

GREETINGS FROM CUPERTINO – DECEMBER 2007

I am writing this letter on my way home from Saint Louis after participating in the December meeting of the Provincial Council. I want to give you some highlights of life at the Marianist Center in Cupertino the past six weeks and also report on my participation in the funeral of Brother Franklin Pao in Hawaii and the trips to Saint Louis for the meetings of the Provincial Council in November and December.

I returned from Rome early on the morning of Saturday, November 3 and the next day for the Sunday Mass I commented on the story of Zacchaeus in the context of the beatification of the 20th century Spanish martyrs; in the afternoon I gave a report about the Roman celebrations to the community. I then prepared my report about the pilgrimage and the November Greetings from Cupertino to send out by e-mail. On November 6 we celebrated the feast of our newly beatified martyrs. At our community Mass in the morning I made some more reflections about Miguel, Sabino, Joaquin and Florencio. In the afternoon we had a festive social before dinner. Early on Wednesday, November 7, I flew to Hawaii where I was welcomed by Father Bob Hackel and taken to the Marianist Hall community on the campus of Chaminade University-Saint Louis School.

I had picked up an "airline cold" on my way back from Europe so I welcomed the time I had in Hawaii to recover. Once again I was very much at home at Marianist Hall and I enjoyed the visit with old friends, beginning with Father Joseph Priestley with whom I entered the SM in 1944. An annoying cough prevented me from accompanying Brother Frank Spaeth who represented the community at the celebration opening the 125th anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of Saint Francis in Hawaii. Friday afternoon, however, I was able to attend the wake for Brother Franklin Pao at the chapel of the Mystical Rose and on Saturday we went to Saint Anthony's Kailua for the Mass and then on to the cemetery. I have written more about this colorful and memorable weekend elsewhere.

November is an exceptionally peaceful time in Hawaii. The sun rises a little later and the day comes quickly to an end. From my room I had a splendid view of Palolo Valley and Kaimuki. It was in the mid-80s, but there were refreshing trade winds. From my place in chapel I had an unrestricted view of that great symbol of stability, Diamond Head. My guest room had been Brother Joe Becker's room and the prayer book in my place in chapel was also his. I remembered others from previous visits to Marianist Hall, some deceased, others now in Cupertino. While in Honolulu we received a series of death notices from Rome, including old friends in France, Switzerland and Spain, the last being Father Severiano Ayastuy, who was the younger brother of Blessed Brother Sabino.

Then came news of the death of two of our fellow Brothers in the USA whom I had known well. While in Honolulu I gave a report of the pilgrimage to the Marianist Hall community as part of our Veterans Day observance and then returned to Cupertino where Brother Paul briefed me about the adventures I had missed as we drove from the airport to the Center. Later I checked the bulletin board where I found the Director's Bulletin, Weekly Bulletins and Grace's bulletin. I learned that there had been a lively community meeting and that the community had welcomed several visitors: a group from the North American Center for Marianist Studies (NACMS) - Ray McCracken, Ben Dougherty and Danny Kallenberg.

Mrs. Mary Ellen Garcia, director of human resources, was also our guest as she continued to work with Mrs. Grace Pancipanci and the staff. Mr. Sal Trozzo visited us and announced that his wife was now in residence at the Pleasant View retirement center across the street from the Marianist Center. Brother John Haster continued to post updates on unfinished work and the Physical Therapy Room.

After greeting Brother Joe Wasy for his birthday on November 15 I went to Saint Louis for the monthly meeting of the Provincial Council, returning to Cupertino just before the Thanksgiving holiday crunch. I welcomed Brother Pat McMahan and Brother Urban Naal who had come to the Center for medical attention. I had just missed meeting Brother Gene Frank's sister Suzanne. I also missed Brother Charles Johnson's lively talk

about vocations in the Province. We remembered Ms. Isabel Taporca on her birthday and I noted that Brother David Betz had given a talk about the ministry in Santa Cruz. Brother Jim Wisecaver brought a group of Lay Marianists for a workshop: Pati Krasenski, Julie Nagasako, Maureen O'Rourke, Marg Van Herk-Paradis and Cristin Fong.

