

BRO. MIKE MURPHY

Celebrating 50 years of profession

As a novice, I had great initial passion for becoming a Marianist; this did not diminish during my formation. There were times when I found my commitment demanding. More than once I asked, "Can I really keep this commitment for the rest of my life?" After 50 years, the answer is obviously yes.

My first 10 years of ministry might be considered routine education ministry. I was working in a school with marginalized youth who were struggling with school, family, and life issues. After ministering in high schools, I received an opportunity for a sabbatical that changed the direction of my ministry.

I acquired my master's in counseling and ministered for three years at St. John's Residence for Boys in New York. In India, I served as executive director of Ragpickers Education and Development Scheme, working in formation and as business manager. During this time, my commitment to marginalized youth grew.

My ministry during those years to the present has had the biggest impact on my spirituality and ministry. It was after experiencing India that I could see myself walking with the forgotten, the marginalized, the invisible people of God. I now define my ministry as *Nova Bella*, new wars. I am responding to new social problems – it's stressful and demands that I be available to people – but like Mary, I am choosing to say, "Yes."

This led to my assignment in Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine working with the homeless and my founding of the HELP Program, which advocates on behalf of returning citizens (ex-offenders) and challenges the permanent and lasting effects of our criminal justice system.

In the next five years, I see myself training and forming the people I work with to take over the HELP Program. I can't imagine retirement. I'll probably die with my boots on.