

MARIANIST CULTURE, FAITH AND COMMUNITY

# ALIVE

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*Betty Ventura's passion for baking yields an abundance of riches, page 4.*

# A MESSAGE

*from the Provincial*

Dear Friends,

I used to think that losing a child was one of the worst tragedies a person could experience. In my priestly ministry, I have been with many parents who have lost children. It is devastating and painful beyond words. But about 10 years ago, I learned there is an

equally painful loss — that of a parent.

Michael Githae was in the fourth grade when his mother died. He attended Our Lady of Nazareth Primary School in Nairobi, Kenya, a Marianist ministry. Living in the slum where family support is often weak, Michael's grief led him to the streets of the city, where he lived for the next two years. During that time, he was "educated" far beyond what a 10-year-old should be. It is difficult enough when an adult loses a parent. How can a child possibly manage, especially when he is alone?

One of the remarkable developments in a number of our Marianist schools is the emergence of support groups for students who have lost parents, siblings or friends.

Surrounded by a faith community, which our Marianist schools provide, a young person can express the anger and regret, the fear and emptiness that can be sparked by the death of a loved one, especially a parent or sibling. In this issue of *ALIVE* you'll read about one such program at Archbishop Moeller High School in Cincinnati.

Knowing that people of faith support you places that loss within the wider horizon of God's love and our

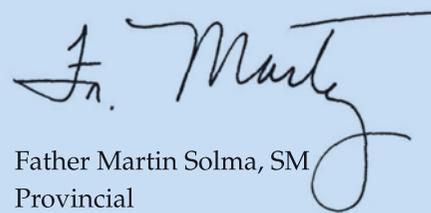
Christian belief in the Resurrection. What a gift for a young person to learn how to live through life's challenges and transitions, surrounded by faith and care!

Such care is characteristic of a Marianist education and why our annual "Teaching as Ministry" formation program for educators in Marianist schools is important and so popular. You'll read about this fine program, as well. Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, our founder, taught that "the essential is the interior" and encouraged vowed religious and the laity to engage in formation that touches the heart, inspiring people to become an expression of God's love in the world.

It's this love that led a school counselor at Our Lady of Nazareth to find Michael on the streets and get him back into school. He graduated from primary school and won a scholarship to high school, thanks to a kind sponsor in Dayton, Ohio. I heard from him not long ago. He wanted to tell me that he had just graduated from the Sisters of Mercy Nursing School in Nairobi — the gift of a Marianist education and the wonders of God's grace!

This issue of *ALIVE* comes to you with our deepest gratitude and a promise of daily remembrance in our prayers.

Yours in Christ,



Father Martin Solma, SM  
Provincial



Father Martin Solma, SM

**Father Martin Solma, SM**  
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Betty Ventura and students from St. Anthony Jr.-Sr. High School, a Marianist school in Maui, whip up a batch of "Aunt Betty's Sweet Bread," page 4.

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**The Society of Mary** (Marianists) is an international Roman Catholic religious congregation of priests and brothers. More than 300 serve in the Province of the United States, which includes India, Ireland, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. In the United States, they sponsor three universities: University of Dayton in Ohio, St. Mary's University in San Antonio and Chaminade University of 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.

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*Betty Ventura has raised \$250,000 for scholarships from the sale of her famous Portuguese sweet bread.*



# Sweet Bread

## OF LIFE

*Through sales of her bread, Betty Ventura has helped hundreds of students receive a Marianist education.*

BY AMY GEORGE RUSH

Betty Ventura, a native of Maui, a Hawaiian island, is deeply grateful for her recent birthday. “I am thankful that God has given me 80 years of life on this beautiful planet,” she says.

There are many families on the island who are equally grateful for her life — and her bread.

For more than 13 years, Betty has dedicated every Tuesday to baking loaves of Portuguese sweet bread.

Sales of the bread exclusively benefit a scholarship fund at St. Anthony Junior-Senior High School, a Marianist-sponsored school in Wailuku, Maui, to the tune of \$250,000 and counting.

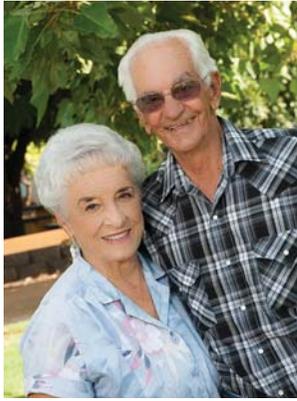
At \$6 per loaf, simple math reveals that Betty has baked and sold more than 42,000 loaves over the years — and that’s a conservative estimate.

“People think I have done something out of the ordinary — but it is not,” Betty says.

ALL PHOTOS: STEVE BRINKMAN



*Before removing the dough from the mixer, Betty stops to say a prayer and blesses the mixture.*



Betty and Arthur Ventura

## A living legacy

Betty was born in a small sugar plantation town nestled in Maui's mountains. She proudly claims pure Portuguese heritage, explaining that her ancestors hail from the Azores. She is one of seven children — a number that overwhelmed her birth parents. As a result, she spent several months in a children's group home until her aunt and uncle took her into their family.

Betty's aunt and uncle could afford Catholic education, so they enrolled her in St. Anthony High School, an all-girls school that was a precursor to today's St. Anthony Jr.-Sr. High School.

