

MARIANIST CULTURE, FAITH AND COMMUNITY

ALIVE

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Marianist organizations teach about water scarcity and its impact on the human family, page 4.

A MESSAGE

from the Provincial

Dear Friends of the Marianists,

Some social scientists say that the next big international struggle will be over clean water and predict there will be conflicts and wars over this fundamental human commodity. Even Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI added his voice, saying that clean water is “a basic

human right.” Marianists throughout the world are reflecting on this issue and are engaged in conversation and advocacy for universal access to clean water.

On a local and personal level, though, it is easy for us to take this precious liquid for granted. It’s always there and it is almost always clean. One turn of the tap and our need is satisfied, whether for drinking, laundry, hygiene, cooking or gardening.

My attitude about water changed sharply when I lived in Nigeria, where we had six months of plentiful rain and six months of a dry season. The late Marianist Brother Fred Gelhard, a master engineer, built a 20,000 liter reservoir on our novitiate compound.

When the rains ended, this collected rain-water had to last for the next six months. Every drop was precious and used with utmost care. Dirty dish-water was used to water the gardens; shower water was collected for cleaning and laundry. I remember the afternoon when one of the novices accidentally left one of the taps on in the kitchen. The usually placid Brother Fred grew livid.

Such measuring and care of water made us aware of our use and misuse. By then, I had learned to live

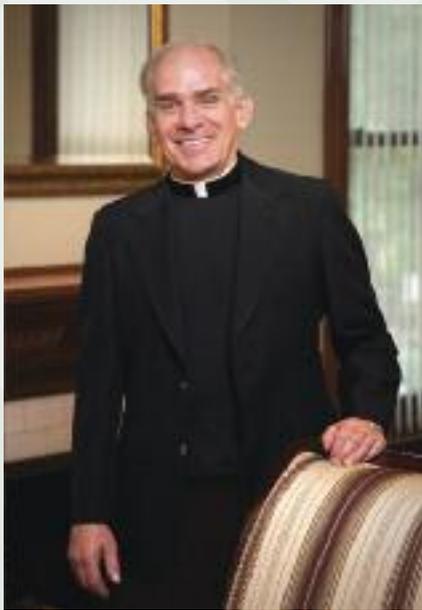
without electricity, which often went out; but water was absolutely necessary.

That perspective was sharpened when I worked in the Mukuru slum of Nairobi. Watching women from the slum stand in line waiting for the one available water tap, sometimes two to three hours a day for five gallons of water, I learned two important lessons: I must not waste water and I must learn to share.

I was still adjusting to life in the United States after my first year back from Africa when, out of habit, I turned off the running tap in the kitchen at one of our communities. “This isn’t Africa,” one of the brothers reminded me. I thought, “You’re right, but we all need to be good stewards of water!” My hope is that the article, “Water: A Case for Environmental Justice” (see page 4) will raise everyone’s consciousness about this valuable resource.

As always, we are deeply grateful for our partners in ministry and those who support the mission of the Marianist Province of the United States, especially our growing commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

We pray for you and your families daily.



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Provincial

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Front cover
Even though water supplies exist, many people around the globe don't have access to clean water because governments have failed to provide even modest tap water systems, page 4.

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The Society of Mary (Marianists) is an international Roman Catholic religious congregation of priests and brothers. About 350 professed members comprise the Province of the United States. They serve in communities and ministries from Honolulu to Puerto Rico and Eastern Africa, India, Ireland, Mexico, and the Philippines. In the United States, they sponsor three universities: University of Dayton in Ohio, St. Mary's University in San Antonio and Chaminade University in Honolulu, as well as 19 high schools, seven parishes and several retreat centers. The order has been present in the United States since 1849 when the Marianists came to Cincinnati. Blessed William Joseph Chaminade founded the Society of Mary in 1817.

INSIDE ...

4 WATER: A CASE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
Marianist organizations join forces to educate high school students about water scarcity and its impact on the human family.

8 FAITHFUL FRIENDS
Lay people and Marianists reflect on the impact of their friendships, animated by faith and an appreciation of Marianist spirituality.

11 TIPPING THE SCALES TOWARD JUSTICE
Marianist Brother Frank O'Donnell draws on his legal training to effect lasting change for Baltimore's disadvantaged.

12 WHERE EVERYONE IS WELCOME
A Marianist high school in Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley uses an innovative diversity program to help students appreciate their differences.

16 TRANSCENDING GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES
A program at St. Mary's University provides enriching opportunities for students and the brothers and priests they befriend.

DEPARTMENTS

Provincial Letter.....	2
The View from Here.....	14
Unsung Marianist Heroes	19
Slice of Life.....	20
In Remembrance.....	21
Marianist Devotional	22



