

Received the Breath of Life  
New York City 3 March 1946

Called to Accept the Marist Brotherhood  
1963

Was Commended to God  
4 Nov 2005  
Father Hudson Hospice  
Jersey City NJ

Mass of Christian Burial  
7 Nov 2005  
St. Andrew's Church, Bayonne NJ

Interment  
8 Nov 2005  
Marist Brothers Cemetery  
Esopus, New York

*Obituary circulated from the Provincial Office*

***BROTHER DENIS HEVER, FMS***

Brother Denis Michael Hever, FMS, a member of the Marist Brothers of the Schools for 41 years, died on November 4, 2005, after a three year battle with brain cancer. He was 59 years old.

Brother Denis entered the Marist Brothers Juniorate in Esopus, New York in 1960. He professed first vows in 1964. After completing his religious and academic studies at Marist College, Poughkeepsie, New York in 1968, he served in the Archdiocese of Newark at Marist High School in Bayonne, New Jersey from 1968-1972. While other assignments as a Marist Brother took Brother Denis outside the Archdiocese of Newark, he returned to the Archdiocese of Newark and to Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish and High School in Newark, New Jersey from 1992-1995.

In addition to his ministry in the Archdiocese of Newark, Brother Denis served as Formation Director, Vocation Director, Director of Candidates, and Director of Novices from 1972-1981 and from 1984-1985.

Brother Denis served in the Archdiocese of New York at Sacred Heart Parish in the Highbridge section of the Bronx as religious education coordinator from 1985-1986 and 1987-1991.

Brother Denis' talents took him to positions outside of the US when he served as Assistant Director of the Marist Renewal Center in Fribourg, Switzerland from 1986-1987 and as a teacher and pastoral minister in Pleebo, Liberia in 1991. Brother Denis returned to Monrovia, Liberia from 1999-2002 and served as Diocesan Director of Religious Education and Director of the Marist Brothers community in Monrovia as well as serving as Sector Superior and Coordinator of religious formation for Liberian Marist Brothers.

Brother Denis completed certification as hospital chaplain in 1996 and served in that position in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston at Wheeling Hospital in Wheeling, West Virginia from 1996-1999.

At the time of his death, Brother Denis was living in the Marist Brothers' Avenue C community in Bayonne, New Jersey and served as a volunteer at St. Anne's Nursing Home in Jersey City and Marist High School in Bayonne when his condition allowed.

Brother Denis is survived by sisters, Winnie Allen and Marie Pichichero and his brother, Ed, Bill, and Bob as well as by his Marist Brothers of the Province of the United States. A funeral mass was celebrated at St. Andrew's Church in Bayonne, New Jersey on Monday evening, November 7, followed by burial on Tuesday, November 8, in the Marist Brothers' Cemetery in Esopus, New York.

**Brother Denis M. Hever, FMS**  
**March 3, 1946 – November 4, 2005**

|           |                                                                                                                                  |                                     |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1960-63   | Juniorate                                                                                                                        | Esopus, NY                          |
| 1963-65   | Novitiate                                                                                                                        | Esopus, NY                          |
| 1965-68   | Scholasticate                                                                                                                    | Marist College, Poughkeepsie, NY    |
| 1968-72   | Teacher                                                                                                                          | Marist HS, Bayonne, NJ              |
| 1972-75   | Formation Studies                                                                                                                | Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA |
| 1975-77   | Director of Candidates                                                                                                           | Bayonne, NJ                         |
| 1977-78   | Director of Novices                                                                                                              | Cold Spring, NY                     |
| 1978-79   | Vocation Director                                                                                                                | Queens, NY                          |
| 1979-81   | Director of Novices                                                                                                              | Cold Spring, NY                     |
| 1981-84   | Teacher                                                                                                                          | St. Joseph Academy, Brownsville, TX |
| 1984-85   | Director of Novices                                                                                                              | Sacred Heart Parish, Bronx, NY      |
| 1985-86   | Religious Ed Coordinator                                                                                                         | Sacred Heart Parish, Bronx, NY      |
| 1986-87   | Ass't Director, Marist Renewal Center                                                                                            | Fribourg, Switzerland               |
| 1987-91   | Religious Ed Coordinator                                                                                                         | Sacred Heart Parish, Bronx, NY      |
| 1991      | Marist Community Member (Sept-Dec)                                                                                               | Pleebo, Liberia, West Africa        |
| 1992      | Second Novitiate (Jan-June)                                                                                                      | Nemi, Italy                         |
| 1992-93   | Religious Ed Director                                                                                                            | Our Lady of Good Counsel, NJ        |
| 1993-95   | Teacher                                                                                                                          | Our Lady of Good Counsel HS, NJ     |
| 1995-96   | Clinical Pastoral Education                                                                                                      | Belleville, NJ & New Brunswick, NJ  |
| 1996-99   | NACC certified Chaplain                                                                                                          | Wheeling Hospital, Wheeling, WV     |
| 1999-2002 | Diocesan Director of Religious Education,<br>Director of the Marist Community,<br>Sector Superior & Marist Formation Coordinator | Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa      |
| 2002-05   | Saint Anne' Nursing Home Volunteer                                                                                               | Jersey City, NJ                     |

