

Marianist Community – 22683 Alcalde Road – Cupertino, CA 95014

Oct. 23, 2011 – Mission Sunday

Greetings from Cupertino!

I dated my last letter Sept. 23, to mark the first day of autumn, but delayed mailing the final edition until just before the arrival of the Provincial Council for our day-long *Conversation* which proved to be a gratifying experience for them as well as for us. Their presentations were lively and informative and elicited good feedback.

Thank you for your greetings. I am doing very well, thank you, as is nearly everyone else here at the Marianist Center and I hope this update finds you enjoying autumn wherever you are! Today we are celebrating World Mission Sunday and God has blessed us with a glorious day. Some call it Indian Summer, others the Summer of Saint Martin, but it is simply a late summer day here in the San Francisco Bay Area, with pleasant 80 degree weather during the day, dropping 30 degrees after sunset. As I pause in my writing I feast on the sight of many humming birds and bees reveling in the deep purple flowers just outside my window. As I walk from my room to the parking lot I admire two trees with spectacular red and golden leaves. Earlier this month we had a surprise day or two of rain but it will take a while to determine what that meant for this year's grape harvest.

On October 2 the Sunday Liturgy eclipsed the Feast of the Angels and the anniversary of our foundation as a religious community. The following Sunday, however, we had a special observance of the Marianist World Day of Prayer which included a talk by Father Joe Stefanelli and concluded with Benediction. On the 12th we celebrated the Feast of Our Lady of the Pillar. For me the date is especially memorable because my parents had selected Columbus Day for their wedding. They told me there were snow flurries in Hamilton that day! Later I learned of Blessed Chaminade's devotion to Our Lady of the Pillar and his indebtedness to Mary for guiding him to found the Marianist Family.

On Oct. 7, Feast of the Holy Rosary, we combined our evening prayer with our community remembrance of Father James Imhof. Brother John Haster faithfully had our flag at half-mast until the funeral. Brother Bill Bolts made his debut with us as a homilist on the anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council on Oct. 11, 1962. Brother Bill also keeps us abreast of events in the local church as he serves on two diocesan committees. Brother John Samaha is indefatigable in writing. Both he and Brother Bill give occasional talks in the parish and with other Catholic groups.

Friday, Oct. 14, was the day selected for the Mass of Christian Burial for Father James Alexander Imhof who had died on Oct. 5. Symbols placed on the casket at the beginning of the liturgy were: Crucifix, Rosary, Rule of Life, Stole, Camera – and ALIVE (presented by Brother Frank (Skip) Matthews) as Father Dave Schuyler read this explanation: “Current issue of *ALIVE* features our Marianist work in Malawi where Jim was assigned during his ministry in Africa.” Father Paul Marshall, representing the Provincial Council and the Province, presided at the mass and gave an inspiring homily. One of Father Jim’s nephews is a Knight of Columbus and several local Knights, all in full regalia, joined him in for the Mass. Burial followed immediately at the Gate of Heaven cemetery. It was a glorious day, so appropriate for Jim who delighted in the beauty of California.

The same morning featured the dedication of the Brother John McCluskey Residence Hall at Archbishop Riordan High School in San Francisco. Although most of us attended Father Jim’s funeral, others attended the Mass of dedication at Riordan. Brother John had been the founding principal in 1949. Currently 17 boys from China, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Northern California live in the new Residence Hall. Riordan has the only urban Catholic boarding program in the Western United States.

On Saturday, Oct. 15, we had our Second Annual Luncheon of Appreciation for our doctors and nurses. The event was well attended and featured a video that recorded tributes from many of us – including a well stated expression of thanks by Father James Imhof! It was a vivid reminder of how quickly Jim had left us. When he was no longer able to come to the chapel I would visit briefly with him on my way there. One day he told me that he was going to die after 5:00. I assured him I would pray with him and for him. When I reflected on Jim's declaration I realized that he hadn't said AM or PM, nor the day, month or year! On another occasion I greeted Jim heartily only to see Brother Jim Christiana, who had been staying with him, leap out of his chair! Brother Jim spent many hours with Father Jim and was with him, quietly saying the rosary, when he died.

Oct. 5 was a memorable day not only for us but also for Cupertino as about the same hour that Father Jim died, a disgruntled employee at the quarry just a few minutes from us went on a rampage and shot eight employees, killing three before fleeing. There was a general lockout of our area as police searched for the killer, closing the Rancho San Antonio Park and canceling a talk Brother Bill Bolts was scheduled to give at the parish. Later that day we learned that Steve Jobs died – and that was world news.

As soon as Brother John Haster returned to Cupertino he changed the Alcalde House banner from summer to autumn. Autumn always has a touch of nostalgia for me. It also seems to highlight the ever more rapid passage of time: Sept. 29 marked the first anniversary of the death of Father Jim Mifsud. A year ago, on Oct. 23, San Francisco won the World Series.

Dr. Lewis, our principal doctor, came to give us flu shots. A hymn Brother Howard used recently began with the words: *"Morning glory, starlit sky, soaring music..."* I told him that 2 out of 3 wasn't bad! Our table talk has entered a new phase as we welcomed Brother Gene Frank to the chair that Father Jim Imhof held for so long. Brother Bob Wade claims his hearing aid is broken, but we aren't sure that he ever really listens anyway! On the other hand, he eats and talks heartily! The other day he was telling one of his famous war stories when Father Larry was about to leave. I whispered "Aren't you going to wait to hear the rest of the story?" Very discreetly, with his disarming smile, he replied "I've heard it already" (pause) "More than once!"

On another occasion when we were discussing snuff Father Larry concluded with "Snuff said!" On the other hand, he was surprised to learn that at one time his beloved Cleveland Indians were named "Naps" (after Napoleon Lajoie). Imagine what we did with that tidbit! The nurses make sure Brother Charles gets a ride around the property these wonderful autumn days, and he continually says "Hello!" or "Alleluia" which might mean many different things! I was told he also says "Jackpot!" from time to time. In chapel, however, his memory of many prayers is remarkable.

Our Task Force on Sponsorship has been meeting regularly by videoconference calls. I had the good fortune of supplementing that by a chat with Father Jim Orsini who dropped by to visit before returning to Maui. Father Jim brings a long history of school administration both in the "glory days" when we had a number of Marianists at Saint Anthony's and now when we are all learning about this new form of ministry called Sponsorship. I prefer to speak of partnering or collaborating, to use the language of *Vision 2020* – our strategic plan for the future. Now I am off to St. Louis for a meeting of the Task Force Aging with Grace, but without Grace, our Director of Nursing. She and Father Dave had met earlier with the Directors of Mercy Siena in Dayton and the Marianist Residence in San Antonio.

Be assured I am with you in thought and prayer, making my own the greeting one of my friends sent me recently (borrowed from Saint Jude):

May Mercy, Peace and Love be yours in abundance.

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