4



8



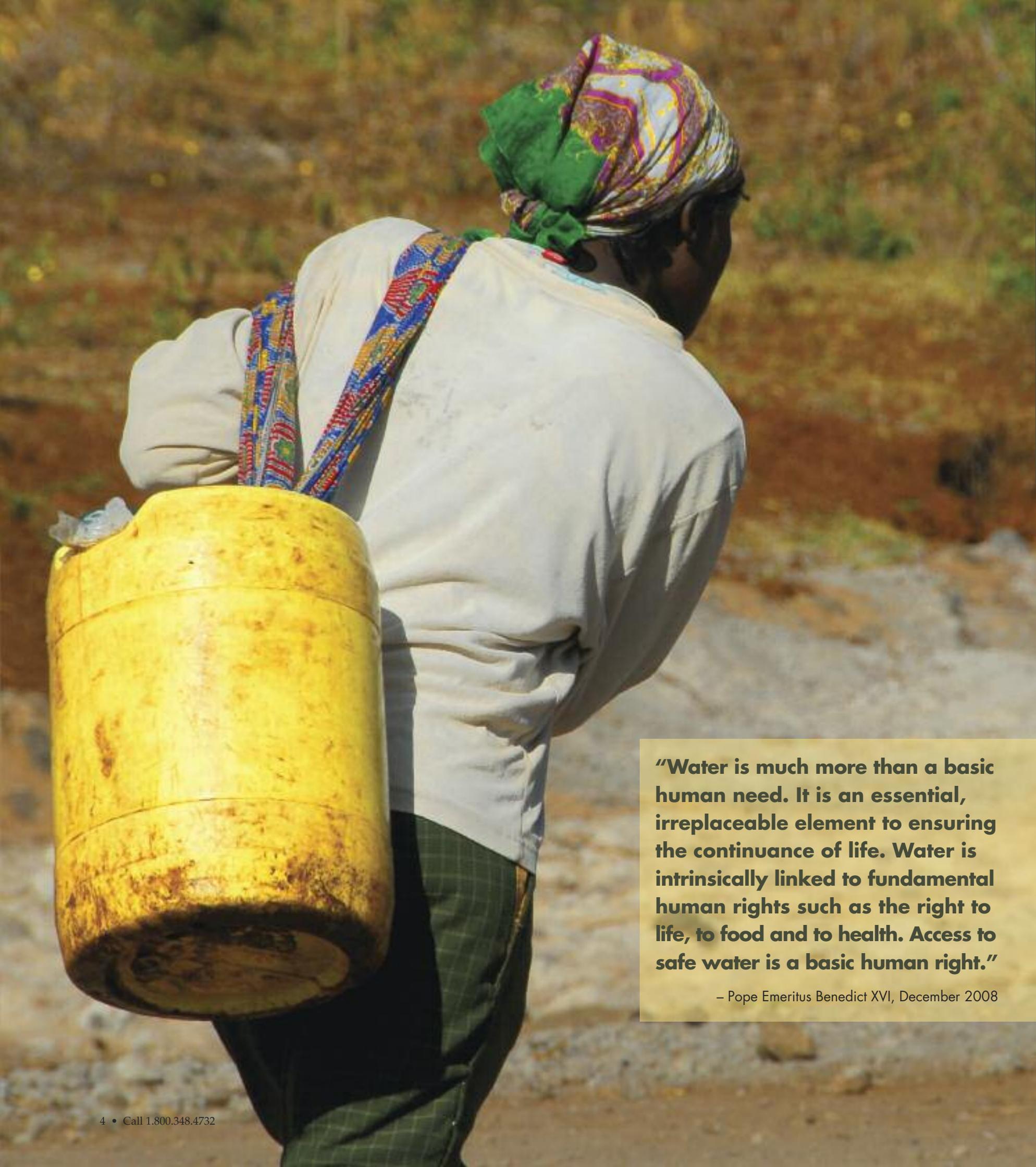
12

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“Water is much more than a basic human need. It is an essential, irreplaceable element to ensuring the continuance of life. Water is intrinsically linked to fundamental human rights such as the right to life, to food and to health. Access to safe water is a basic human right.”

– Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, December 2008

Water:

A Case for Environmental Justice

Marianist organizations join forces to educate high school students about water scarcity and its impact on the human family.

BY JAN D. DIXON

There's one thing that never fails to amaze Luis Guerra. When a rainstorm blows through south Texas, "I stop what I'm doing and just watch. When we've gone for a month or more without rain, it's a beautiful sight," says Guerra, who teaches religion and serves on the campus ministry team at Central Catholic High School, a Marianist school in San Antonio.

San Antonio has been hit hard in the last few years with hot, dry spells that have dried up creek beds, set off wildfires and significantly lowered the aquifer that nourishes the city. "You can't live here and not know about water issues," says Guerra.

But an immersion trip three years ago to visit Marianist ministries in Malawi, a country in southeastern Africa, brought Guerra face-to-face with another reality: Many people don't have access to clean water. "We watched people take water directly from Lake Malawi to use for drinking and cooking without treating it. Now that's an issue of social justice. People need clean water," he says,

noting the number of waterborne diseases that are spread through contaminated water.

Last summer Guerra, a LIFE moderator, joined others in the LIFE program to teach high school

students about water scarcity and social justice. The Marianist LIFE (Living in Faith Experience) program was created so that Catholic high school students could experience faith-awakening experiences, including programs on social justice.

"We rely on water for almost everything," says Toni Mesina, national coordinator of Marianist LIFE. "But most of us take it for granted. I wanted students to understand that they can make choices about how they use water — and stand in solidarity with people from around the world who do not have access to clean water. There's a lot at stake. How much water and what kind of water will we leave for our children and grandchildren?"

The issues surrounding global water shortages are complex. To frame a dialogue on the subject for students, Mesina sought the help of Tara Poling, an educator at the Marianist Environmental Education Center in Dayton, Ohio, and others who are passionate about the subject.

Water is life

The first time Tara Poling saw the Pacific Ocean was 15 years ago during a visit to Peru. "I wanted to dip my toes in it, so I asked one of our hosts in Lima if she could drive me to the beach. She looked at me in disbelief and said, 'That's the sewer for the city of Lima!' Raw, untreated sewage was being dumped daily into the ocean," says Poling.

It is one of many lessons Poling has learned about



global water supplies and pollution. But it is the scarcity of water that has environmentalists like Poling deeply concerned. “There are two types of water scarcity,” she says. “Physical challenges — lack of rainfall and few water resources — is one category. We see this in the southwest region of the United States, which historically has been water stressed.” She noted that climate change is exacerbating these conditions in drought-prone regions worldwide.

“The other type of water scarcity rises from political and economic conditions,” says Poling. In many parts of the developing world, even though water supplies

exist, people don’t have access to clean water because governments have failed to provide even modest tap water systems. Researchers estimate that 1.1 billion people — one-sixth of the world’s population — don’t have access to clean water often because of ineffective government planning or corruption.

The Education for Justice Project, an outreach program of the Church that specializes in programs on Catholic social teaching, estimates that in 13 years, more than

3 billion people will live in water-stressed countries.

The implications of water shortages are foreboding. “By 2015, we will have 9 billion people on this planet,” say Poling. “Worldwide, water is a food issue because a vast majority of our water is used for agriculture. Our ability to feed ourselves will succeed or fail based on our ability to manage our water supplies.”

Where does your water come from?

Almost everyone in the United States has access to clean drinking water. Beyond turning on a faucet, however, few people know where their water comes from. “We wanted to raise students’ awareness about their water shed — where their water comes from — and the future of their communities’ water supplies,” says Poling.

Water wasn’t on Tyler Johnson’s radar screen before he participated in the summer LIFE program.

“What caught my attention is that in Los Angeles, we don’t have enough water to support the population,” says Johnson, a junior at Chaminade College Preparatory, a Marianist school near Los Angeles. “We are totally dependent on water from northern California and the winter snow melts. As time goes on, it will get more difficult for people here to access water. That was an eye opener.”

Another goal of LIFE’s water program was to teach students about water conservation and simple things they can do to be good consumers of water (see “Conserve Water, Preserve the Planet” on page 7).

But the most heartfelt issue Mesina wanted students to absorb is that water is a basic human right. “No matter where you live or how much money you have, you should have the right to clean, potable water. It shouldn’t fall into the category of haves and have-nots,” she says.

A basic human need

Marianist Father Marty Solma, who spent more than 25 years serving in Marianist ministries in Africa before becoming provincial of the Province of the United States, learned about the importance of water while living in Nigeria and Kenya. “Our Marianist communities often went without water,” says Father Marty. “We often went without electricity, too. But you can live without electricity. You can’t live long without water. You need water for cooking, for hygiene, for almost everything.”

Though life in Nigeria, a country that experiences annual dry and rainy seasons, is difficult, people manage to save water for their basic needs, says Father Marty. But in the slums of Nairobi, politics and money are the driving forces. “There was often one tap in a section of a slum, and whoever controlled that tap could charge whatever they wanted for water. Because people needed the water, they were willing to pay any price,” says Father Marty.

“I remember women and children waiting in line with their five gallon cans to get water for the day. They would wait one, two, three hours — sometimes all day — to get their bucket of water.”

Now working in the United States, Father Marty is ever mindful of water. “I notice how easily water is wasted here. We’re so unconscious about how we



Luis Guerra, LIFE moderator and religion teacher at Central Catholic High School, San Antonio



Tara Poling, educator from the Marianist Environmental Education Center, and Toni Mesina, national coordinator of Marianist LIFE



Students and adult moderators from Central Catholic High School who participated in the Marianist LIFE program last summer: Joey Sandoval, Miguel Ochoa (LIFE moderator), Ricardo Garcia, Daniel Garza, Luis Guerra (LIFE moderator), Terri Morgan (LIFE moderator), Ryan Zarazua, and Ceazar Flores

use it. I can't help but think about people in the world who suffer for lack of water."

What we love

The African environmentalist Baba Dioum once said, "In the end, we will conserve only what we love.

We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught."