After graduating from St. Anthony in 1951, she met and married her husband, Arthur, now 86. They've been married for more than 61 years. The couple enrolled their two sons in her alma mater. "My St. Anthony education instilled in me that children are the most prized possessions in life. We have to bring them up right," says Betty. "So although it was not easy to get to St. Anthony from where we live in the mountains, we made it happen."

Thanks to that original gift of a St. Anthony education granted by her aunt and uncle, Betty's family is now a three-generation legacy at the school, as Betty's grandchildren attended as well. "I am very proud of St. Anthony. I wish all children could go there," says Betty. "But not everyone can give their children that kind of education. So I help how I can — with my bread."

## Scenic beauty, financial hardship

Betty's life story hints at the challenges of life on Maui, nicknamed the Valley Isle. There is a stark disconnect between the mountainous, lush beauty of the island and the harsh reality many residents navigate.

Life on Maui can be a struggle. Only 160,000 people live on the island, and the cost of living is high. Residents

are challenged to find employment that pays for necessities — food, housing and transportation — leaving little for anything else.

"People hold two or three jobs just to get by," explains Patricia Rickard, principal of St. Anthony. The school's population reflects this struggle: six out of 10 students receive financial aid. "Many of our parents don't have the necessary finances, so they need to choose. Food and shelter usually outrank the luxury of a Catholic education."

The need is great — but so is Betty's dedication.

## A team effort

Betty began baking bread in the 1990s to help fund a restoration project at Holy Ghost Church in Kula, a town near Wailuku. "I decided to make Portuguese sweet bread as my gift to the church," says Betty. "So I worked with a recipe until I could taste my grandmother's bread in it."

With the grace of God, that recipe helped make the church almost \$500,000 — half of its \$1 million goal.

"After we raised the money for Holy Ghost, I took my recipe to St. Anthony and asked if the school wanted assistance. They said 'yes.'"

It was then that a friend's grandson named it "Aunt Betty's Portuguese Sweet Bread."

Betty supplied the seed money to fund the first bake. Ever since, the bread has paid for itself and then some. She receives donations that help offset costs; a local grocer supplies the flour free of charge. But it is her army of assistant bakers that fuels the Aunt Betty enterprise.

When Betty first launched her efforts, word spread that help was welcome. Betty's nieces and St. Anthony parents and student groups volunteered to help bake the bread. "Snowbirds" from the mainland pitch in during their winter stays on the island. "I like to call them my snow angels," says Betty. "Aunt Betty's Sweet Bread could never happen without the people behind me. We are like a football team. I couldn't make a touchdown alone."

Betty's husband Arthur figures in the mix, too. "He helps buy supplies, pre-measures ingredients at home, loads and unloads our car. He even washes all of the bread towels we use — and then neatly folds each one. He is a good man," she says.

*"Aunt Betty's Sweet Bread' could never happen without the people behind me. We are like a football team. I couldn't make a touchdown alone." — Betty Ventura*

*The loaves are bagged and sold from the cafeteria window, via word of mouth, through orders placed among friends and by two local markets that distribute the bread.*





## Tuesdays in the kitchen

Betty, her husband, and her fellow bakers arrive at St. Anthony's kitchen every Tuesday around 1:30 p.m. The baking process consumes the afternoon. First, dry ingredients are added to wet ingredients, and the dough is mixed in large batches. But then Betty intervenes.

Before removing the dough from the mixer, Betty blesses the bread. "She sprinkles flour over the top of the dough and makes the sign of the cross with her hand. She says a private prayer over it, and then work resumes," explains Becky Hanna, a St. Anthony parent who has assisted Betty for five years.

The dough is divided and left to rise before baking. The volunteers then gather for a meal cooked by Betty's niece, Levina Day, who also serves as a baking assistant and the project's accountant. They eat while the bread readies for its trip to the oven. "We talk and laugh and tell stories," says Becky. "We truly enjoy being together."

Once the loaves have cooled, they are bagged and sold from the cafeteria window, via word of mouth, through orders placed among friends and by two local markets that distribute the bread.

The volunteers end the shift by cleaning the kitchen,

wrapping up around 7 p.m. Betty then departs for her 45-minute commute home. On the way, she makes several stops to deliver loaves to individual buyers and the markets. Betty pulls into her driveway around 9 p.m.

"People don't realize the extent of her devotion. She is determined to provide a St. Anthony education to families who can't afford it," says Becky. "For her age, it's amazing what she does, and she's been doing it once a week, every week, for 13 years. She's phenomenal."

## All for love

While monetary wealth may be scarce within the St. Anthony community, Betty's baking yields an abundance of riches, including kindness, fellowship, generosity — and a quality Marianist education for many. "Many students would not be part of our St. Anthony community without Aunt Betty's Portuguese Sweet Bread," says Patricia.

Says Betty, "I love Catholic education. I love St. Anthony. I love the students. All of this is for love." ■

*Amy George Rush is the editor of FamilyOnline, an online newsletter for the Marianists. She also is a freelance writer from St. Louis.*

*Betty and her team of volunteers work the dough and prepare the loaves.*



PHOTO: MARK SOBHANI

# Catching Fire

*Formation workshops for Marianist high school educators fan the flame of Marianist spirituality.*

BY DEBBIE JUNIEWICZ

*Brian Curran, biology and anatomy teacher at Central Catholic High School in San Antonio*

**L**ori Conley, student accounts manager at Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School in Cleveland, struggled with parts of her job, especially counseling parents with financial problems who needed help with tuition. But after attending a Marianist-sponsored workshop last fall called “Teaching as Ministry” (TAM), she had a new appreciation for her work.