## **REMEMBERING BROTHER DENIS HEVER**

Eulogy by Brother John Klein, Provincial

In Psalm 103 the Psalmist prays, "The Lord is good; his love is eternal and his faithfulness lasts forever." Throughout his life, our Brother Denis gave flesh and blood to this description of his God; for Denis was a very good and loving man who remained faithful to his vocation, his family, his Marist Brothers, and his friends. Borrowing the words of Brother Sean Sammon, Denis was truly a "marvelous companion." Whether as teacher, Formation Director, Director of Religious Education, or Hospital Chaplain, Denis was always loving, non-judgmental, and genuinely interested in the other person. Yesterday we found a copy of his Masters Degree thesis that he wrote in 1976. It was entitled, "Self-Acceptance: The Basis for Authentic Response to Life." This is really how Denis lived his life. He knew who he was and he remained the same for everyone and accepted everyone just the way they were. As one brother remarked, "Denis was a user-friendly person."

Denis was first and foremost faithful to his God and his vocation. Last week Brother David Cooney recounted a conversation that he had with Denis when he was in his early twenties. It was a turbulent time in the post- Vatican II Church and our congregation, as well. Denis told Dave that while he could not understand or judge other individuals' decision to leave the congregation, he did know that his call was real and that he had no choice but to respond. He faithfully responded to that call for forty years. His daily prayer time and Eucharist were essential to him and he once told Dave that, "...it is the most important thing that I do everyday."

Much of Denis' life was spent in spiritual formation and he could speak without any awkwardness about his relationship with God. People who interacted with Denis sensed this and it attracted them and encouraged them.

Denis always remained faithful to his family, his sisters Winnie and Marie, his brothers Bob, Bill, and Ed and their families. He delighted in them and, above all, listened to them with genuine interest. He encouraged his nieces and nephews and they knew that he cared for each of them. He visited, wrote cards, and followed their lives without judgment but with loving concern. How delighted he was when the doctors gave him permission to travel with Winnie to Mexico for a family wedding. It was a highlight for him.

Denis' relentless pursuit of developing his family history was deeply rooted in his love for them and his wish that they would always remain close to each other. We will always remember him seated at his computer surrounded with details of his family genealogy even when he could not exactly remember how to turn the computer on or how to use the printer. He would often remark that he wrote and researched in order to try to keep his mind alert. We knew he did it because of his love and his hope to always remain part of his family's life.

Throughout his ministry Denis had a sensitive heart for those in need. He looked after the parish Outreach Program at Sacred Heart in Highbridge and in the Marist community in Liberia. Br. Danny Taylor, one of the Liberian Brothers, wrote expressing his sorrow at the loss of Denis this weekend. He described Denis as "...a humble servant, a brother and a friend to many, most especially the cripples and the needy. They are going to miss him, he wrote, especially his deep understanding and listening skill." I remember

visiting Denis when he served as Chaplain at Wheeling Hospital. Wherever we walked people flocked to him and, not surprisingly, it was in the Dialysis Unit with people most in need of comfort that Denis devoted a significant part of each day.