Teaching high schools students to love water — to regard it as precious, irreplaceable and essential for all

human beings — is one way to strengthen our bonds with this holy resource. "We need to build a relationship with water," says Poling. "It's a part of creation that we interact with every day. Every member of the human family, regardless of where he or she lives, needs water to live a healthy life. Water also is essential to our sacramental lives as Catholics. We need to wrap our spiritual imaginations around it and take steps now to conserve and use water wisely." ■

Conserve Water, Preserve the Planet

Five simple things you can do

Your water footprint consists of what you eat, what you buy and what you use. To reduce water consumption and improve the environment, here are a few tips:

- 1 **Audit your household.** There are several ways to reduce water usage at home. Taking shorter showers, turning off the faucet when brushing your teeth or washing veggies and washing fewer loads of laundry are good places to start.
- 2 **Buy reusable bottles.** It is estimated that 2 million plastic bottles are dumped into the environment every five minutes — and that's just in the United States. Look for a stainless steel water bottle or other types of reusable bottles.
- 3 **Hold the beef.** Did you know that it takes 500 gallons of water to make one hamburger patty? Growing beef requires lots of water, including growing



grain to feed cattle as well as water to process the beef. You don't need to give up beef entirely, but look for less water-intensive foods such as grains and vegetables as substitutes.

- 4 **Join a conservancy organization.** Most communities have local conservancy groups dedicated to improving the environment, including water usage. Become an active community member.

- 5 **Stay informed.** For videos, books and other resources that can help you or your Marianist community become better water advocates, go to <http://meec.udayton.edu/water.asp>

For more information about water conservation and environmental justice, visit the Marianist Environmental Education Center at <http://meec.udayton.edu>.





Faithful Friends

*Lay people and Marianists reflect
on the impact of their friendships,
animated by faith and an appreciation
of Marianist spirituality.*

BY JOHN SCHROEDER

Some friendships begin with instant rapport. Some appear during life's struggles and transitions. Others grow from sharing creative challenges. Lay people who collaborate with Marianist priests and brothers in schools, parishes and social ministries sometimes discover a true friend through these connections — a spiritual relationship that challenges, supports and deepens over the years. *ALIVE* magazine asked three lay people and their Marianist friends to reflect on the impact of their relationships — how each has been inspired or enriched by the other's presence — and the gifts they have received from these special bonds.

Mutual respect

Ann Mueller, administrative assistant, Office of Communications, Marianist Province of the United States, St. Louis

Marianist Father Joe Uvietta, chaplain for the Sisters of Mercy, Kirkwood, Mo.

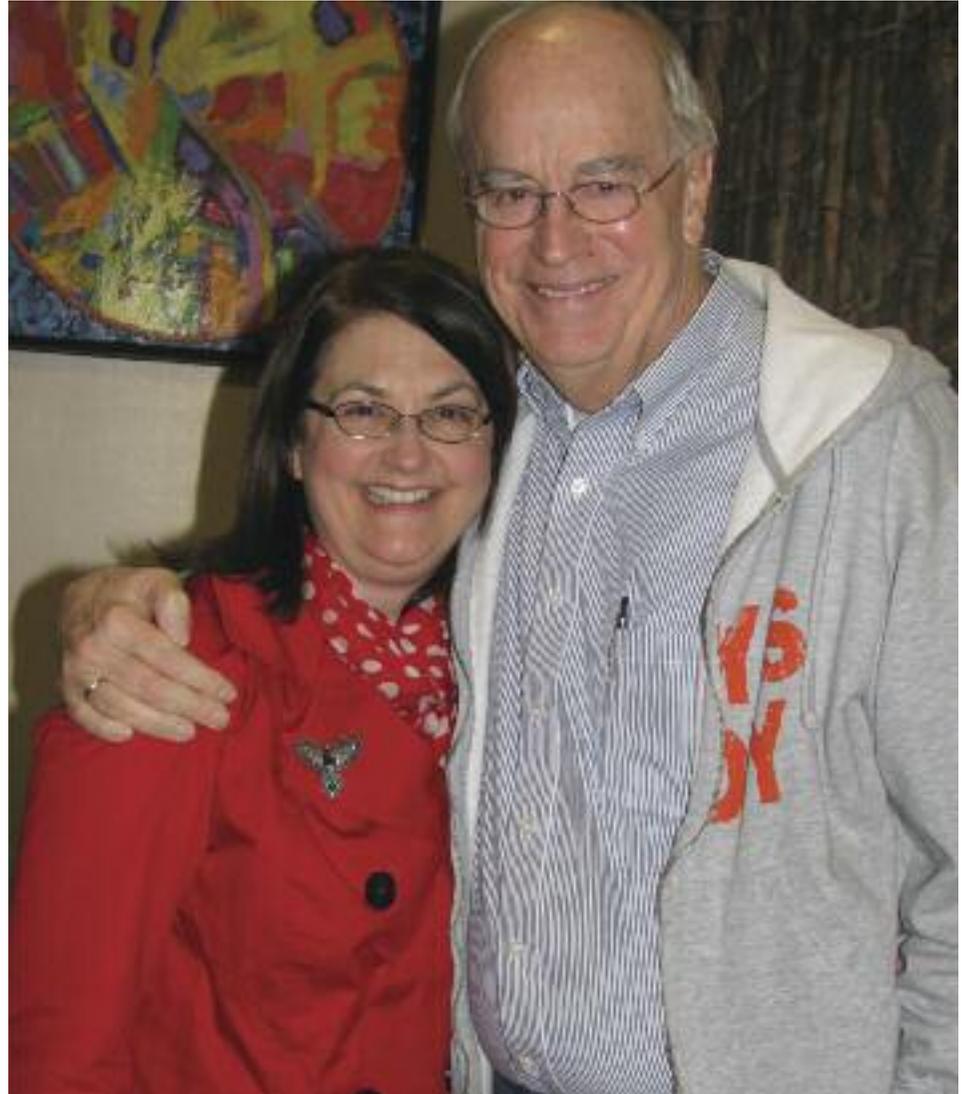
Ann: "I didn't know much about the Marianists when I was hired to work for them in 1988, but I soon learned what 'family spirit' meant to Father Joe Uvietta, the provincial at that time. It showed up in how he treated everyone, especially women. He felt we had incredible gifts to offer the Church and the world, and he was supportive in bringing out those gifts. Working with Father Joe and his provincial council I found a spirit of ministry — not hierarchy. No one was more important than anyone else in the office. He believed and lived that.

Father Joe: "I respect Ann so much. There was instant rapport between us. She's competent, of course, but she also gets along with everyone. To me, the ability to work together as a team was much more important than any kind of personal brilliance. Every person should feel, no matter what their title, that they are part of the Marianist Family. They should make others feel welcome, too. That's Ann. She relates well with others. No one's left out, and no concerns are omitted."

Ann: "Father Joe has never been my spiritual director or confessor, but in many ways his example — his way of 'doing church' and praying — is a more powerful way to be a spiritual mentor. I know he cares for me and my family, and he's always been willing to share our joys and enter into times of pain with us. He's a huge blessing in my life."

Left: Marianist Father Joe Uvietta and Ann Mueller

Father Joe: "I've always been interested in Ann and her family. I've found the same is true for her: She's interested in my family and friends, too. With us, it's understood: Everybody counts. Everybody is part of the mission."



