

## Brother Samuel Leo Larson

February 2, 1933 - June 13, 2025

Brother Samuel Leo Larson, age 92 of Beach, North Dakota passed away on Friday, June 13, 2025, at the Wibaux County Nursing Home in Wibaux, Montana. A Vigil Service will be held at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, June 17, 2025, at St. John's Catholic Church in Beach. Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10:30 AM on Wednesday, June 18, 2025, at St. John's Catholic Church with Father Nicholas Vetter officiating. Rite of committal will follow at a later date in the Salvatorian Cemetery in St. Nazianz, Wisconsin. Brother Samuel Larson SDS (birth name: Everett Leo) was born on February 2, 1933, in Two Rivers, Wisconsin. He was the only boy of the four children in the family of Paul and Albertine (Lesperance) Larson. He attended St. Mark's Grade School for eight years. He did not begin regular high school classes immediately after this, although he did earn his G.E.D. in later years. Rather, like a number of other young men at the time, he applied to be a Brother Candidate for the Salvatorians in nearby St. Nazianz. He was accepted into the program, moved to the Salvatorian Monastery in July 1948 for the next few months, and in March 1949, he began his Novitiate year in Menominee, Michigan. He made his profession of vows on March 19, 1950. It was discovered during those early years that Bro. Sam was good with tools and machinery, and for the next six years back in St. Nazianz, he learned the trades of being a boiler operator, carpenter, and electrical engineer. In the larger institutions and schools in which Salvatorians ministered during those years, skills such as these were essential for some community members to have. For two years, beginning in

1956, he was the boiler room operator and maintenance worker at Divine Savior Seminary in Lanham, Maryland, and then he did those same tasks at Trinity Prep Seminary in Sioux City, Iowa, from 1958 to 1961. One more place would need those skills from him, and he was asked to move to nearby Colfax to maintain the boiler operations and other janitorial duties at the Society's Novitiate. In 1967, the Novitiate moved from Colfax, but Bro. Sam remained there along with the former Novice Director until 1975, while the facility operated as an Interfaith Spiritual Center. It was during his years living and working in Colfax that Bro. Sam experienced a change within himself. In his earlier years of ministry in other Salvatorian institutions, those places were much larger and there were many more students who were busy with their classes and studies and extra-curricular activities. He never really got to know many of the students nor hear about their spiritual and vocational journeys; and with so many buildings to maintain on those campuses, he was always busy with his own work. But working at the Novitiate turned out to be a different sort of institution. The number of residents in Colfax was far fewer, and he got to know many of the novices by name and to hear the stories of their lives. Some of them were assigned to work with Bro. Sam side-by-side, and they would talk with him about their vocation and their spiritual lives. He was a good listener. The novices sometimes confided in him and asked for his advice, and he would freely share with them his own experiences and offer some insights that might help them in their spiritual journey. Over the years, several of the novices expressed their appreciation to Bro. Sam for listening to them and for giving them his advice. It was, they often told him, exactly what they needed to hear. After the Novitiate program moved from the facility and the Interfaith Spiritual Center opened, the experience for Bro. Sam was quite similar and, in some ways, even more enriching. He got to know many of the participants and hear of their faith journeys, and he was often asked to participate in the panel discussions where he could share his own story and talk about his own faith life. This was certainly a different sort of ministry than operating boilers and keeping facilities clean and in good working conditions.