Denis consistently remained remarkably faithful to his friends. Cards, letters, phone calls, invitations to go to a movie or out to a meal were Denis' hallmark. Throughout the past three years he would walk to the public library so that he could access his e-mail and keep in touch with his friends. It also gave him the opportunity to socialize with the librarian and senior citizens who frequented the library to read the newspaper each day. As we know, Denis loved a good conversation. His unique facility with languages enabled him to have a wide and eclectic group of friends. Even one of the Haitian aides in Hospice said that she loved to speak with Denis in French.

Last spring Denis gave Brother John McDonnell the password to his e-mail account and asked him to open it when he died to let people know that he had passed away. How aware he was of his own mortality! When John opened Denis' e-mail he discovered 134 unanswered messages from mid-August and 174 friends listed in his Address Book. Denis remained very interested in each of them and they loved him for it.

Denis was always faithful to his Marist family. He always gave his best and he brought the best out of each of us. In many ways the life of our community revolved around Denis for the past three years. We would accompany him to doctors' visits and eagerly anticipate their reports; discreetly watch for any sign of physical decline; attempt to allow him as much independence as possible and, at the same time, share our concerns and fears with him. In so many ways, Denis was our life and our hearts break to have to say goodbye. It was a privilege to live with Denis and struggle to accompany him on his long journey. Denis was a blessing to us and we will always be grateful to him.

In the conclusion of his Dissertation Denis wrote about trust and self-acceptance as being essential to living a fulfilled life. "Lack of self-acceptance, he wrote, is permeated with a coldness, a fear, and a self-preoccupation. It is like a person who hugs himself tightly in the winter and comes to feel only his own chill. It is self-enveloping but not self-sustaining. Trust, on the other hand, is characterized by an openness that is sensed as joyful, warm, outward, calm, and unifying." In reality, I believe that Denis was describing himself...the joyful, warm, outward, calm, and unifying Brother.

The Book of Sirach speaks of Goodly men whose virtues will not be forgotten. "Their wealth remains in their families and through them God's covenant endures. Their bodies are peacefully laid away, but their names live on and on. At gatherings their wisdom is retold, and the assembly proclaims their praise." Denis Hever will live on and on; his virtues will be recalled; and his family, his Brothers, and his friends will always proclaim his praise.

**EMAILS RECEIVED BY BROTHER JOHN McDONNELL  
FROM FRIENDS OF BROTHER DENIS HEVER**

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John,

We have all been blessed by having known Denis. He was through and through the ultimate gentleman and gentle-man! And choosing you (his alter ego) to send his final letter showed he had good sense, too! If I am able to die with a modicum of the grace

and graciousness that Denis showed us over these past few years, I will be a very grateful.

You know, it has occurred to me recently that those Marists (and small-b brothers) that I have known have been overall remarkably spiritual and wonderful men. How much of it is the accumulation of personal attributes, and how much of it is the spirit of Champagnat? Or is this really the wrong question?

It really cannot be dissected, can it? Or is it this: those who have been attracted to the Marist way of life already have the soil that has been prepared for the planting of the seeds of the Marist spirit!

I guess I still do a little meditating....

Vin Poisella

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Greetings John,

Thanks you for informing me of the recent death of Br. Denis Hever. I am truly at a loss of words this morning. Denis was a truly loving person, and I can't even begin to express in words how he touched and changed my life. I have been extremely blessed by his kind and loving friendship and support over the past few years, even as he was going through his own suffering. I would be extremely grateful if I could receive several of Br. Denis' prayer cards... Thanks and my prayers for all of you and Br. Denis's family and the repose of his soul...

