

(1917 - January 8, 1996)

Obituary taken from FMS Poughkeepsie Province Newsnotes, February 1996.

In the midst of the Blizzard of '96, Brother Peter Leonard, famed missionary member of the Poughkeepsie Province, died at Champagnat Hall, Bronx NY on January 8th. Peter was 79 years old and had been professed as a Marist Brother for 64 years.

Peter will always be cherished as the brother who exemplified radical poverty in our community; often he would travel around the world carrying little more than a knapsack. Peter loved the simple life and he came to apostolic mission with great fervor.

To highlight just his international experience, Peter has worked as a missionary, teacher, and builder since 1948 in the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, New Guinea, Sri Lanka and Nigeria. His home mission included work in Savannah GA, Lawrence MA, New York City, Eugene OR, Pine Ridge SD and Esopus NY.

In these recent less active years, Peter has been a helpful chauffeur and community member at the Champagnat Hall community in the Bronx.

A wake and rosary service were held at Mount St Michael Academy on January 12th, concluding with a Mass of the Resurrection, that wintry evening in the school chapel. Mrs. Mary Oakley, Peter's sister from San Jose CA, his niece, Eileen, and several cousins and personal friends, joined many brothers of the NY-NJ area for the final commendations and prayers.

Father Adee, Mount Chaplain and friend of Peter, presided at the Eucharist, and Brother Paul Ambrose, former Assistant General, offered a stirring and beautiful eulogy.

Among the many reflections on his many years of Marist life, Paul captured Peter's spirit. "He was a man on the move. His Motto: Do the good you can, and then get out. He contacted me at the end of each job and always said, "Do not ask me where I want to go but you send me where you think I can help out."

Peter was buried in Marist Brothers cemetery, Esopus, New York.