

Bro. Richard Dix
60 years of profession



I have always considered it a wonderful stroke of luck that Don Bosco High School in Milwaukee opened just as I entered high school. It gave me a chance to see Brothers of Mary in action. I was impressed by their family spirit, especially their working together in a wonderful, joyful way. They were also good teachers. After being asked, I went to St. Louis and finished my high school at the Maryhurst postulate.

After formation, my first teaching experience at Chaminade was not good. However, things were much better when another brother requested a change of ministry, and I was transferred to Victoria, Texas. Teaching our students was never a problem after that. Rather, it was an enjoyable occupation.

Besides teaching, I have always enjoyed physical work. During my time in Victoria, I considered transferring from the teaching category to the working brother category. Fr. Paul Ryan gave me some good advice. He suggested I remain a teacher, indicating that I would always be able to work as much as I wanted while keeping the teaching option. That has pretty well played out in my life as a Marianist.

I enjoyed my four years of elementary teaching in the sixth grade in Victoria but then was ready to move on to high school. My high school teaching career was about half biology and half mechanical drawing. These are quite different, but I found both enjoyable and rewarding. I taught high school at McBride, Central Catholic in San Antonio, then back at McBride, and then Nolan.

Nolan was my introduction to administration, where the first year I served as assistant principal and the second year, principal. I went from being principal of the boy's division at Nolan, which was then a co-institutional school, to principal of Nolan as a co-ed high school for a total of six years. Then it was back to McBride, teaching biology for a year until the school closed. Next it was St. Mary's high school for two years, teaching, being assistant principal, director of the community and supervising maintenance and doing quite a bit of work myself. Then I moved on to Vianney as principal for a three-year term.

As reappointment was being considered, I was asked to be involved in community service at the Provincial level, as Assistant for Temporalities. I did this for two terms and a total of eight years. It was a new experience, completely different than teaching. There was a steep learning curve, but I learned and came to enjoy the work and the interaction with the rest of the Provincial Council and the men in the Province.

However, after my second term, I was happy to move on to St. Mary's University in San Antonio as director of the large Marianist Residence community. The first year I also taught two biology courses. When the registrar's position became open, I applied and was appointed registrar. This all gave me a chance to work at the University, which was a new ministry and quite enjoyable. During my time in the registrar's office, we were moving more and more into computers, which I found challenging and enjoyable.

In the summer of 1995, I was recycled—that is, I was asked to go back to Provincial Council work as Assistant for Temporalities. I did that for seven years for the St. Louis Province and then, after the reorganization of the four American Provinces, I was in this position for five years in the new Province of the United States.

Finally after my term was finished, I was assigned to the Marianist Residence in San Antonio. It is a kind of retirement, but I also help pretty well full time with maintenance of the residence. I finally had more time for my beloved physical work, which I've enjoyed immensely. I used to enjoy doing work around the house on Saturdays, when I could. Now, I have all Saturdays!

Looking back over the years, I have had four different careers or periods in my active religious life. First, I was an elementary and high school teacher and administrator for about 25 years. Then, I served as Provincial Assistant for Temporalities on several occasions for a total of 20 years. Third, I was registrar of St. Mary's University for 10 years and, finally, fourth, I am a senior and spend my time on physical work.

I feel I have been blessed in all these periods and have found all the various ministries rewarding and enjoyable. I am grateful and thank God for the many students who have entered my life in those first 25 years, making for a truly rewarding experience. However, I have also found my work in internal ministry, with the Provincial Council members and the men of the Province, also most rewarding and enjoyable. I have never had an assignment or a community I did not like.