Bro. Sam found that he really enjoyed being a part of people's lives and their spiritual journeys. The Center closed in 1975, and the Provincial told Bro. Sam that, since many of our former schools had closed, there wasn't much work he could offer to him in his usual line of work. He also noted that he had heard how beneficial Bro. Sam was by his taking part in the Spirituality workshops that were given in Colfax and suggested it might be time for him to consider something in that kind of ministry. The Provincial offered him a few choices for consideration: there were two parishes in Milwaukee, that could use his services; there were openings for teaching religion classes in the Washington DC area; a chaplain in Phoenix was looking for people to help minister to patients who were sick and dying; and there was a faith-centered resident facility for at-risk youths in North Dakota that was looking for live-in counselors. Bro. Sam would later say, "It was like a bell rang inside my head when I heard that last option, as if God was telling me that this was the place where I was needed." After a sabbatical of several months in New Mexico to prepare for this kind of work, Bro. Sam was on his way to North Dakota. There he met with a fellow Salvatorian friend who introduced him to "Home on the Range" – a place that would become both his home and his ministry for years to come. He would later tell one writer, "I saw a spiritual starvation in those young people. God had made us all for goodness, and we needed to bring out that goodness in them." He taught them carpentry, but he also taught them about life and faith while they worked. The youths gravitated to Bro. Sam and the leaders took notice. His patience, gentleness, listening, and sharings brought the young people to his side, not just to work with him and learn new skills, but to learn how to live so faithfully and in such a peace-filled manner. The leaders asked him to take on the role of Assistant Chaplain. Bro. Sam was willing, but at the same time he knew he needed more training from the Church to do it properly. He enrolled in the program at nearby Sacred Heart Monastery to study Scriptures, Theology, and Canon Law. There he was advised to consider becoming a Permanent Deacon so that he could expand

his role as Chaplain. He met several times with the local Bishop, and he was ordained a Deacon in May 1985. Bro. Sam hosted Spiritual Leadership Projects at the Home and conducted weekly prayer services for the youths. He was also certified as an Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselor. Bro. Sam once told a reporter for the local Catholic newspaper, "Many of these youths come from dysfunctional homes. We can help them and teach them many things, and most of them will eventually become parents. What I want most for them is to be good moms and dads." In 1997, Bro. Sam suffered a heart attack and it slowed down his pace considerably. While he was resting and recovering, he learned to design beautiful hand-made greeting cards that he would send to people on birthdays or holidays, to encourage them when they needed it, to console them in time of loss, or simply to tell them that he was thinking about and praying for them. He retired in 2008, and in 2018, he moved into an Assisted Care facility in Wibaux, Montana, where he died peacefully on June 13, 2025, at the age of 92. Bro. Sam was preceded in death by his parents, his sisters Lucille (the late Eugene) Honzik-Larson, Ramona Boutwell-Larson, and JoAnn Larson-Carle. He is survived by his brother-in-law Thomas Boutwell, his nephews and nieces, as well as his brothers and sisters in the Salvatorian Family.

Silha Funeral Home of Beach has been entrusted with the arrangements.

# Cemetery Details

## Salvatorian Cemetery

St. Nazianz, WI

# Previous Events

## Vigil Service

JUN 17. 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM (MT)

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church  
162 2nd Avenue Northeast  
Beach, ND 58621

## Mass of Christian Burial

JUN 18. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (MT)

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church  
162 2nd Avenue Northeast  
Beach, ND 58621

# Tribute Wall



“ Almost everyone has 2 grandpas, but I also had the privilege of having a Bro. Sam. A man who was just always there, part of so many of my childhood memories. When we set the table we just always set an extra place in case Bro. would be there, and he usually was. We never threw out the paper because we knew he'd be by later to read it. He was guaranteed to show up for every holiday, have a card for every birthday, and even sponsor me for my Confirmation. Sometimes he would hit cars that he couldn't see because he didn't have his hearing aids in, and when I broke the tragic news of my bursitis diagnosis he offered zero sympathy, because he didn't know I smoked 🚬 I hate that I didn't make as much of an effort in recent years to stay in touch, or that when I read his obituary I learned about an entire life I didn't know he'd lived prior to just becoming "Bro." But I consider myself lucky to have had him in my life. Rest in Peace Bro ❤️



Jeni Hardy - June 18, 2025 at 12:55 AM

KM

I was privileged to be one of Brother Sam's caregivers at the Manor . He was a kind soul , sometimes gruff around the edges , his sense of humor I learned to appreciate and look forward to . He blessed me every night when I left his room after night cares. He made many cards for people . So thoughtful . missed him alot on my shifts when he moved to the NH in Wibaux. He lived a long good life. Such an example of a servant to serving God. I founf him many times on the Manor Chapel at night when he couldn't sleep 🙏 I was blessed to know him . Rest in Peace Brother Sam!