Linda Hayes and Marianist Father Jim Heft

Standing the test of time

Linda Hayes, director, Marianist Mission, Dayton, Ohio
Marianist Father Jim Heft, Alton Brooks Professor of Religion, University of Southern California, Los Angeles

Linda: "I was acquainted with Father Jim Heft through family connections before I moved to Detroit in the 1990s. While I was in Michigan, I went to hear him speak at a University of Dayton alumni event. I couldn't tell you what he spoke about that night, but I do remember I sought him out for a conversation after his talk. I had a personal dilemma and wanted his advice. I remember our conversation well. I was impressed by his attentiveness. I felt he was really

listening and interested in my problem. His encouragement gave me the confidence to act. It reminded me of Mary's 'yes,' and that we are often asked to step out in faith in our lives, too — even if we don't know exactly what we're saying 'yes' to."

Father Jim: "It's easy to be helpful to people you like. With Linda, I ask: 'What's not to like?' She's bright and energetic. She cares deeply about people and understands that being part of a family is integral to Christian life. She has encouraged me in my ministry, too. Whenever a person offers an affirmation, something concrete, that points to a grace or a gift in another's life, you help that person considerably. That's the sort of encouragement Linda provides."

Linda: "Father Jim understands that there are ups and downs, joys and sorrows in life. It's all part of the process. You can't rush it. Nor do you get to a certain point in life when you say, 'That's it. I'm all done.' You have to be open to new challenges, at any age, even if you prefer to stay in your comfort zone."

Father Jim: "I greatly value a genuine friendship like the one I have with Linda. Lessons shared over a lifetime allow for a deeper relationship — and the fruit comes when those friendships remain through thick and thin. It doesn't matter if you haven't seen the person in six months. You know the friendship is solid — something you can always count on."

Learning from differences

Crystal Sullivan, director of campus ministry,
University of Dayton

Marianist Brother Tom Pieper, campus ministry
staff, University of Dayton

Brother Tom: "I first met Crystal Sullivan in 2004 when she interviewed for a position in campus ministry at the University of Dayton. I remember hoping she would take the job, which would make her my supervisor in the campus ministry department. Since then I've come to appreciate many qualities in her. She's a great servant leader whose faith engenders a true sense of humility. She's also a good listener and a woman of courage — willing to speak out about what she feels is important."

Crystal: "I remember being a little apprehensive about my new job because I didn't know the Marianists and I had never supervised a religious. But Brother Tom



Marianist Brother Tom Pieper and Crystal Sullivan

trusted me immediately and that made it easy to work together. He has an endless amount of energy. He is amazingly positive, even in the midst of challenges. I think challenges excite him. They bring out the best in him because he's always thinking, 'How can we make this better?' He's willing to take risks, even if he has questions about the path forward."

Brother Tom: "I've noticed how different our personalities are. I'm a relational, subjective kind of person and Crystal tends to come at things with an objective, analytical view. That's helpful to me. She offers ideas that encourage me to step out of my habitual ways and see that there are many approaches to ministry. We need all of them. She brings a different vision to our ministry."

Crystal: "Brother Tom has the voice of a prophet, but his spirituality is grounded and practical. His main focus is building community. He drinks that water. It's real to him. So watching how he cultivates community — and being on the receiving end as someone he has welcomed into his community — has been an important witness. He is a great model of the Marianist spirit, encouraging my personal growth and showing me how to be more present to others." ■

John Schroeder is a freelance writer from St. Louis.

TIPPING THE SCALES

Toward Justice

Marianist Brother Frank O'Donnell draws on his legal training to effect lasting change for Baltimore's disadvantaged.

BY JOHN SCHROEDER

Having worked in Baltimore since 1963, Marianist Brother Frank O'Donnell knows a lot about what makes the city tick. For the past 20 years, he has been using that knowledge, along with his training as a lawyer, to tip the scales toward justice for the area's poor and disadvantaged — including recent groundbreaking legislation to promote inclusionary housing requirements.

Brother Frank's immersion in social issues began in the 1970s when he served as director for the Marianist Sharing Fund of the former New York Province. "That's when I began to see how the legal community influences housing issues," he recalls, noting that you tend "to get justice if you have a good lawyer."

With the blessing of the Province, he went to law school in the early 1990s and after passing the bar exam, helped to develop Baltimore's Tenant Advocacy Project (TAP). Its primary function: to provide immediate representation for low-income residents in property disputes. TAP's biggest challenge was staffing. "We created a network of 75 volunteers — including retired attorneys and law students — so we could provide adequate counsel," he says.

With the TAP network solidly established by the mid-1990s, Brother Frank went to work at the Community Law Center, a law firm focused on programs to improve infrastructure and services in specific neighborhoods.

"These programs and ministries seemed more Marianist because our religious order focuses on systems rather than direct services," he says, noting that justice has always been an integral part of his work. "I believe that's what the Gospel calls us to do."

Brother Frank's advocacy efforts have taken him to the state capitol, where he has served as a legislative aide and later as staff attorney for two cabinet-level agencies involved in social issues. But this work hasn't diminished his interest in local housing concerns. As a board member for the P. Francis Murphy Justice and Peace Initiative (a collaborative sponsored by 14 Catholic religious communities,



"You usually don't get what you want on the first try. But with the Murphy Initiative, backed by the religious communities, we can take the long view and find a way to make it work. That's what we are called to do."

- Marianist Brother Frank O'Donnell

Marianist Brother Frank O'Donnell points to a new housing project in Baltimore that includes housing for low- and middle-income families.

including the Marianists), he played a role in the organization's efforts to write and pass Baltimore's 2007 Inclusionary Housing Act.

One of the first laws of its kind in the country, the act requires developers of publicly subsidized projects of more than 30 units to set aside a percentage of homes for low- and middle-income families. While political wrangling has since diminished the legislation's impact, Brother Frank has been working in these circles long enough to know that progress often comes slowly.

"You usually don't get what you want on the first try," he says. "But with the Murphy Initiative, backed by the religious communities, we can take the long view and find a way to make it work. It's what we are called to do." ■

John Schroeder is a freelance writer from St. Louis.



Students from the diversity team at Chaminade College Preparatory, West Hills, Calif.

Where **EVERYONE** is Welcome

A Marianist high school in Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley uses an innovative diversity program to help students appreciate their differences.

BY JOHN GILMORE

Early in his sophomore year at Chaminade College Preparatory, a Marianist high school near Los Angeles, Cameron Nasatir ducked into the restroom between classes. As he walked in, two students shoved him from behind, knocking him off balance into the urinal. Nasatir knew instinctively this was an act of aggression, not a silly stunt.

The 15-year-old confided in a teacher, who took him to the dean and then to Franciscan Brother Tom Fahy, the principal. When Brother Fahy brought in the two students to apologize, Nasatir asked them a simple question: “Why?”

“They thought it would be funny,” says Nasatir. “I asked how they would feel if someone did that to them and they said: ‘bad.’”

Nasatir’s questions turned the episode into a teachable moment. “I felt like I made a small difference by helping them understand the harm bullying can cause people.”

Empowered by the experience, Nasatir joined 45 students on Chaminade’s diversity team to see how he could help make a difference.

Adapting to diversity

Chaminade launched a diversity training program in 2007 when the school was attracting an increasingly diverse student body. Its leaders recognized they needed to adapt their approaches to educating and ministering to a changing population.

“We wanted to be proactive — to help our students feel safe, like part of a family,” says Julie LaBelle, Chaminade’s director of student activities and co-director of the diversity program. “We are now building the program at our middle school so we can offer a continuous seven-year experience.”