“I realized that God had chosen me for this job because I could talk with people about sensitive issues. Now when a parent comes to see me with a problem, I think, ‘God, here is something you can help me with.’ I know I don’t have to solve the problem on my own if I turn to God for help.”

TAM was designed to help people like Lori view their work from a spiritual perspective, says George

Lisjak, director of Marianist Educational Studies and Partnerships, who oversees the program. TAM also fills a special need.

“At one time, the halls of our schools were filled with priests and brothers dedicated to the Marianist mission, but their numbers are decreasing,” says George, noting a demographic trend that many Catholic religious orders are experiencing. “If Marianist spirituality is to continue to enliven our sponsored schools, we must form lay people as missionaries. We can’t replicate the formation of the Marianist religious, but we need to offer formation that is more than surface level.”

## Education through a Marianist lens

TAM has been offered to Marianist educators for three decades. Early on, the workshops were primarily attended by teachers, but they now include administrators and staff. More than 300 participants have taken part in TAM since 2005. A follow-up workshop, “Growing in Commitment to Marianist Education,” was added two years ago to provide the next level of lay formation.

“The way Marianist values are translated and shared today is very different,” says Dan Donnelly, director of the Office of Sponsorship. “But it is not unlike the actions of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, founder of the Marianists, who worked with lay people first. Chaminade was focused on helping people grow in faith and live the charism.”

Part education and part inspiration, TAM is open to all 18 Marianist-sponsored schools. Participants



Lori Conley, student accounts manager at Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School in Cleveland

PHOTO: EMILY ROBINSON

network, share stories and gain insights. Topics range from understanding Marianist core values to reflecting on one’s personal journey.

Participants say that TAM inspired a deeper commitment. Jeff Caballero, head of the theology department at Chaminade-Madonna College Preparatory in Hollywood, Fla., now views his job through a larger lens. “You no longer can think about your career as a teacher or administrator as something solely about you,” says Jeff. “It’s much bigger and more dynamic. It is a sacred commitment.”

For Brian Curran, a biology and anatomy teacher at Central

Catholic High School in San Antonio, TAM also provided a burst of insight.

“I’m quiet by nature, so talking with others and opening up was refreshing,” Brian says. “When I got back to work, I felt rejuvenated. It gave me a lot of clarity.”

## ‘The essential is the interior’

While participants return to their schools with renewed energy and enthusiasm, their spiritual growth extends beyond the professional realm.

“I especially enjoyed the morning and evening devotions,” says Lori. “Now I find myself taking 20 seconds out of my day to say ‘God, can you help me with something?’ I frequently take time to pray, and I didn’t always do that before.”

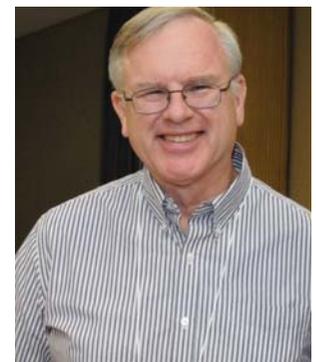
Although Brian has worked in education for 15 years, the experience was new to him. “It was the first conference I came back from where I felt spiritually at peace,” he says.

Much of this has to do with the focus on the participant’s unique gifts. According to Dan Donnelly, “TAM encourages people to use their gifts and see them in a different light,” says Dan. “It opens hearts and minds.”

“Chaminade said, ‘the essential is the interior,’” says George. “So we must provide formation that touches hearts — and transforms lives.” ■

*Debbie Juniewicz is a freelance writer from Dayton, Ohio.*

*Jeff Caballero, head of the theology department, Chaminade-Madonna College Preparatory in Hollywood, Fla.*



George Lisjak, director of Marianist Educational Studies and Partnerships

PHOTO: JULIE WALLING



PHOTO: RICHARD PULIDO

# Holy Ground:

## One School's Story of Courage and Compassion

*A program at Archbishop Moeller High School, a Marianist school in Cincinnati, helps boys deal with one of life's greatest challenges.*

BY JAN D. DIXON



Phillip Bryant holds his father's crucifix.

**A**round 2 a.m., Oct. 21, 1995, Pat Buckley and her husband, Bruce, were abruptly awakened from their sleep. A police officer was at their front door with news no parent ever wants to receive. After leaving a bar with friends in downtown St. Louis, their oldest son, Dan, 21, an Archbishop Moeller High School graduate, was brutally attacked. He was on life support and died the next morning.

"I was in shock. It was like an out-of-body experience," recalls Pat about that fateful night. "It was a horrible tragedy, one that Bruce, our seven younger children and I were completely unprepared for. But looking back, God was with us through it all."

Two years earlier, Sheila Munafo-Kanoza, had witnessed the death of her husband, Vince, 39, after his 10-year bout with adenoid cystic carcinoma, a rare form of cancer. "I felt like someone had ripped my heart out," says Sheila, recalling her anguish while trying to console her three children. Her oldest son, Tony, had just entered Moeller as a freshman.

