

BRO. LAWRENCE MCBRIDE

Celebrating 50 years of profession

There has been in my life a gradual transition from being work-oriented to people-oriented. It took me quite a while before I was converted! I found myself growing a lot while I was in East St. Louis, Ill., at Vincent Gray Alternative High School. I had the opportunity to work with Bro. John Laudенbach, S.M., and Sr. Carolyn Sur, SSND, as we founded the school and let our students educate us about how to educate them. Some of the staff there, Sr. Jean Weyer, SSND, and Sr. Carol Lehmkuhl, O.P., and Mrs. Dolores Jorns, especially, helped me to grow and learn generosity, and “forget” myself.

When I went to Mexico, it was my “third” culture—after my own and after the Afro-American culture. Without a doubt, being there with the wonderful Brothers and people of Mexico did most to help me to grow and love, instead of just working. Friendships were formed which will last forever!

And now I am in India—my fourth cultural experience. Again, I find myself, yes, working as a teacher, but being more of what is called a mentor both to the wonderful Indian Marianist Brothers here and also to the students. Changing cultures is not easy, but, in my case I think, necessary in order to wake me up.

The Marianist vocation is “missionary” by nature. Blessed Chaminade said, “You are all missionaries.” However, in my case being a “missionary” means letting myself be “missioned to” by the people I am with. Who knows how much I have been able to “give” during these past years? But what I have received from my Brothers and friends, students and acquaintances, at Chaminade, Vincent Gray, the Mexican District, and now in the Indian District, is much, much more that I have given over the years. And I think that is how Jesus and Mary work in me. Gambles and sacrifices are, in my experience, always rewarded with growth in love, in faith, and in hope.

I cannot imagine a more wonderful life! Marianist life is so rich and interesting and I have been privileged to live it in four cultures—a not-too-common occurrence, but one I appreciate profoundly. Mary’s mission is, if it is anything, relational. It is helping to make Jesus present in myself and in others through my relationships with them. It is a mystery which continues to grow in me and there is quite a bit of growth still to let happen!