Chaminade’s diversity program is rooted in the Marianist approach to hospitality. But being hospitable means more than serving cookies and punch on the first day of school.

“It means making everyone feel welcome,” says Kristina Ortega, Chaminade’s director of campus ministry and co-director of the diversity program. “Our students need to know their voices are heard and their backgrounds are honored. Instead of changing people, we give them freedom to be themselves and meet them where they are.”

To create this supportive atmosphere, Chaminade’s diversity program includes an all-school Diversity Week every November, as well as a Justice Week, a Cultural Week, “mix-it-up lunches” and a series of other activities throughout the year. For freshmen, the school provides Diversity Days with separate

programs for boys and girls. For the upper grades, there is an annual weeklong capstone event led by outside speakers.

The first year, Phil Boyte, an internationally acclaimed speaker, leads a workshop called “Breaking Down the Walls” that teaches students how to talk with others from different peer groups. The next year, communications expert Calvin Terrell challenges students to confront prejudice, hate speech and violence through his “Warriors of Faith in Action” program.

Bringing in strong outside voices has a powerful impact. “Otherwise we begin to sound like Charlie Brown’s teacher droning on to the kids,” says Ortega. “They may not remember my lessons but they will remember these programs, which make them better people for the rest of their lives.”

Developing compassion and respect

“Human beings are connected to each other by their capacity for compassion,” says Logan Scott, a recent graduate who led Chaminade’s football team as quarterback and served as student leader of the diversity team for two years.

“Taking part in Calvin Terrell’s exercises helped many of us access that compassion.”

Scott just completed his first semester at Yale University, where he is continuing his football career and interacting with students and faculty members from cultures across the world. “I try to treat everyone with the compassion and respect that I took away from the workshop with Calvin and our diversity program at Chaminade,” he says.

By labeling this a “diversity program,” Chaminade accepted a certain amount of risk. Some could interpret the name itself as an admission that the school had a problem. Others believe that highlighting diversity further segregates students. Chaminade’s program appears to be proving those perceptions false.

“Respect for each individual and acknowledging our differences make us a richer, better community,” says Ortega. “I wish all high schools could have a program like this.”

Now a 17-year-old senior, Nasatir is in his second year on Chaminade’s diversity team. Though he hasn’t decided on a college, he knows one thing: “I will either be part of the diversity team or I will help start one.” ■

John Gilmore is a freelance writer from St. Louis.



Kristina Ortega, Cameron Nasatir and Julie LaBelle; Ortega and LaBelle co-direct the diversity program.

THE VIEW FROM HERE



A HOLY LONGING

*Marianist Brother Bob Jones shares insights
from his life on the path to priesthood.*

BY JAN D. DIXON

Marianist Brother Bob Jones' morning walk to school each day takes him past the ancient Roman Colosseum, a site that always surprises him. "It's still hard to believe I live in Rome," says the 36-year old Marianist who began theological studies last fall.

"If you asked me five years ago what I'd be doing today, I would never have imagined I'd be here studying for the priesthood," he says.

But in hindsight, his vocational pathway appeared naturally. "It evolved," he says, accompanied by a lot of prayer and the support of many people. "Much of my upbringing revolved around our parish, the Catholic school and holidays that had a strong religious underpinning," he says. "But as a kid, I never thought about becoming a priest."

He wanted to be an engineer.

A holy longing

While in high school in Fort Wayne, Ind., Brother Bob began looking for a good engineering program. That search led him to the University of Dayton and his first encounter with the Marianists. By his sophomore year at UD, he switched his major to math and education and began participating in campus ministry activities. "But I was mostly interested in my social life and studies. I graduated and left Dayton, never thinking about a religious vocation," he says.

He moved to Indianapolis in 1998 where he taught high school math, bought a house, became active in a local parish and was "living a good life," he says. "I was happy, but there was something tugging at me. I wanted to live my faith more intentionally. I wanted something different."

By age 26, Brother Bob began thinking seriously about religious life. "I visited some of the Marianist communities in Dayton, and it seemed like this was a good fit for me," he recalls. "I could see myself enjoying it, and it scared me a little."

Looking back, Brother Bob can see that a lot of seeds were planted during his time at UD. "I didn't realize it then, but now I see that I was drawn to the Marianists because of their community life and focus on education."

In 2004, Brother Bob entered the Marianist aspirancy program — a one-year commitment and a chance to try out community life. "I was lukewarm about entering the program," he admits. "I thought I would finish the year and decide it wasn't for me."

But something happened that year that filled a void in him. "Living in a community that centered on prayer — we start and end our days with prayer — and approaching my work as ministry, not just teaching math, was what I had been looking for."

The road to Rome

Brother Bob soon found himself at the Marianist novitiate, completing a two-year program and professing first vows in 2007. He continued to teach and serve in campus ministry at Marianist high schools in Texas and Ohio, and by 2010 was ready to profess perpetual vows.

During this time, "a couple of Marianists approached me and asked if I would consider becoming a priest," he recalls. "That's when my discernment for the priesthood began. It's how the Marianists call someone to the priesthood — relying on the person's discernment and the community's input before an official request for clerical studies can be affirmed."

That request was approved, and in June 2012 Brother Bob headed to Verona, Italy, to complete a crash course in Italian.

"It was enough to give me a fighting chance," he laughs, explaining that even though his courses are in English, the seminary community conducts its prayers and conversations in Italian.

"It's exciting, challenging and still overwhelming, but I wouldn't trade it for anything," he says of his first months in Rome. "It hasn't always been easy, but I think God puts pathways before us and our job is to be open, to take some risks and trust that no matter what happens, God is leading us in the right direction." ■

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Vocation ministry is crucial to the Marianists' mission of bringing Jesus into the world by following the example of Mary. One thing you can do to assist this vital ministry is provide financial support. There are monthly giving clubs and other options to choose from. To send a donation now, please use the enclosed envelope or go to www.marianist.com/support. For more information, contact Colleen Kammer at 937.222.4641, ext. 244, or email colleen.kammer@marianistmission.org.

Transcending Generational Differences

A program at St. Mary's University provides life-enriching opportunities for students and the brothers and priests they befriend.

BY MICHAEL BITTNER

Yesenia Guzman, a senior at Marianist-sponsored St. Mary's University in San Antonio, was born in the age of the Internet, text messaging, mobile phones, MP3 players and instant messaging. Her generation has been dubbed the "digital natives" for their ease in navigating the world of technology.

Marianist Brother Leo Willett, 87, who came of age during WWII, doesn't own a computer, never sent a text message, listened to a podcast or opened a Facebook account.

Despite their generational differences, Yesenia and Brother Leo discovered something in common: They both love math. Brother Leo spent his entire Marianist life teaching mathematics and working as an administrator in Marianist high schools. Yesenia is about to embark on a similar career.

"Finding common ground is the most important thing in cultivating intergenerational friendships," says Tom McBride, a communications researcher who has studied these relationships. Common interests — careers, hobbies, religious beliefs and other shared interests — form the basis on which intergenerational relationships can blossom into rich, satisfying connections.

Yesenia and Brother Leo met through a program called "Marianist Friends" sponsored by St. Mary's and the Marianist Residence on campus, where

brothers and priests live after they retire from active ministry. The purpose of the program, which began more than a decade ago, is to provide opportunities for students to meet Marianists and experience a friendship with someone from a different generation. "There are benefits for everyone involved," says

Joanne Sanchez, manager of operations at the Residence and director of the Marianist Friends.

