

Bro. Michael Galvin, S.M.
50 years of profession



In January of 1955, having graduated from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Elementary School in Queens, N.Y., I met the Marianists for the first time when I moved on to Most Holy Trinity High School. Among my teachers who were most influential in my life were Bros. Frank Russell and Charles Roggemann. When both of them encouraged me to consider becoming a Marianist, I reflected and I prayed over their suggestion and decided to give it a try.

In the novitiate the camaraderie was contagious and the opportunity to learn about the Marianist heritage and to reflect upon its values was priceless. I was amazed to learn that New Yorkers and Midwesterners spoke two different languages.

After completing a packed but stimulating program of studies in the scholasticate, in 1963 I was afforded the opportunity to move on to graduate studies at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, an opportunity made possible thanks to a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship awarded to me near the conclusion of my studies at UD.

The following year I joined the staff of Cardinal Gibbons High School. The experiences in teaching Spanish and French, together with my work as departmental chairperson, were both challenging and rewarding.

Before going to Florida as principal of Chaminade High School in Hollywood, I visited the school in April. I interviewed teachers, student leaders, administrators and several parents. It became clear that there were areas in serious need of attention, including faculty morale, ill-defined objectives, enrollment, stability of curriculum and scheduling, and an extremely precarious financial situation.

Fortunately there was a cadre of competent and dedicated Marianists and lay persons already on the staff, or soon to arrive, who made it possible to begin to bring about stability in the areas where it was most needed. However, in 1968—and subsequent years—stability was hardly the hallmark of the larger culture in which we lived and moved. Seismic quakes in society and in the post-Vatican II Church produced palpable

aftershocks in the school environment. Those were challenging times for everybody, especially students, parents and educators.

After a sabbatical in St. Louis, I moved to Colegio San Jose in Puerto Rico, where my ministry involved teaching English and French, departmental responsibilities in English, service as guidance counselor for students of the eleventh grade, and work with groups of parents. I was particularly struck by the warm and affectionate nature of colleagues, students, parents and people in general.

During a later sabbatical program in Cambridge, Mass., in 1992, I acquired some fluency in Portuguese, primarily by talking with the Brazilian cook at our residence. Before long there was a steady stream of immigrants seeking assistance in dealing with every imaginable type of situation. I soon learned that the Brazilian presence in the area was enormous and that the resources available to assist them were scant or non-existent. I consulted with Bro. Steve Glodek, then assistant provincial of the New York Province, and explained my hopes of developing mechanisms or structures to help meet the need for providing assistance that was so critically lacking in the Boston area. Bro. Steve's enthusiastic assistance and that of subsequent Provincial Council members has been greatly appreciated

I give thanks for the many competent, caring and supportive people with whom I have shared community life and ministry. Their presence in my life and the love and support of the members of my family have been the greatest blessings among many.