

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

For many of us, September marks another round of new beginnings. We embark on a new community venture, perhaps, or we find ourselves in a new ministry. We make plans and schedule events. In some ways, it is like the train leaving the station, slowly speeding up and then hitting a maximum stride.

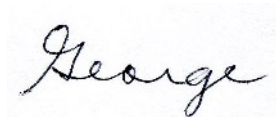
As we get caught up in these new beginnings, new projects and new plans, let me encourage you to ponder the words of the American humorist Erma Bombeck (1927-1996), a distinguished alumnus of the University of Dayton. Her fine wit produced many memorable works, but few are as poignant as the words she wrote after finding out that she had a fatal disease:

" If I had my life to live over, I would have talked less and listened more. I would have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained and the sofa faded ... I would have sat on the lawn with my children and not worried about grass stains ... Given another shot at life, I would seize every minute ... look at it and really see it ... live it ... and never give it back."

The busy-ness of beginnings sometimes diminishes the importance of people over things and lessens our commitment to others over self. Bombeck's words are an impetus to us to rethink our priorities and to allow the Holy Spirit to move each of us to sort out our lives and our loves.

September also is a very *Marianist* month. We commemorate events of our history in the Society of Mary, and we join together to celebrate with joy our patronal feast, The Most Holy Name of Mary. Let us begin this ministerial year with great hope, and let us pray together for this beloved Marianist Family of ours that it may continue to spread far and wide!

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

George J. Cerniglia, S.M.
Assistant for Religious Life