Katrina Mathiason - June 18, 2025 at 04:14 PM

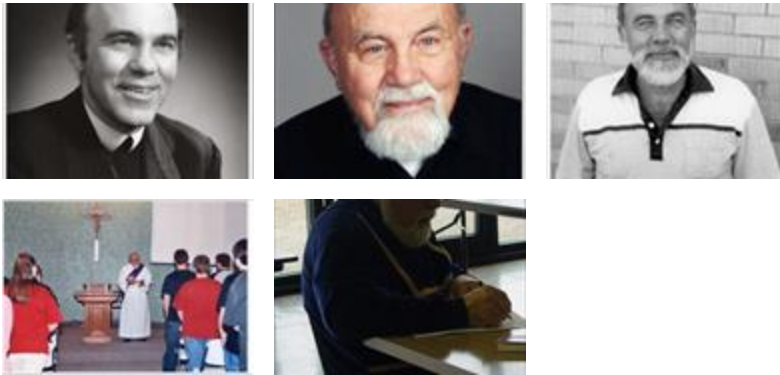
JS

*I am a lost cousin...was visiting my sister in Two Rivers and met with a group of other family members. I asked about Brother Samuel and we googled him. So sorry to hear of his passing. May he rest in peace. We all enjoyed learning about his journey thru life which none of us were totally aware of. Thank you to whoever took the time to write about his life! We have all benefitted from this info today. Joyce Dewey Soares*

Joyce Dewey Soares - September 10, 2025 at 03:37 PM



“ 14 files added to the album Brother Sam



Silha Funeral Home - June 17, 2025 at 11:37 AM

SH

“ Oh, Bro. Sam! How many fond memories do I have of you!? Thank you so much for your witness of faith! You were a true gift to the Search program for the Bismarck Diocese. You never seemed to age and always could light up a room with your smile and your wisdom. Well done, good and faithful servant! Go enter into your Master's house.



Shawna (Leingang) Helbling - June 17, 2025 at 10:12 AM

MH

“ Maurice and Loann Hardy lit a candle in memory of Samuel Larson



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**Maurice and Loann Hardy** - June 16, 2025 at 07:32 PM

AW

“ Brother Sam spent endless hours working on beautiful letters for the Search program. I'll always remember him as a quiet force for our program through my formative years and I don't think anyone ever beat him in ping pong!

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**Ashley (Friese) Wooledge** - June 16, 2025 at 10:56 AM

SS

“ Sid Sjoquist lit a candle in memory of Samuel Larson



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**Sid Sjoquist** - June 15, 2025 at 11:19 PM

SS

“ Brother Sam, a strong, gentle, peaceful man. So many lives you have touched. Rest In Peace brother.

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**Sid Sjoquist** - June 15, 2025 at 11:18 PM

LW

“ *Lynne Wojahn lit a candle in memory of Samual Larson*



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**Lynne Wojahn** - June 15, 2025 at 09:47 PM

ME

“ *Mark and Dawn Egan lit a candle in memory of Samual Larson*



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**Mark and Dawn Egan** - June 15, 2025 at 01:45 PM

TT

“ *Brother Sam will be remembered as a blessed icon in the Catholic communities of Beach & Golva. From the time Cindie and I first arrived, in 2013, he was always there for us & everyone. He was always supportive of the different ministries of the parish and complementary of everyone who participated in the works of the parish. We will always remember his subtle sense of humor and his smile. He was a gift from God to all of us! Rest in peace Brother Sam and enjoy all the lovely “cards” floating up to you!*  
*Tom & Cindie Togni*

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**Thomas Togni** - June 15, 2025 at 06:00 AM

DC

*Countless youth at HOTR were enriched by Brother Sam over his 30 plus years there. He was my mentor and friend in the Lord. May he rest in God's loving embrace!*  
*Deacon Dallas Carlson*

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**Deacon Dallas Carlson** - June 16, 2025 at 10:42 AM