Then we celebrated Thanksgiving Day in grand style and continued to welcome visitors: Brother Enrique Zabala from Mexico, Father Gene Contadino from nearby Berkeley, Brother Tom Redmond from Saint Louis, and Brother Skip Matthews with his brothers Joe and Pete and Pete's wife, Mai, who were in town to attend the Notre Dame-Stanford game. Serene Chew came bearing gifts from Hawaii and Brother Joe Markel made a brief visit with us while also visiting Brother Robert Juenemann and Brother Joe Aspell at the Avila House community. Brother Robert then came to the Center to recuperate from surgery.

Mr. James Marken was also our guest as was Brother Jim Swicki, SJ. Father Ray Malley moved in after completing the Vatican II program in Menlo Park. Father Tom French and Brother Dave Betz were frequent visitors as well. Our guestmaster, Brother Vince Wayer, was busy and his memo looked like a baseball manager's scorecard in an extra-inning game with so many changes in room assignments. Biggest event of these days, however, was Father George Cerniglia's official visit to the community, concluding with a very encouraging and stimulating report of what he had seen and heard in this, his first visit to the community.

We celebrated Father Joe Stefanelli's birthday on November 24 and Mrs. Grace Pancipanci's birthday on the Feast of Christ the King. Christmas decorations competed with Advent art and environment as we began December. We continued to be blessed by many visitors including a group from the Jesuit Retirement Center in Los Gatos and Brother Peter Pontolillo and his sister who were visiting in the Bay Area. We celebrated Brother John Samaha's birthday on December 5, the great feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, including an anticipated celebration of Brother Dave Betz' birthday.

But I missed the celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Father Jack Rielly's birthday on December 12 as I flew that day to Saint Louis for the meeting of the Provincial Council. I also missed Father Dave Schuyler's birthday on the 14th. That was also the day that Brother Bernard Foster died in Stanford Hospital. Brother Barney was unresponsive when I went to visit him before leaving Cupertino, but a few days before his fall and subsequent hospitalization, he told me with his customary impish smile that he was "a walking drugstore!" He was one year short of 90 and one year short of his 70th anniversary as a Marianist. He was fondly remembered by many of his former students. He was a cheerful and lively fellow-Brother who loved to call me "Stevie boy!"

The meeting of the Provincial Council began on Friday morning and continued until Sunday noon. Dr. Dan Curran, president of the University of Dayton, was with us Friday. I had arrived Wednesday night - and the cook of the day, Father Tim Kenney, picked me up at the metro stop and we returned to the Maryland Avenue residence in time to join the others who were just finishing dinner. Earlier that day I had lunch with Mrs. Nancy Davies and her daughter Linda. On Saturday evening Father Jim Tobin arranged a dinner (expertly prepared by Father Gerry Hammel) at the Pillar parish community to which Mr. and Mrs. Michael Gorman and I were invited. Our common bond was Mike's brother John with whom I had lived in our scholasticate years - and who was killed in a hiking accident in the Swiss mountains during the time when Brother Pat Moran and I were in Fribourg.

Here in Cupertino I missed the first of three meetings scheduled to discuss the issue of Mixed Composition in the SM. I also missed Mr. Jessie Rosario's birthday, Father Tom French's birthday, the staff Christmas Party and the concert given by THE SINGERS AROUND THE BAY. I was told that when the group serenaded Brother Joe Wasy he joined them in singing JINGLE BELLS. I liked this quote from Brother John Haster's bulletin: "Many thanks to Brother Joe Nu'uauu, Mr. Kevin Heddy and the Romano Family as they continue through Advent to prepare the way for us to celebrate a very holy and prayerful Christmas. Every day there is something new for us to discover!"

Be assured I am with you in thought and prayer – ever grateful for your interest, encouragement and prayerful support. May the great feasts of Christmas be days of profound Peace and Joy for you and may you begin the New Year with Great Expectations.

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