

Rev. William R. Wightman, S.M.
50th Sacerdotal



I was born in St. Louis on May 17, 1928, to Cecelia and William Wightman. It was the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, and my mother never forgave me for causing her to miss Mass on this holy day of obligation.

My first contact with members of the Society of Mary was when I entered high school in 1942. I entered the Postulate at Maryhurst after my junior year in 1945. I went to the Novitiate the following year and made my first vows in 1947.

After graduating from the University of Dayton in 1950, I began my teaching career at McBride High School. I taught there until I entered the seminary in Switzerland in 1955.

I was ordained in 1959 and returned to the U.S. in 1960 for a pastoral year of study at St. Mary's University.

For the next eight years, I was involved in formation work as chaplain at our scholasticate at St. Mary's University (1961-1964) and at our novitiate in Galesville, Wis. (1964-1968).

I finally returned to high school teaching and campus ministry work in August 1968 when I was assigned to Assumption High School in East St. Louis. From there, I went on to Gross High School in Omaha in 1975, Thomas Moore High School in Milwaukee in 1980, and to our retreat center in Eureka in 1983. I was director of the community at all of these assignments with the exception of Thomas Moore.

In 1987 I began a career in parish work when I was appointed pastor at Our Lady of the Pillar in St. Louis. After 10 enjoyable and fulfilling years there, I left for a sabbatical year and then spent 1998 at Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth as chaplain and director of the Marianist community.

In the summer of 1999, I returned to St. Louis as director of a new community composed of members of three communities that were merged: Frische/Chaminade, St. Mary's High School and Vianney High School. The new community was located at Vianney under the title of Curé of Ars.

After six years as director I returned to Our Lady of the Pillar Parish as associate pastor. At a time when the years are beginning to catch up with me, this assignment where I had spent many happy years has been a real blessing.

When I look back on my years as a Marianist and try to imagine what I might have done and become if I had not entered the Society of Mary, I can never come up with anything in which I might have been even minimally satisfied and happy. The people I have lived with, those whom I taught and have ministered to in different ways, gave me more than I could have found elsewhere. These same people encouraged and counseled me as I made way through a life that has been mostly very positive but has not been without some minor hills and valleys to deal with. God and his mother have been very good to me!