But it wasn't until Sheila and Pat joined Marianist Brother Ron Luksic on a trip to Rome for the beatification of Marianist Founder Father Chaminade in 2000 that they shared their stories of grief and how their children had struggled. "We talked about starting a grief group for teens at Moeller," says Sheila, and by the time the women returned to Cincinnati, they had a plan. Little did they realize how quickly it would unfold.

A week after returning from Rome, they met with Marianist Brother Bob Flaherty about starting the grief program. The next day, Sheila received a frantic phone call. Jim Crone, a beloved English and German teacher at Moeller, had collapsed in a hallway and died from a sudden heart attack. The students were reeling. "Can you come now?" asked Brother Bob.

ALL PHOTOS: SKIP PETERSON



Boys attend monthly meetings of the Teens in Grief program at Archbishop Moeller High School.



Since then, Sheila and Pat have facilitated Teens in Grief, a faith-based bereavement support group sponsored by Companions on a Journey, a nonprofit organization that Sheila launched. The teen program started at Moeller in 2000 — now offered to several schools in the Greater Cincinnati area — has gained attention for its innovative methods in helping adolescents through the grief process.

The program mirrors Marianist values. Bearing one another's burdens, especially during times of great loss, deepens the bonds of Marianist Family spirit, the



*Phillip Bryant and Quinn Sullivan, participants in the Teens in Grief program*

underlying force that animates Marianist education. The grief program also teaches students about coping with life's ever-changing landscape. "When a loved one dies, your whole world stops," says Jim Elfers, director of pastoral ministry at Moeller, who assists with the grief program. "To move on, our students have to create a 'new normal.' They know better than anyone at our school what it means to adapt to change. It's a Marianist value that they live every day."

### High-risk moments

Shock is often the first reaction during times of grief, followed by anger and helplessness. "Boys are especially prone to shutting down," says Sheila. Sadness, loneliness, isolation and anger can lead to alcohol and drug abuse, even suicide, as the boys try to cope with pain.

Phillip Bryant, a senior at Moeller, knows too well the emotional roller coaster of grief and loss. Phillip's mother, Diane, died when he was four. Then on Labor Day weekend in 2008, Phillip's father, Phillip Bryant Sr., fell off a roof, leaving him a quadriplegic. He died in 2012 from complications from the accident. "After my dad died, I pushed people out of my life, even my best friends," he says.

Orphaned and alone, he worried about where he was going to live and how to cope. "I didn't feel safe talking about it with anyone," says Phillip.

Quinn Sullivan, a junior, who lost his father, Dan, to brain cancer when he was 12, also put up walls. "I shut down emotionally. I didn't want to let people in because I was afraid of getting hurt again," says Quinn.

One key to healing after the death of a loved one is to find trustworthy people — and a safe place to tell your story. "The guys in our grief group are carrying a heavy emotional load," says Jim. "It's a privilege to hear their stories. We need to tread softly. We're walking on sacred ground."

### Holy ground

It's 11:30 a.m. on a Tuesday. The boys have just finished eating pizza and are wolfing down freshly baked cookies — comfort food they rely on at their grief support meetings.

Moeller's Teens in Grief program meets monthly during the school year, and students can attend for as long as they need support. "Our program, like grief, is ongoing," says Sheila, acknowledging that grieving is unpredictable and different for everyone. There are 935 boys in grades 9 – 12 at Moeller. Typically 20 to 25 boys attend the group. Though the meetings are organized around topics, the moderators know they must be open to whatever comes up.

"In the beginning, I was quiet," says Phillip, who joined the group his junior year. "But I learned that you can't process your grief alone. You need others. You need to get past your walls and fear."

Quinn calls it a rite of passage — tough work because it hurts and there's no way around it. "I was nervous, but when I saw guys, some of them football players, break down and cry as they shared their stories, I realized they were experiencing many of the same thoughts and emotions I was feeling. It gave me courage to open up."

One challenge for the grief moderators is to help teens understand that death and loss are part of life. Sadness and emptiness are part of the journey. Belief in the Resurrection also is woven into the discussion.

## Lean on Me

*Five things to remember about grief*

**M**aking sense of life after the death of a loved one takes time and help from others. Here are some tips from Sheila Munafo-Kanoza, executive director of Companions on a Journey, a faith-based bereavement support center.

1. **Accept your feelings.** Grief unleashes a flurry of feelings: sadness, loneliness, guilt, anger and helplessness. Feelings come in waves and can seem overwhelming. “Cry when you need to. Get angry. Most important: Don’t push the feelings away,” says Sheila.
2. **Be good to yourself.** Take time for healthy activities. Keep a journal. Try to restore balance in your life: pray, work, exercise, eat well and rest.
3. **Don’t go it alone.** Ask for help and accept it. Find a compassionate person to talk with (a friend, family member, another bereaved person, a support group). If necessary, seek a professional counselor.
4. **Lean into the pain.** You can’t go around, over or under it. You must go through the pain. Be careful not to avoid grief by being a workaholic. Do not abuse alcohol or drugs; they only mask pain and delay healing.
5. **It will get better.** Your life will never be the same, but with time, you will feel better. Everyone’s grief journey is different. Be gentle with yourself and honor your own timing and ways of mending your broken heart.



