



## **AN INTERVIEW WITH . . .**

## **BRO. CHARLES JOHNSON, PROVINCE VOCATION DIRECTOR**



### **What excites you about your job?**

I'm inspired when I see young men who are interested in the Marianists, who are on fire about our charism. I also like visiting different places and learning new things. I get to work with different Marianists in many different capacities. It helps me see the big picture.

My job as vocation director also has helped me in my personal vocation. It's made me very grateful. So many people have helped me and guided me with my vocation journey. When I work with other men on their journey, it helps *my* journey.

### **What is a hopeful sign you've seen recently?**

Things like our recent meeting of Hispanic Marianists held in Puerto Rico. We continue to have many successful discernment weekends. We just had one in Hawai'i and one at Governor's Island, and San Antonio is coming up.

Our brothers are beginning to understand a "vocation culture." People are thinking about it and praying about it. The community at Cape May just organized their own vocation retreat. That's terrific.

### **What surprised you about the job?**

When I first got this job, I thought that if I did "A, B and C," then vocations would happen. Well, I've done A, B and C, and it's not that easy. There are things happening in society that I can't control. It's just the reality I work with.

### **What's the hardest part about being the vocation director?**

Having to tell a young man that a Marianist vocation is not for him, that maybe he should look in another direction.

And the traveling. Traveling can be difficult at times because the Province is so big.

### **What's different about today's vocation prospects?**

The young people are coming out of a very different mindset. The men we have in formation are older and more mature, with education and life experience. On the one hand, they have a wealth of knowledge, talent and skills. On the other hand, they might be a little set in their ways. But we have to remember that they're grown men, not kids.

There are two kinds of vocation contacts –those who want to be a Marianist because they can't do anything else, and those who want to be a Marianist but don't *have* to be a Marianist. The men we have in formation right now, they're in the second category. What keeps them associated with us is our membership.

### **What would you like to tell the brothers that perhaps they don't know?**

I would want to tell the brothers that young men aren't going to join the Marianists because of me, but because of the brothers in the schools, parishes and ministries. I would tell them to be aware that our men in formation are coming from a different experience than we did. And to be open to cultural diversity.

### **How can the brothers help you in your job?**

I would ask the brothers to continue to pray for vocations. Continue to invite, to mentor, to recommend. I would ask them to open their communities to share their lives with younger people. Most brothers have been very supportive.