About 20 students are involved in the program this year and visit the brothers on a weekly basis. "Some of the students receive class credit, but many participate because they enjoy the program and find it enriching," says Sanchez.

A steady presence

Lindsey Turse, a junior at St. Mary's, is a long way from her home in New Jersey. As someone who grew up around Marianists, she says Brother

Jim McCaffrey, 90, is someone she can count on — her family away from home.

The brothers and priests in the Friends program offer students a sense of familial connection in an age that is marked by fragmentation in families, media, communication and other realms of life.

"It's rewarding to have a relationship and bond with Brother Jim," Lindsey says. "If I get homesick, I can visit him." She and Brother Jim sit outside and



Joanne Sanchez



Marianist Brother Leo Willett with Yesenia Guzman, a participant in the Marianist Friends program

talk at least once a week. “It’s meditative for me,” Lindsey says.

Yesenia has met regularly with Brother Leo for the past four years. He served as her confirmation sponsor. “Brother Leo is my rock in San Antonio since I don’t have family here,” Yesenia says. “He always knows the right thing to say at the right time, even if I haven’t told him what’s going on in my life.”

Learning from each other

Six students visit Brother Leo, and he likes to keep in touch with students after they graduate. Although he

and the students are at different places in life, he believes the purpose of living is to touch other people for good. “The lives Yesenia touches, I will be touching. My purpose in life is helped by doing this.”

Sophomore Ryan Munoz enjoys having philosophical conversations with Brother Leo. “He has so much wisdom,” Ryan says. “He wants to live on through me and I want to fulfill that wish.”

“There is a beautiful reciprocity in these relationships,” says author Irene S. Levine, who writes about intergenerational friendships. “Friendships with older folks help us see our own future and

learn ways to enjoy the years that lie ahead. Young people tend to have more energy and a sense of adventure. Each friend can offer the other something different based on their station in life.”

Lindsey Turse was nervous about studying abroad in Spain because of the language barrier, but Brother Jim encouraged her to follow her dreams.

“Brother Jim was a world traveler and he encouraged me to go to Spain,” Lindsey says. “I was scared to go but he gave me the confidence that I could do it.”

“There is a beautiful reciprocity in these relationships. Friendships with older folks help us see our own future and learn ways to enjoy the years that lie ahead. Young people tend to have more energy and a sense of adventure. Each friend can offer the other something different based on their station in life.”

— Irene S. Levine

Brother Jim now is helping Lindsey discern an opportunity with the Peace Corps.

Many students say they feel more connected to the Marianist Family because of the program. “Before getting involved, I didn’t know what ‘Marianist’ meant. Coming here changed that,” says senior Kathleen Benavides, who meets regularly with Marianist Brother John Totten.

Unconditional acceptance

One of the most valuable benefits of the Marianist Friends program is that it offers the students a pressure-free environment. “The students aren’t worried about us being as critical as their parents or professors,” says Marianist Brother John Rohe, 82. “They’re able to talk to us in a way they can’t with others.”

For college students, having an older friend listen closely helps them feel heard and respected. Most brothers say the Marianist Friends program allows them to keep in touch with a group two generations younger and helps them stay connected to worlds outside their own. For example, Brother Rohe says one of his friends took

him to get coffee in the university library — a place he normally doesn’t visit.

Brother Rohe says he is awestruck that so many busy students take time to meet with the brothers. “We must be doing something right, because the students keep coming back,” he says.

Students struggle to find time when they begin the program, says Sanchez. “But once they meet their friend and realize how much they enjoy it, they make time for it.”

At 99 years old, Brother Totten knows what’s important in life. He says the name “Marianist Friends” is fitting for the program.

“The name we give this program reflects my philosophy of life,” Brother Totten says. “Friendship is fundamental to human life. Life has no enrichment without friendship. With it, life is worth living.” ■

Michael Bittner is a freelance writer living in Chicago.



Marianist Brother John Totten and Kathleen Benavides

Friends in faith

College students are in the process of forming their adult beliefs and values. Having a relationship with a brother or priest from the Friends program, someone who has been formed in Marianist spirituality, helps students explore the spiritual dimension of their lives.

Visiting Brother Leo allows Yesenia to stay grounded in her faith. “When I come to the Residence, I’m reminded what life is about. I’m re-grounded.” Yesenia says the most important thing she’s learned from Brother Leo is not to judge others. “It’s one of the things I’m working on,” she says.

“One of the things I enjoy is when Brother Leo talks about equality within the Marianist Family,” Yesenia says. “Brothers, priests, sisters and Lay Marianists are equals. It makes me feel part of the family.”

A MAN WITH A MISSION

Dr. Frank Bellomo, a big-hearted Italian immigrant, found in the Marianists perfect collaborators for helping some of the world's poorest people.

BY JAN D. DIXON

There are lots of things Dr. Frank Bellomo could have done with his life's savings. But after witnessing the suffering of poor families near his home in Bari, Italy, as a 10-year-old boy, he vowed someday he would do something to help people out of poverty.

Dr. Bellomo immigrated with his parents to the United States in 1930 where he studied medicine, but the call to work on behalf of the poor never left him.

"I recall discussing with my wife, Mary, that upon completing my professional training as a doctor of medicine, I would consider doing medical volunteering in the impoverished town of Eboli, Italy," he wrote in a reflection about his life.

But God had another plan. After serving in the Navy during World War II, Dr. Bellomo received a degree in biology from Loyola College in Baltimore and a medical degree from the University of Maryland and began private practice in Caldwell, N.J. Later, he studied psychiatry and worked as the chief of psychiatry at the Veterans' Medical Center in Lyon, N.J. Still, the dream of working on behalf of the poor persisted.

As his wealth accumulated, Dr. Bellomo, a devout Catholic, began reaching out to Catholic organizations with gifts of money. One day he placed a call to the Marianist Mission in Dayton, Ohio, after receiving one of its Mass cards. He explained that he wanted to give a

major gift to the Marianists to be used for the poor. Little did anyone anticipate the impact of that phone call.

A shared mission

Marianist Father David Paul, director of development for ministries in developing countries, whose primary work is fundraising for Marianist work among the poor, was the first to call on Dr. Bellomo.

"He was the utmost gentleman — always pleasant, humble and incredibly thoughtful," recalls Father David, who struck up a decade-long friendship with Dr. Bellomo. The two found common ground in their love for the poor and their Catholic sense of social responsibility. "I found myself visiting him several times a year and got to know his life story. He became like a second father to me. When he had to move to a care facility two years ago, I flew to New Jersey almost every month to spend a few days with him."

Dr. Bellomo was a big-hearted man. During his life, "he made a lot of major gifts to the Marianists and other religious orders, as well as the diocese of his local parish," says Father David.

Dr. Bellomo died at 92 on Aug. 25, 2012, joining his wife, Mary, who passed away in 1993. Shortly before his death, the Marianists learned that he had given his entire estate to the Marianists. "He always wanted to work with the poor," says Father David. "This was his way of fulfilling a lifelong dream.