*Sheila Munafo-Kanoza greets a student while Pat Buckley looks on.*

For more information about grief support at Archbishop Moeller, contact Jim Elfers at [jelfers@moeller.org](mailto:jelfers@moeller.org) or 513.791.1680. To learn more about Companions on a Journey, contact Sheila Munafo-Kanoza at [sheila@companionsonajourney.org](mailto:sheila@companionsonajourney.org) or 513-870-9108.

Because Moeller is a Catholic school, the group leaders often turn to faith as a way to shed light on the subject. “We have tremendous models of suffering in our faith tradition — from Christ’s personal suffering on the cross, to Mary’s sense of loss and pain at the foot of the cross,” says Jim. “It’s important to face the truth: Painful things happen. Acknowledging our emotions can lift the fog and help students see how God is walking with us in our pain.”

### Creating a community of compassion

Catholic theologian and author, Father Richard Rohr, OFM, once wrote: “If you do not transform your pain, you will surely transmit it to those around you.”

Transforming pain takes time, God’s grace and help from others. Through the grief group, adolescents learn how to build a strong support network, which is something they’ll need to create on their own after they graduate.

One network is the Moeller family — a brotherhood that helps students become companions to each other in dealing with grief. A faculty member also attends each month to share his or her story. “Bringing faculty

to the group teaches students that death is a part of life. It’s a part nobody likes,” says Doug Rosfeld, a history teacher and assistant football coach who lost his wife, Stephanie, shortly after childbirth in 2005. After remarrying, Doug was stung by a second loss: the miscarriage of his first child with his wife, Abbie. “The guys in this group hear our stories and it creates a wider, deeper community of compassion. They see how we have gone on with our lives and integrated this experience into who we are now.”

“I’d be lying if I told you I had completed my grief journey,” says Quinn, acknowledging that the loss of his father will never go away completely. But he has benefitted from the group. “No one goes through life unscathed. Everyone will lose someone or something they love. The grief group has helped me be more compassionate toward others.”

It also has helped him prepare for the rest of his life. “Without the group, I would have had trouble forming new relationships and being comfortable with myself.”

Phillip agrees. More confident and open, Phillip sees himself actively involved in grief work to help others, even as he takes off for college this fall. “I don’t want any kid to go it alone.” ■



*Jim Elfers, director of pastoral ministry*

# Rewind

*ALIVE magazine looks back at 10 years of Marianists in ministry.*

BY JAN D. DIXON



*Brother Skip Matthews, see ALIVE Spring 2008*

For 10 years, *ALIVE* magazine has followed Marianist brothers and priests, sisters and lay people into their classrooms, parishes, street ministries and mission fields. We've walked with Brother Skip Matthews in the back alleys of Skid Row in Los Angeles to see him share the message of Jesus with one of the largest groups of homeless people in America. We've witnessed the work of Brother Bob

Donovan, a medical doctor who provides healthcare services to homeless on the streets of Cincinnati. We've ventured with Brother Tom Pieper and students from the University of Dayton into Mogofoffin County, Ky., one of the poorest regions in Appalachia, to better understand the lives of rural Americans and their rich cultural heritage.

We've traveled to Mexico, Kenya, Malawi and India to see firsthand how Marianist ministries and schools are helping desperately poor people build job skills and a sense of dignity and self-worth.

We've spotlighted Marianist educators — favorite teachers, administrators and campus ministry teams — and their passion for helping a new generation grow in faith.

We've celebrated the work of Marianist artists, writers, musicians and photographers and how their creativity has touched us.

We've followed closely Marianist LIFE and retreat ministries and how their faith-filled efforts inspire adolescents and families to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

We also have said our goodbyes: to Father Joe Lackner and Brother Walter Oberster, Father Dave Schuyler and Brother Mel Meyer — and the passing of nearly 120 Marianist brothers and priests who graced our lives.

To remember and honor all those who have made us more hopeful and our faith more alive,

we invite you to travel back in time through the *ALIVE* archives for these and many other stories you may have missed. Go to [marianist.com/publications](http://marianist.com/publications). ■



*Anthony Fucci, director, Marianist Family Retreat Center see ALIVE Spring 2012*



*Brother Bob Donovan, see ALIVE Summer 2004*



*Brother Bob Politi, see ALIVE Fall 2010*



*School children from Roro Binda Upper Primary School in India, see ALIVE Summer 2012*



*Brother Art Cherrier, see ALIVE Summer 2010*



*A mother and child from Ujamma Family Centre, a Marianist program in Kenya, see ALIVE Fall 2010*



*A young child from Appalachia, see ALIVE Fall 2004*



*Student from St. Laurence College, a Marianist school in Dublin, see ALIVE Fall 2006*



*Brother Bob Dzubinski, see ALIVE Summer 2011*

# Reflections on a Marianist Life

*Brother Wally Ebbesmeyer recalls a spiritually rich and rewarding life.*

BY CAROL DEXTER

**G**ratITUDE. That's the undercurrent that flows through a conversation with Marianist Brother Walter Ebbesmeyer. He brims with gratitude for his long and busy life.

