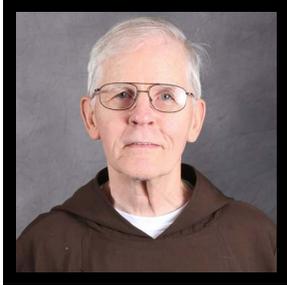


Necrology

Joseph Howe

1929-2020



Thomas Howe was born in Detroit in 1929, the fourth of ten children of Michael and Rose Howe. The family attended St. Rita and Holy Rosary Parishes where Thomas (Joe) attended the Catholic schools. After high school, Thomas worked at the Sanders Chocolate Company. His sister, Katie, said that while Tom was working there, he helped to provide her wedding cake and she said he made a very good choice.

In later years, Joe would often remind people that the name was pronounced “Sanders,” and not “Saunders,” as some people would say it. He thought that sounded too “hoity-toity,” and that in itself may say something about Joe himself. He was not hoity-toity!!

Regarding his name: his baptismal name was Thomas. When he entered the order apparently he took the name Joachim. But most of us knew him as Joseph and that is how his name now appears on his file. So we will use Joe throughout this writing. He also had chosen May 1, the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, as his celebration date.

Joe entered the novitiate in 1958 and made first profession in 1959. He spent post-novitiate formation time at Crown Point IN and Marathon WI. He was part of the novitiate staff at Baraga MI in 1963-64. After that, he was part of various communities, in various capacities. In response to a request for someone from the province to serve at the general curia in Rome, Joe spent 6 years there from 1970-1976. Later on someone who knew him well, said he did “not enjoy his time working” in Rome. The full report of that is buried with him!

After his time in Rome, he spent time in several different friaries around the province, including St. Bonaventure, St. Felix, Huntington and St. Lawrence, Mt. Calvary. From 1989 -1992 he was on the House of Prayer Staff at Madison WI. From 1992-96 he was part of the first staff at the new St. Fidelis Friary in Appleton WI. He was also part of the community at Casa San Jose, Tucson from 1998-2003.

He finally came to Capuchin Retreat, Washington MI in 2003, where he spent the remainder of his Capuchin Life.

Joe was simple, straightforward, down to earth. He would willingly state his opinion on various topics and in reference to various people. He jokingly referred to himself as “the humble brother.” But he really was that.

At the retreat center he carried out his duties with great regularity and discipline. He watched over the supplies for the chapel, such as candles, wine, hosts and whatever else was needed. He was the main person to drive to town to get the mail and would make the daily walk to the mailbox on Mt. Vernon Rd. He would help wherever he could with tasks of cleaning and maintenance.

He was present to greet retreatants as they arrived on Friday evening and helped to see them off on Sunday. The retreatants liked, even loved, "Br. Joe." One of his favorite things to do over the years was to sell tickets and set aside the golf balls for the helicopter golf ball drop at the annual golf outing. As long as he was able, he was a member of the golf outing committee.

He was something of a golfer himself. A reliable source said that Joe was a good sport although he was a terrible golfer!

For Joe's 60th jubilee, Rose Ann and Pat Miller, good friends of the friars, took Joe to Mt. Calvary for the celebration. When they checked into a hotel, they were given coupons for a free drink. After the long day of celebration, when they came back to the hotel, they were headed to their rooms when Joe reminded them about the free drinks. And so they availed themselves of that opportunity. Joe liked a bit of wine once in a while and also was usually ready for a meal of steak or ribs when the occasion arose.

One time Pat Miller and Joe took a mailing project into Detroit. Pat wanted to stop at a pawn shop he had seen on TV. And so they went in and soon realized they were "not in their comfort zone." Joe said the security guard was the biggest man he had ever seen.

Few people might realize that his favorite film was *Les Miserables*. He had copy of that video, which he watched numerous times. Something about the story touched him.

Joe was also a man of prayer. For many years he would read the first reading at the daily Eucharist and act as communion minister. He would also at times choose songs and lead the singing, sometimes with mixed reviews! And he could often be found praying alone in the chapel and would often sit in his office reading his Bible and other books, while being present to the needs of the retreatants. He was a good and humble servant.

During the year leading up to the pandemic, in the winter of 2020, Joe's health began to deteriorate. He had more difficulty with memory and communicating. The brothers at St. Crispin Friary, especially Biju Parakkalayil, watched over Joe and tried to take care of him as best they could.

There was one touching moment during Holy Week of 2020, when the friars were having their own services. On Good Friday, Joe joined the community for the service and took his turn approaching the cross at the time of veneration. A few tears may have been shed at that moment.

In August of 2020, it was finally decided to move Joe to an assisted living place where he could be more secure. He finally died there on September 27. He is buried in the friars' cemetery at St. Bonaventure, Detroit.

~Thomas Zelinski