

Rev. James H. Flanagan, the founder of the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT), passed into eternal life on Holy Thursday, 24 March 2016, at the age of 91. The National Catholic Register entitled his obituary, "The most influential Catholic you have never heard of", because, as Carrie Gress writes, in a world drowning in the cult of celebrities, "Fr Flanagan sought out anonymity and a hidden life", instead "touching the lives of so many through the ministries of SOLT priests, consecrated and lay people". Presently, there are 150 priests and religious brothers, 120 religious sisters, and hundreds of lay faithful in SOLT, serving in 13 different countries around the world.

Born in Boston, Massachusetts on 29 May 1924, Fr Flanagan attended the University of Notre Dame on a football scholarship in the 1940s. His time at Notre Dame was interrupted by his entry into the Navy in 1943 during World War II, after which he served in the Pacific war zone as a Navy frogman. Following the end of the war, Flanagan completed his studies in South Bend before entering the seminary for the Archdiocese of Boston. During his time in seminary, Fr Flanagan already felt inspired to begin the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity — a community comprised of priests, religious and lay faithful, devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary and serving together in mission on ecclesial teams. Following his ordination and five years of ministerial service in the Archdiocese of Boston, Fr Flanagan was granted permission to depart Boston in order to found SOLT in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe in 1958.

Surrounded by members of his community, Fr Flanagan passed away peacefully early on Holy Thursday morning immediately following the recitation of the Luminous Mysteries of the Holy Rosary. According to Fr Peter Marsalek, General Priest Servant for the S O L T community, "It was a great providential source of consolation that our beloved founder, who was so dedicated to the priesthood and Eucharist, would pass away on Holy Thursday, the day on which we celebrate the institution of both of these great sacraments." Bishop Michael Mulvey of Corpus Christi, and Ordinary of the SOLT community celebrated the funeral Mass for Fr Flanagan in Mora, New Mexico, in the same place where Flanagan began S O L T in 1958