

(June 8, 1894 - June 10, 1987)

Brother Raphael Ziegler was active as a missionary in Japan for thirty-five years. During that time he exerted a remarkable influence on the lives of many members of the Kobe foreign community as well as on the Japanese people. Before coming to Kobe, Brother Raphael served for thirty-two years at Saint Francis Xavier, Shanghai, China. In 1978 he was the recipient of the German Cross for distinguished service and in 1985 was honored by the International Committee of the Kansai. He died in Kobe after a stroke; a Mass of Resurrection was celebrated Saturday, June 13, 1987 at Sacred Heart Church, Nakayamate, Kobe.

Brother Matthew Callanan delivered the eulogy.

May I express our sincere thanks to all of you as we come together to bid a fond farewell to a wonderful gentleman, Brother Raphael. We certainly do not mourn nor regret Brother Raph's final reward as he joins his Father in glory, for that is what he is doing now, even as we offer our last good-bye.

Raphael began his journey home over ninety-three years ago in his beloved homeland, Germany. Little did he realize then where his journey would take him.

In his early youth, the voice of the Lord called to him and Raphael answered with a resounding yes. Thus was set in motion a way of life as a Marist Brother that took him first to Italy for his early studies, then to China, where he began his career as an educator of youth. His career was to span some seventy years working with youth from all parts of the world. Some of you know only too well what China was like in the early and late twenties. But Brother Raph's work took all his time and energy in the city of Shanghai.

Raph's life as a religious and an educator kept him in close contact with his fellow Marist Brothers, and with students and their parents for over seventy years; it kept him young in mind and heart. In time this deep respect and concern for his boys became Brother Raphael's whole life. When the tides of change began to sweep over China, Raph and many other missionaries were forced to leave their work and missions. Raph found his way first to Hong Kong and then in 1952 to Kobe, Japan. He brought a wealth of experience deeply rooted in his love for our Lord, and in a special way, our Blessed Mother, Mary. Raph's daily life was filled with and reflected this love. He was one of those rare individuals who is able to touch many lives. His students in Suma knew him as a tough, fair, and gentle teacher: a man who had their welfare at heart, a man who could laugh easily with them and still remind them that they owed him and themselves work to be done at school or at home. He would accept nothing less from them or himself.

His companions in his journey, the Marist Brothers with whom he lived and worked, especially those in Kobe, found in Raph an example of a man fighting the good fight and growing old gracefully. In his younger golden years Raph's favorite expression was "don't get old"; this changed to "over the hill" and "too old" in his senior golden years. Raphael had a delightful sense of humor, in which he gradually indulged more in his later years.

And so it is fitting that we offer a prayer of thanks:

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of Brother Raphael as a Marist Brother in our lives.

We thank you, Lord, for giving the youth of many nations a compassionate and loving teacher in Brother Raphael.

We thank you, Lord, for allowing Brother Raphael to touch our lives with his love.

Finally, Lord, we thank you for your gift of a loving reward to Brother Raphael at the end of a long journey home.

And to you who have joined us here today, in the name of Brother Raphael and the Marist Brothers, God bless you all. Thank you.