



Brother Gerard Arsenault, O.C.S.O.

Born Rumford, Maine	Apr 2, 1929
Entered Vina	Jun 6, 1974
Simple Profession	Jul 11, 1977
Solemn Vows	Jul 11, 1980
Entered Eternal Life	Apr 1, 2026

Brother Gerard was born to Zozime (Samuel) and Rose Arsenault. At baptism he was given the name Joseph Emile Edouard. He attended St. John the Baptist Catholic Grade School, Rumford, ME and two years of public high school. He worked in the service industry at various resorts and was drafted and served in the US Army from 1951- 53 where he was assigned to Europe. Upon his honorable discharge he joined the Capuchin Franciscans making his perpetual profession as a Friar in 1958. In 1961 he received a dispensation from his vows and made his way to Huntington Beach, CA, where he worked in the restaurant business. It was there his religious vocation was rekindled, a desire for a contemplative lifestyle and he arrived at Vina in 1974.

For most of his years in the monastery Brother Gerard was involved in the kitchen and/or bakery. He continued to bake bread and desserts for the community until only a few months before his death, this at his own choosing. He had brief stints as assistant prune orchardist in 1980-82, assistant novice director, and then novice director, 1986-89. Brother served as a cantor for many years and will be remembered for his strong voice that would carry throughout the church. Brother served as church decorator and for many years decorated the church for Christmas. He was known for his ingenious creche designs which he took great pride in creating to the delight of monks and guests alike.

Brother was an ardent devotee of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity and of Dom Colomba Marmion. Their insights on the Holy Trinity nurtured his spirituality and he read their works and pondered on the beauty and theological significance and necessity of the Holy Trinity applying these insights to his own life.

Although Brother Gerard's health and mental capacity gradually declined, he remained quite alert and occupied in simple tasks. He helped to make greeting cards for monastery donors in the development office and would bake an occasional batch of cookies with the help of Mariah Villanueva, the monastery's director of healthcare and with other members of the care team.

Brother Gerard was one of 12 children (his mother had 21 pregnancies) and was devoted to his family. It was appropriate that his remaining and youngest sibling, Armand, from Port Angeles, WA was present at his bedside at the moment the Lord came to lead Brother home to eternity. His greatest legacy may be the mantra that formed his life. Frequently he would say, "Always be grateful to Almighty God for his great mercy."