"I am still in awe of him — of how he lived his life and how he opened himself to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit," says Father David. "I feel privileged to have known such a sweet, generous soul." ■



Dr. Frank Bellomo and his wife, Mary, in the 1980s



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SLICE *of Life*

Father Raymundo Domínguez González Celebrates Ordination

Father Raymundo Domínguez González was ordained by Bishop Faustino Armenáriz Jiménez at the San Francisco Galileo parish church in Corregidora, Querétaro, Mexico. His ordination was the first for the Province in the District of Mexico. Provincial Marty Solma and Brothers Ed Brink and Francisco González represented the Provincial Administration. Father Raymundo celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving on Jan. 27 in the Chapel of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Amanecer Balvanera, where he will continue to serve.

Father Raymundo Domínguez González receives the blessing from Bishop Faustino Armenáriz Jiménez at the ordination ceremony.



Father Bill Meyer, Provincial Marty Solma, Brother Tom Farnsworth, Brother Joe Kamis and Father Paul Marshall

Brother Tom Farnsworth Professes Perpetual Vows

Brother Thomas O'Neill Farnsworth professed perpetual vows in the Society of Mary at the Immaculate Conception Chapel at the University of Dayton in October. Provincial Marty Solma presided at the Eucharist and gave the homily. Father Bill Meyer concelebrated. Brother Tom holds a doctorate in clinical psychology. For the past five years he has ministered at the University of Dayton in counseling, community wellness, Greek life, leadership and sexual violence prevention. He is a full-time lecturer in UD's Department of Psychology.

For more Marianist news, visit www.marianist.com/familyonline.

Two Brothers from India Ordained to Diaconate

In January, Brothers Chinnaiah Polishetti and Chittibabu Gunja from the District of India were ordained to the diaconate at Holy Name of Mary parish church in Rome. Presiding at the ordination was His Excellency Luis Francisco Ladaria Ferrer, secretary of the congregation for the doctrine of the faith. The new deacons will complete their seminary studies in June and return to India for pastoral assignments.



Brother Bob Jones, Deacons Chinnaiah Polishetti and Chittibabu Gunja, and Father Marty Solma

In Remembrance

For the complete obituaries of these Marianists, or to honor a Marianist with a donation, visit www.marianist.com/obits.



Brother William Callahan, SM

Brother William Callahan, SM, 92, died Oct. 31, 2012, in Dayton, Ohio. Brother Bill began his career with the Marianists as a math teacher at Marianist schools in New York, Ohio and Michigan. In 1956, he earned his master's degree in mathematics from Catholic University of America. Always interested in international assignments, he taught math at Marianist schools in Nigeria and Australia. His last full-time assignment was teaching math at St. Laurence College, a Marianist-sponsored school in Dublin.

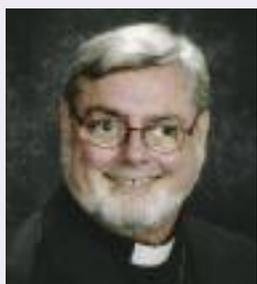
Brother William Callahan, SM, 92, died Oct. 31, 2012, in Dayton, Ohio. Brother Bill began his career with the Marianists as a math teacher at Marianist schools in New York, Ohio



Father Francis Kenney, SM

Father Francis Kenney, SM, 90, died Sept. 25, 2012, in Dayton, Ohio. Father Frank began his career as a Catholic educator teaching at a Marianist high school in New York before attending the seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland. Ordained in 1950, Father Frank worked for several years as a chaplain at Marianist high schools in Ohio and served for a short while as novitiate director for the former St. Louis Province. Father Frank worked for the next seven years at St. Joseph High School in Cleveland and in 1968 began a 15-year stint working in the student life department at the University of Dayton. Before retiring from full-time ministry in 1999, he served for 14 years as a parish priest at Emmanuel Parish in Dayton.

Father Francis Kenney, SM, 90, died Sept. 25, 2012, in Dayton, Ohio. Father Frank began his career as a Catholic educator teaching at a Marianist high school in New York before attending the



Father Michael Lisbeth, SM

Father Michael Lisbeth, SM, 64, died Dec. 25, 2012, in Dayton, Ohio. Father Mike began his career as a Marianist in 1973 teaching religion at a Marianist school in Cleveland. Shortly after, he

entered the seminary and was ordained in 1980. Father Mike continued to pursue his education, earning master's degrees in divinity and in spirituality. In 1999, he completed a third master's degree in social work. For most of the 1980s, Father Mike taught religion and served in pastoral ministry at a Marianist school in Dayton. During this time he also worked as assistant director of the novitiate program in Dayton. In 1993, Father Mike accepted an assignment as rector at the Marianist seminary in Toronto. He returned to Ohio a year later and began working as a therapist, counselor, case manager and family development worker in Cincinnati. In 2004, Father Mike moved to Cleveland to run the Marianist aspirancy program while serving as part-time chaplain at a Marianist school. His last full-time assignment began in mid-2007 when he served as director of novices at the Marianist novitiate.



Father William O'Connell, SM

Father William O'Connell, SM, 85, died Oct. 1, 2012, in Cupertino, Calif. Father Bill taught at Marianist high schools in San Francisco and Alameda, Calif., before completing seminary studies in Fribourg, Switzerland. He was ordained in 1956 and for nine years served as teacher, chaplain and counselor at Marianist high schools throughout California. In 1966, Father Bill accepted a position at Saint Louis School, a Marianist school in Honolulu, where he served as chaplain and guidance counselor and eventually became principal of the school. In 1982, Father Bill began parish work as pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Maui. He returned to California in 1985 and served as principal of a Marianist school in San Francisco. In 1993, he accepted the position as chaplain for the Newman Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He retired from full-time ministry in 2005.

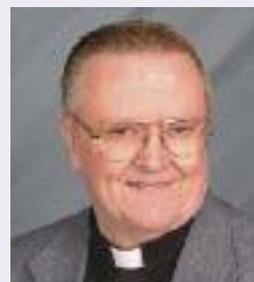
Father William O'Connell, SM, 85, died Oct. 1, 2012, in Cupertino, Calif. Father Bill taught at Marianist high schools in San Francisco and Alameda, Calif., before completing seminary studies in Fribourg,

Father David Schuyler, SM, 79, died Nov. 19, 2012, in Cupertino, Calif. Father Dave taught at two Marianist schools in California before attending the seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland. He was ordained in 1960. After completing an advanced degree in sacred theology, he moved to Rome to complete a degree in canon law. Following his studies,



Father David Schuyler, SM

he taught theology and served as an administrator for two years at Chaminade University in Honolulu. In 1967, he was named assistant chancellor and later chancellor of the university and official of the Marriage Tribunal of the Diocese of Honolulu. In the early 1970s, Father Dave also served as an administrator and chaplain at the Marianist scholasticate. In 1974, he was named assistant for religious life for the former Province of the Pacific while also serving as vice president and later president of Chaminade University. In the early 1980s, he returned to California and served two years with the Diocese of San Jose on the Diocesan Tribunal. He also worked in provincial administration for the Marianists starting in 1985, but four years later was named judicial vicar and co-vicar for religious for the Diocese of San Jose. Before retiring from full-time ministry, Father Dave served as adjunct judicial vicar for the Diocese of Monterey.



