1932 at home in Lynbrook, New York, the son of Raymond and Margaret (Lonergan) Keenan.. He had three older brothers, Raymond, James, and Vincent, and a twin brother, William. His father, Raymond, Sr., born in 1896, had been hoping for a girl. However, when the doctor came down the stairs, he announced that it was a boy, Frank's twin brother, William. Ten minutes later, he came down to announce that there was a second boy, a twin, who became Francis Thomas. His father cried!

Frankie, as his family called him, and Billy were very close. They had the same room together and went to St. Raymond's Grade School together. However, at the beginning of their eighth grade at St. Raymond's in September of 1945, their father died very suddenly. After the death of their father, the years were very difficult for Frank and Billy as they had to cope with this loss as well as their mother's breakdown from the stress of being bereft with practically no source of income. Like their three older brothers, Frank and Billy attended Chaminade High School in Mineola, where they played football and acted in the school plays. They graduated in 1950.

After graduation, Billy went into the service for the Korean War and Father Francis went into the service of Mary as a Marianist. He made his Novitiate starting August 1950 at Marcy near Utica, New York and professed his first vows on September 8, 1951. Father Francis studied at the University of Dayton, earning his degree in 1954. His first teaching assignment was at St. John's High School in Manayunk, near Philadelphia. He taught there one year and then continued his teaching career at Most Holy Trinity High School in Brooklyn. While at Trinity, he earned a Masters Degree in Spanish Literature. In 1958, Father Francis was assigned to St. Joseph's High School in Cleveland. In the fall of 1959, he travelled to Fribourg in Switzerland to begin his seminary studies for Ordination to the Priesthood in the Society of Mary. Competent in Spanish, French and Latin, he became one of the best students in his seminary class. He was ordained March 30, 1963.

After Ordination, he served as teacher and chaplain at Cardinal Gibbons High School in Baltimore. In 1966, Father Francis was asked by his superiors to assume the responsibility of teacher and chaplain for our young Brothers in the Scholasticate in Dayton, Ohio. This was the beginning of his many decades of formation work.

Father Francis was a student in the full sense of the word all his life. He never stopped reading, studying, taking notes. He requested that he could continue theological studies for a higher academic degree for which he was sent to Chaminade High School in Mineola as residence with study at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He began his studies in 1968 and completed them in 1970. He remained at Chaminade High School where he acted as Chaplain, Senior Religion Teacher, and Counselor, and Director of the Collegiate Program

Father Francis continued to teach in Chaminade's collegiate programs until he joined the Kellenberg Memorial Community in 1998, where he taught Latin and tutored in Spanish, besides guidance and extensive priestly ministry. He retired from teaching at Kellenberg Memorial in 2006, but continued counseling, tutoring, and his priestly ministry. For many years, he said Mass on Sunday for the Novitiate of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Queens. He also had Saturday Mass for the Sunrise Retirement Facility, and had Rosary on Fridays with the residents at the Bristol Retirement Community in East Meadow.

Father Francis was an outstanding preacher. In his early days at Cardinal Gibbons, he developed a whole preaching philosophy around the comic strip Peanuts. His retreats and homilies were very popular, both with his students, the Brothers, and the Scholastics. When he came to Kellenberg Memorial High School, he developed a whole preaching philosophy centered around the cartoon character, Ziggy. He became known as the "Ziggy Priest." He had a habit of walking through the school greeting students and in particular visiting the lunch periods. As he got older, he did not diminish in vigor or spiritual service.

Father Francis enjoyed excellent health throughout his whole life with one miraculous exception. In December 1992 he was afflicted with a rare viral brain infection which put him into a coma with an only ten percent chance of survival. Only one percent of patients with this virus recover with any ability to speak. On December 24, Fr. Francis came out of his coma and spoke in Latin! It was a Christmas miracle. The only lingering effects of this disease were a bit of a short term memory loss and a great desire to eat apples! He would eat at least 5 apples every day, and everyone knew to have a dish of apples ready if Fr. Francis was coming to visit.

In addition to his teaching and priestly work in our schools and communities, Father Francis also played very important roles in the life of the Province of Meribah. He was the Novice Master from 1970 to 1998, responsible for the formation of more than half the province. He was our first Provincial from 1976 to 1984, and thereafter was in charge of religious life for the Province, and continued as a member of the Provincial Council for many years.

In August of 2010, he celebrated his 78th birthday. He informed us that he was planning to live to 105. However, his Heavenly Father had other plans for him. On Wednesday, the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, he had a massive cerebral hemorrhage from which he did not recover. He never regained consciousness. He died Monday, September 20, 2010.