

March 2012

### **Greetings from Cupertino!**

I had planned to draft this update on my way to Saint Louis, but I was in no condition to travel, so now I am patiently resting here, hoping the pills my doctor gave me will restore my energy and zest. The good news is that I am now even more sympathetic to my fellow brothers as they, too, cope patiently and confidently. When I told Father Larry that I felt exactly like he does he dismissed the comment "there are degrees!" The best news is that I have been able to continue my brief conversations with Father John McEnhill as he makes his final journey under hospice care. He has coped well and is fully aware that he is preparing for inevitable death – the end of the journey.

February was a quiet month for us. No rain to speak of, fairly mild days, and some days of sunshine. At the beginning of the month our attention was focused on Brother Charles Ehrenfeld who finally breathed his last under hospice care on February 8. We had our usual community remembrance and later a simple funeral, as he had requested. Bro. Charles was another example of one who had to be known in his prime to be appreciated in his final years. Our staff, however, came to know and treasure Brother Charles as they cared for him.

His broad smile was the best "Thank you!" Although he wanted to limit the public prayers on his behalf, all of us prayed earnestly for his peaceful passing and each of us, in our own way, celebrated his remarkable life of service. Father Joe Stefanelli celebrated the funeral and several of us went to the cemetery afterwards. I understand there was a fine remembrance at Saint Anthony's, Maui, where he served for so many years.

Now Father Larry Mann claims the title as Dean, but was disappointed to learn there were no special privileges attached to the title. Father Larry is well cared for and responds graciously. Brother Tony Pistone has now unpacked the boxes sent from Dayton and has just been appointed director of activities for the community as well as our contact with *FamilyOnline*. Brother Tony told us of Father Larry's last Mass at West Hills when the closing bell for the school day rang out – only to be overruled by Father Larry who told the congregation – "Don't go away, the Mass isn't over yet!" Father Larry was immensely popular at Chaminade, West Hills, but frequently we get inquiries from former parishioners at Holy Family in Honolulu where Father Larry served for many years.

We celebrated Brother Pat McMahon's 77<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 12<sup>th</sup>, Brother John Haster's birthday on the 18<sup>th</sup> and Brother Vince Wayer's on the 26<sup>th</sup> – each had a distinctive touch at dinner. Meanwhile, I had two conference calls in preparation for the meeting of the Provincial Chapter. One was our monthly videoconference on sponsorship; the other was the chapter committee on religious life as we highlighted points that we wanted to come back to at the chapter.

Ash Wednesday marked our calm entry into Lent. The Holy Season has moved forward quickly day by day as we celebrate the Lenten liturgies, so rich in teaching us – once again – the basics of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Although our chapel is bare during this austere time, there are plants and flowers around our home. Best of all, for me, are two giant flower pots of glorious spring tulips.

We began March, not only with our monthly novena for the canonization of our Founder, but also with a lively hymn in honor of Saint Joseph, our special patron. When we moved from Villa Saint Joseph to the Marianist Center, the section with the nurses' station was named Saint Joseph Hall.

Father John Putka is remarkably active, especially in driving people around town for medical appointments. In chapel, his enthusiasm is contagious as he says so much, so well, so vigorously, in few words. In Saint Joseph Hall, Brother Bob's birds continue to greet us – while on this side of the property, Saint Mary Hall, Brother Howard has his enthusiastic crows greeting us as we go to and fro. Only Brother Howard, however, is able to converse with them!

On the day I had planned to go to Saint Louis I had a massive nosebleed. I had never used the call button for the nurses' station, but Ruby instantly responded and handled that crisis well. We are blessed with a talented and devoted staff. Later, my doctor checked me and concluded that it was simply the result of the dry conditions in my rooms. But he confirmed my decision not to go to Saint Louis. "All you would contribute would be germs!" It seems this lingering virus is hard to shake off. So I continue here in Cupertino, bitterly disappointed about missing the meeting and my fellow-capitulants and other friends, but trying to practice what I preach about living fully in the present. I am writing a new chapter about aging gracefully!

Thank you for your interest, encouragement and prayerful support. Be assured you are in my thoughts and prayers as we go through this Holy Season of Lent.

**Fr. Steve Tutas, SM**