Father Eugene Sweeney, SM

Father Eugene Sweeney, SM, 79, died Oct. 27, 2012, in San Antonio. Father Gene spent the first 20 years of his career teaching at Marianist high schools in Texas. During this time he earned a master's degree in English. In 1975, Father Gene began studies at the Marianist seminary in Toronto. He was ordained in 1978. After teaching at a Marianist high school in Wisconsin for one year, Father Gene served in retreat ministry at the Marianist Retreat and Conference Center near St. Louis. In 1982, Father Gene accepted an assignment as campus minister at a Marianist school in Nebraska. Two years later, he was called to serve as campus minister at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, a position he held for 10 years. From 1994 to 2004, he worked as a parish priest at St. Mark's Parish in Denton, Texas. His last full-time assignment began in 2005 when he returned to retreat ministry at the Marianist Retreat and Conference Center.

A Handful of Rice

BY BRIAN REAVEY

A Provincial staff member reflects on his experiences after a trip to visit Marianist ministries in India.

Mother Teresa once said, “Live simply so others may simply live.” I first heard that saying as a student at the University of Dayton. It resonated with me then, but never so powerfully as it did in January when I took a trip to India on behalf of the Marianists. Most of the people I met in India live a simple existence. They have meager homes, almost no income and barely enough to eat. But still they find ways to give from their small pockets and big hearts.

One example of their generosity occurred during the middle of Sunday Mass. A large burlap bag was brought to the altar during the offertory, along with a plate of money — rupees that had been collected as the plate was passed to the congregation. After Mass I asked Marianist Father Marianus Lukan about the contents of the bag. He explained that the women in the villages surrounding the parish take a handful of rice before preparing their family’s meal each day and put it in a separate container for their weekly offering. Every Sunday morning, the women combine their weekly rice containers into one bag and present it as their offering. The rice is used for parish events or sold to benefit the people of the parish.

A handful of rice doesn’t amount to much, but when multiplied by seven days a week and many rural households, the

women’s sacrificial giving goes a long way. This gesture touched and inspired me. Not only did I witness impoverished people sacrificing the little they had, they also reminded me that it takes only a small handful to make a big difference.

The gesture calls to mind the actions of Jesus. He used his hands for many things, including miracles. Jesus used a handful of water for cleansing, a handful of mud for healing, a handful of food for giving, and lastly, hands full of nails for the ultimate sacrifice on Good Friday. We all know Good Friday wasn’t “good” until Easter Sunday when Jesus overcame the handful of nails and left us with hearts filled with gratitude, hope and love. We are called to be Easter People in the name and remembrance of Christ’s resurrection.

I met many Easter People in India, especially the Marianist brothers and priests who serve the poor. Watching them work, I realized that their daily handful of rice involves a willingness to live simply. Their offering to the poor is measured by daily acts of unconditional love, patience and perseverance.

Since returning from India, I have thought many times about my handful of rice — my commitments and how I live and whom I serve. I invite you to discern your daily, weekly or monthly commitments. What is your handful of rice? What do you offer out of love? Whom does your handful serve? ■

Brian Reavey works for the Marianist Province of the United States as assistant for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. To learn more about Marianist ministries in India and how you can support them, go to www.marianist.com/India



Brian Reavey with children from a Marianist REDS center in India

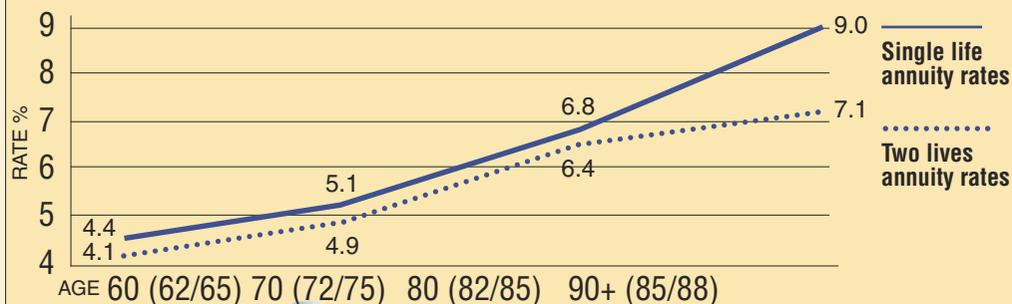
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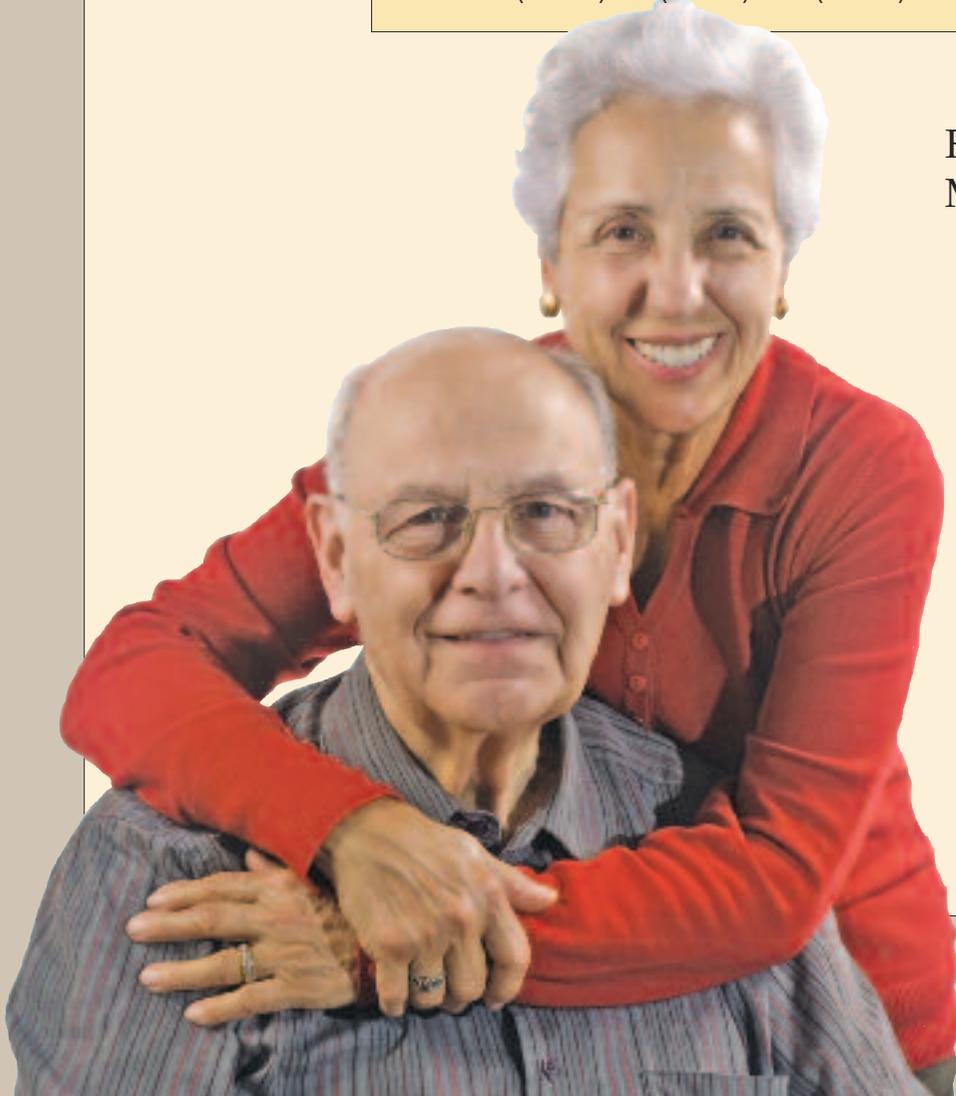


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