

Robert J. Araujo, S.J.

Robert John Araujo was born in Taunton, Massachusetts, on October 30th, 1948, and grew up in nearby Dighton, on a family farm established by his paternal grandfather, an immigrant from the Portuguese island of Madeira. The middle child between two older sisters and two younger brothers, Bob attended local public schools, where he excelled in his studies. By his own admission, no one was less likely to become a farmer, but he did spend summers selling fruits and vegetables at a farm stand on the family property. He thought about a vocation to the priesthood and on a school trip to Washington was attracted to the idea of applying to Georgetown. He was offered considerable financial aid and enrolled there, continuing on to Georgetown University Law School.

His Georgetown years turned his thoughts of priesthood to the Jesuits, but the Vietnam War was still going on and, as the beneficiary of an ROTC scholarship, he had to serve three years in the Army. Upon discharge, still undecided, he went to work as a trial attorney for a federal regulatory agency in Washington and spent five years there before the decision to apply to the Society finally crystallized. Jesuit mentors at Georgetown advised him to apply to the New England Province because his parents were aging and because the formation program there was likely to be more flexible for someone with his background. In August, 1986, he entered the novitiate at St. Andrew House in Boston.

During his pilgrimage trial he taught English to Muslim and Christian students in Jordan and for his long experiment he taught at the Boston College Law School. He took first vows in 1988, did a year of philosophy studies at Loyola University of Chicago, and then spent three years in graduate law studies at Columbia University, during which he acquired an M.A. and a second J.D. degree. His theology studies were at Weston in Cambridge. Ordination in 1993 was followed by a year of further legal studies at Oxford, focusing on international law.

He taught international and public law at Gonzaga University from 1994 to 2007, interrupted by visiting professorships at St. Louis University and Fordham University. During the years 2005-2007 he was also Permanent Observer and Attaché and Legal Observer for the Holy See to the United Nations, in the course of which he worked on the creation of the International Criminal Court. He was invited to take part in a new program the Gregorian University was establishing for training Vatican diplomats but while that program was being organized he was diagnosed with lymphatic cancer and the need for medical care kept him in the U.S. He spent a sabbatical year working on writing projects at Boston College, then a year as visiting professor there. He was invited to be the inaugural holder of the John Courtney Murray chair at Loyola Chicago, where he remained for five years (2009-2014).

In 2014, his health worsened and he was assigned to Campion Center. Even there, despite bouts of exhaustion from ongoing treatments, he continued his scholarly output in the field of international law and its foundations. Less than a month before his death, he traveled to Washington and met with Pope Francis at the Vatican Nunciature, where he received the Pope's blessing. Advised by doctors that there was nothing more they could do, Bob declined further treatment and, leaving a final article unfinished, lapsed into a coma and died peacefully in the early morning of October 21st, 2015.

Bob's reserved manner and austere facial features could suggest grimness, but as soon as he spoke his warmth, kindness, and understated wit became apparent. These, along with his rigorous intelligence and high principles, were the qualities appreciated and remembered by his students, the diplomats he worked with, and by fellow Jesuits who admired and loved him.