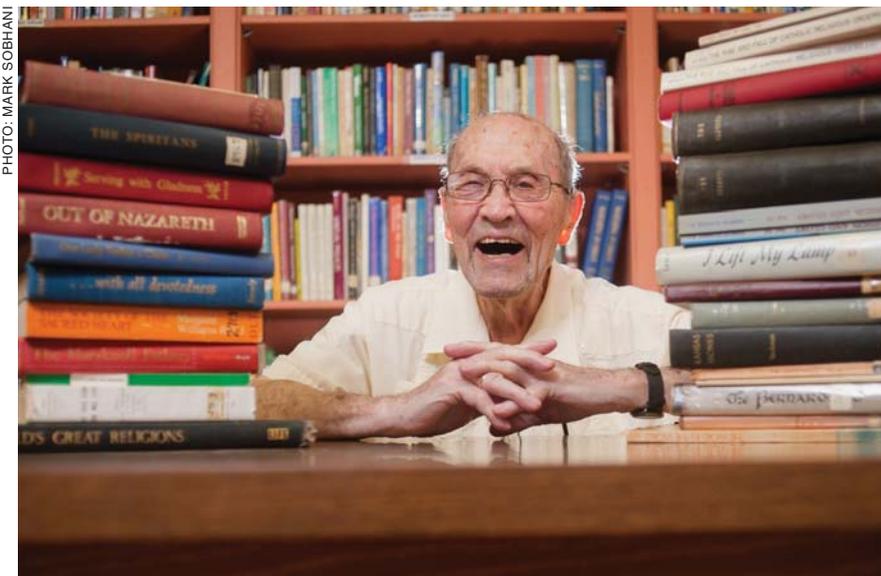
Walter Ebbesmeyer was born in Florissant, Mo., in 1924. His father died of typhoid fever when Wally was a year old. Faith was sustenance for the family, and Brother Wally knew from an early age that he was called to religious life. "In 1938, I finished

grade school and I wanted to enter the postulate, but they told me I had to stay home and take care of my mother," he says. So he bided his time and entered the novitiate in 1942, after graduating from McBride High School, a former Marianist school in St. Louis.

Brother Wally earned a bachelor's and later, a master's degree. He taught at Marianist middle schools and high schools beginning in 1945.

His longest stretch of ministry is also the one closest to his heart. He becomes animated when he describes his work in East St. Louis, Ill., an impoverished city with an almost entirely African-American population.

Brother Wally taught at Assumption High School, a Marianist school that closed in 1989, and in "Upward Bound," a program to help underprivileged youth complete high school and go to college. He became deeply committed to anti-poverty work and served with a number of social service organizations. For nearly three decades, he grew to love many families in the area. "I went to their graduations, their weddings and their funerals. They called me 'Uncle Wally,'" he says, chuckling. "I am so grateful they let me share their lives."



*Brother Wally Ebbesmeyer is an avid reader, averaging 170 books a year.*

## Turning points

Brother Wally was diagnosed with kidney cancer in August 1999. He says his faith sustained him in his battle back to health. "My constant thought was the suffering of the Blessed Mother. How she suffered as her son was crucified!" Brother Wally says. "I knew that if I wanted to be like Mary, I had to face my suffering, too."

Just one short year later, Brother Wally found himself in a very different place, physically and emotionally.

He was able to travel to Rome for the beatification of William Joseph Chaminade, founder of the Society of Mary. "To be there in the audience and to see the Holy Father pronounce Chaminade blessed. Oh, my, it was a tremendous experience." There's an unmistakable catch in Brother Wally's voice as he recalls the moment.

Reflecting on his life as a Marianist, Brother Wally is confident of what it has meant: "I have had a wonderful opportunity to serve Jesus — Son of God and Son of Mary," he says. "The most important thing is to be Christ and to spread Christ to as many people as I can," he says. "I am grateful I have been able to do that for as long as I have."

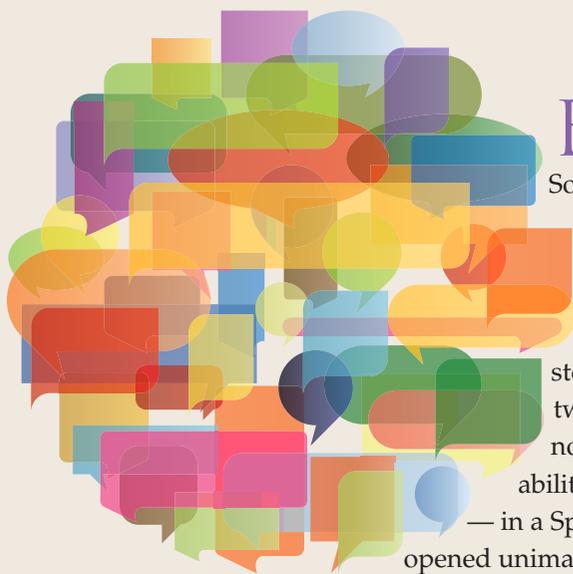
Brother Wally now lives at the Marianist Residence in San Antonio where — in June and with gratitude — he will celebrate his 90th birthday. ■

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# THE GIFT of TONGUES

*A missionary and minister for social justice at St. Mary's University in San Antonio reflects on the gifts — and challenges — of language and communication.*

BY CLARE ACOSTA



Being bilingual is a gift. When I first moved to South America as a missionary with a small Catholic program many years ago, I barely knew how to ask for a tomato at the corner store. The idea of speaking two languages fluently was not on my radar. Later, the ability to survive — even thrive — in a Spanish-speaking world opened unimaginable doors for me, both

professionally and personally. But the learning curve was steep. I have experienced many linguistic snafus that have left me in unexpected (and often humorous) situations. As I reflect on my life and my attempts to live God's call, there is no question that I would not be where I am, or who I am, without this precious "gift of tongues."