Peace of Christ,

Marty Roers, Maryknoll Associate  
1900 Laramie Trail  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55444-1905

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Dear Marists Friends,

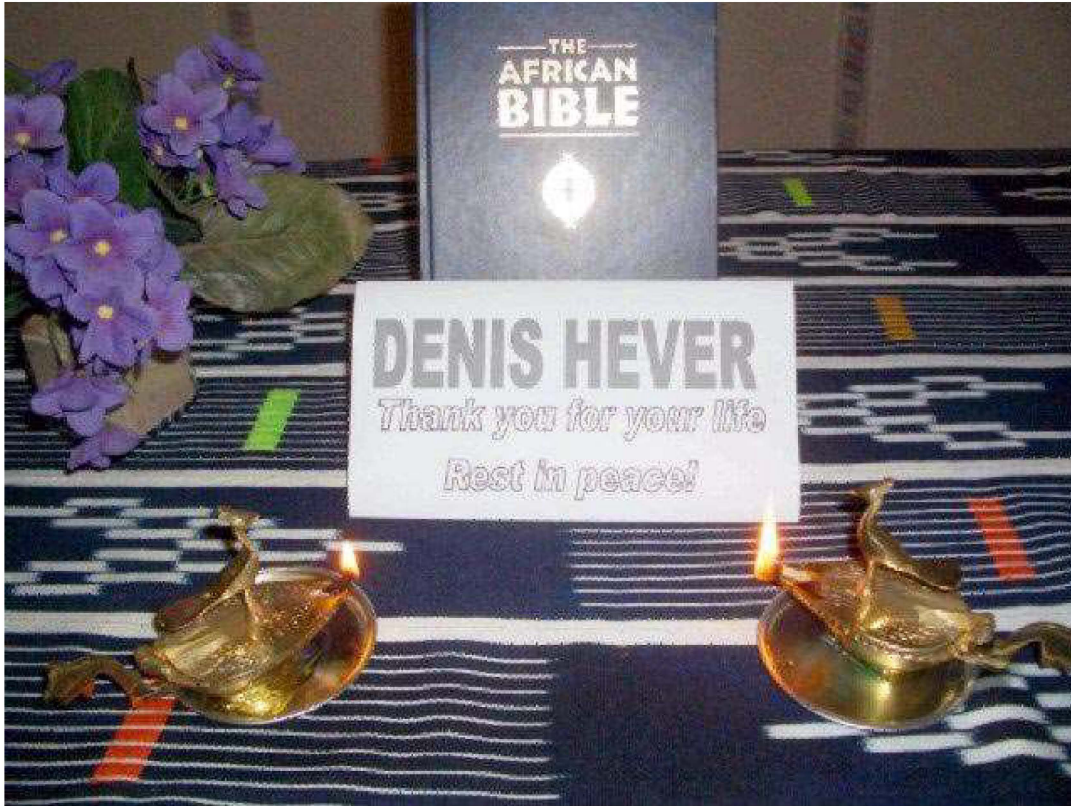
Sorry to hear of the death of Bro. Denis RIP. He was a personal friend of mine while he was here in Monrovia, Liberia. He was a very good man and was held in the highest esteem here in Monrovia.

I will offer Mass for him and his family. Our deepest sympathy on the death of a very well loved Religious Marist Brother.

Harry O'Brien



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Usually, the news I receive from around this time is, "Happy Birthday, Michael, may God richly bless and protect you and your family." Little did I know that November 8, which is my birthday, would turn out to be your date of burial, Brother Denis. Why this day? Why did you tell me before time. My heart sinks.

But I thank God for giving me opportunities to enjoy and share His love embedded in you. From an independent life in the classroom at Pleebo to the life of a refugee in Ghana for 12 years, you have been there. Thank you. Rest in peace on my birthday.

Michael Worgbror Topor, II

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John,

Have just heard the news of the death of Brother Denis with deep shock and with a heavy heart, knowing that you and Denis have been brothers and friends for many years. He death would certainly crack your soul to some extent. In this regard, I am writing to express my very sincere and deep sympathy to you. Please know that the people of Monrovia and especially the FMS would be thrown into confusion about his death. Denis was a humble servant, a brother and friend to many, especially the crippled and the needy. They are going to miss him, especially his deep understanding and his listening skills.

We are all wailing at his death. We are also going to remember his good deeds and sense of humanity. His deeds characterized by generosity and prayer would be our consolation. We remember that we shall meet someday in our Father's house.

I miss Denis and will ever remember him with deep respect and affection. Once again, John, let us continue to pray for his soul and for those he touched in small, but many ways.

I am attaching a group of Denis and the Brothers of Monrovia. The photo was taken in 2001. This is to show how Denis and the FMS were united in heart and mind.

Danny Taylor