I recently attended the Missionary Congress of the Americas held in Venezuela. This conference meets every five years, and people come from all over the Americas to gather in solidarity and support of our Catholic identity as missionaries. During this meeting, Chaminade's edict that "we are all missionaries" has never been more alive for me. As young and old, formally educated and worldly wise, clergy and laity, men and women, speakers of various languages, we gathered to be renewed and to imagine how we can bring about God's kingdom on earth more tangibly. We made a commitment that week to move toward the kingdom, toward a universal church of love, toward that vision and reality of solidarity for which we (especially as part of the Marianist Family) continue to live.

## LIVING PENTECOST DAILY

One of the challenges we received was to live Pentecost daily — to speak about our faith in a language others can understand. To speak not in an abstract and theological manner, but to get to know people, develop relationships with them and learn their cultural idiosyncrasies.

We were reminded of our roots in the book of Acts: "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. Yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God." (Acts 2:4, 11)

A decade ago, I was given the opportunity to learn Spanish. But I learned more than grammar, idioms and dialects. I learned to hear, embrace and exchange the language of faith and culture. I now know to ask myself daily if I am speaking the language of those around me, if I am sharing my faith in a way that can be received and understood. When I volunteer at the shelter for men who are undocumented, am I speaking their language? When I teach undergraduates in the classroom, am I speaking their language? When I work with college students yearning to learn about injustices in our world, am I speaking their language?

As I minister to my colleagues and coworkers, or spend time with my friends and family, I wonder if I am speaking their language. How do I communicate faith? How do I communicate mission? How do I communicate love? ■

*Clare Acosta (Strockbine) is the minister for social justice at St. Mary's University, where she also serves as adjunct faculty in the Exercise and Sports Science department. She lives with her husband, Yonatan, in San Antonio, and serves as part of the national core team for the Adèle Social Justice Project.*

# The Road *Less Traveled*

*Listening for God's call, Sister Nicole Trahan discovered a path less worn — and filled with surprising blessings.*

BY CAROL DEXTER

It takes a strong woman to step outside the boundaries of expectations. It takes a strong woman to hear a challenging call and respond “yes.” Although she may not view herself as a maverick or nonconformist, Sister Nicole Trahan has proven herself strong enough to listen to God’s call and take the road less traveled.

Sister Nicole professed her perpetual vows as a Marianist sister last summer. It was a milestone in a faith journey marked by turns she did not expect.

## A circuitous path

Born in Orange, Texas, Sister Nicole attended Catholic grade school and high school. She thought she might go into medicine, and earned a degree in biomedical science from Texas A&M University. It was her involvement at St. Mary’s Catholic Center on the campus at Texas A&M, however, that made her realize how much she enjoyed working with youth.

Instead of a medical career, she wound up in the classroom. As a math and science teacher in Catholic schools, she was struck by how often principals were

looking for religion teachers. Her path turned again, and she returned to college — this time to St. Mary’s University in San Antonio. It was her first encounter with the Marianists.

“I was drawn to the Marianist charism and its vision of Mary,” Sister Nicole says. “The relationship among the branches of the Marianist Family — their mutuality and collaborative spirit — fit with my values and way of looking at the world.”

While working on a master’s degree in Catholic school leadership, Sister Nicole began teaching at Central Catholic High School, a Marianist school in San Antonio. There she met the late Marianist Sister Laola Hironaka, who would become a friend, mentor and role model.

“She was a strong woman,” Sister Nicole says. “She was humble but also extremely intelligent. She knew homeless people in San Antonio and senators in Washington, D.C., and she treated them all with great dignity.”

Inspired by Sister Laola and the priests and brothers of the Society of Mary, Nicole became a Lay Marianist, and for three years enjoyed an active role in the Marianist Family. But there was a persistent tug in the back of her mind: Become a sister? Why? Why not? After much prayer, study and conversations with Marianist friends, Sister Nicole answered God’s call, professing her first vows in 2005.

## “At peace with this life”

These days, the best word to sum up Sister Nicole’s life is busy. She lives in Dayton, Ohio, and teaches three classes of sophomore religion at Chaminade Julianne Catholic High School, which is sponsored by the Marianists and the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.

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She combines that with being national vocation director for the Marianist sisters — and serving on a vocation committee at the University of Dayton.

“We try to get people talking about vocations, what religious life is like, and offer guidance to students who are considering a religious calling,” says Sister Nicole. The committee includes Lay Marianists and Marianist brothers and sisters.

“Women today have so many choices, and that’s great,” Sister Nicole says. “But it also makes decision-making difficult.” She adds that it’s hard for women to picture themselves as part of a religious community because they don’t see their peers making that choice. “Many young women have never met a nun,” she says.

Sister Nicole is doing what she can to change that. It’s a challenge she tackles cheerfully, using her work

as a platform to meet young women and offering them a refreshing role model.

“There are never enough hours in the day!” Sister Nicole laughs about juggling her three part-time jobs. “Balance is difficult for everyone, and I’m definitely still working on that.” It’s clear she wouldn’t have it any other way.

“My vocation is life-giving,” she says. “It’s a life filled with joy and struggles.” Surprisingly, the struggles Sister Nicole mentions are common to almost everyone: balance, time for daily prayer and reflection — and time for others. “I’m challenged by my community members to be present to them,” she adds, explaining that without community she could easily become self-absorbed. “But the joy far outweighs the struggles. I’m at peace with this life.” ■

*Marianist Sister Nicole Trahan*

# SLICE *of Life*

## Brother Juan Pablo Espinoza Chávez Professes First Vows

Brother Juan Pablo Espinoza Chávez professed first vows in the Society of Mary at a ceremony in November at the Marianist community in Querétaro, Mexico. About 45 Marianist Family members attended the celebration. Father Raymundo Domínguez González served as main celebrant and Father Quentin Hakenewerth was the homilist. District Superior Brother Ed Longbottom received the vows. Brother Juan Pablo will remain in Puebla, where he continues his preparation for ministry.



*At the Nov. 30 profession, standing, Brothers Esteban Reyes Durán and Juan Manuel Azamar, Fr. Quentin Hakenewerth, Brother José Jesús Ruiz Santillán, Father Raymundo, Brother Juan Pablo, Provincial Martín Solma and Brother Rigoberto Martínez Hernández; kneeling, Brothers Ed Longbottom, José Luis González Molina and Fermín García García.*



*Father Chris Wittmann presides at the final Mass in the Dayton novitiate.*

## Marianists Bid Fond Farewell to Dayton Novitiate

More than 50 members of the Marianist Family gathered to bid farewell to the Dayton novitiate building, which is scheduled to be razed. In its place, a new building will be constructed, one more

suitable to the Province's needs. The novitiate community has moved to temporary housing, where they will reside until the new novitiate is finished. The farewell included Mass, a reception and dinner.

## Colegio San José Celebrates 75 Years of Marianist Education

Colegio San José in San Juan, Puerto Rico, celebrated its 75th anniversary as a Marianist school last fall with a Mass, golf tournament and gala fundraiser. Provincial Marty Solma and Brother Ed Brink took part in the festivities. "The brothers at the community in San Juan and the leadership of the former New York Province deserve our hearty congratulations and best wishes on this happy occasion," says Father Marty. The school has an enrollment of about 500 boys in grades 7 – 12.

For more Marianist news, visit  
[www.marianist.com/familyonline](http://www.marianist.com/familyonline).

## In Remembrance

For the complete obituaries of these Marianists, visit [www.marianist.com/obits](http://www.marianist.com/obits).



Brother Arthur Cherrier, SM

**Brother Arthur Cherrier, SM, 89**, died Dec. 20, 2013, in San Antonio. Brother Art was a teacher and administrator who spent more than 35 years in ministry in Africa, first in the Republic of Congo and then in Ivory Coast. Brother Art started his career with the Marianists as a teacher at schools in Texas, Illinois and Missouri. In 1959, he earned a master's degree in education from Marquette University. In the early 1960s, Brother Art answered a call to teach at a school in the Congo and later at Collège Notre Dame d'Afrique in Ivory Coast, where he taught English for three decades. During the last few years of his ministry, Brother Art translated documents from French to English for the North American Center for Marianist Studies and assisted the Provincial office in St. Louis with special projects.



Brother Peter Loehr, SM

**Brother Peter Loehr, SM, 82**, died Oct. 14, 2013, in San Antonio. Throughout his Marianist career, Brother Peter served as a high school teacher at Marianist schools in Missouri, Colorado and Texas.

He also worked in school administration, serving as principal at Chaminade College Preparatory in St. Louis from 1978 to 1984. Brother Peter earned a master's degree in library science from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. In addition to his teaching and administrative duties, he often worked as the librarian in schools where he served.

**Brother William McCarthy, SM, 89**, died Aug. 20, 2013, in San Antonio. Brother Bill earned a bachelor's degree in education and taught religion, social studies and Spanish at Marianist schools in the



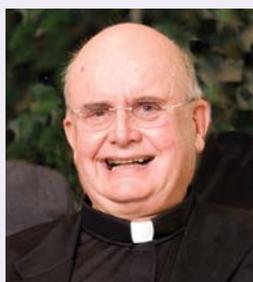
Brother William McCarthy, SM

St. Louis area. He earned a master's degree in United States history from Saint Louis University in 1952. For several years, Brother Bill worked in vocations ministry before moving to Peru, where he taught at a number of Marianist mission outposts. In 1973, Brother Bill returned to San Antonio where he spent the next 22 years teaching history at Central Catholic High School. He retired from teaching in 1995.



Brother Melvin Meyer, SM

**Brother Melvin Meyer, SM, 85**, died Oct. 12, 2013, in St. Louis. A gifted and commercially successful artist, Brother Mel produced an estimated 10,000 works of art — both sacred and secular — over his long career. Following graduation from the University of Dayton, Brother Mel taught art for nearly 20 years at Marianist schools in St. Louis and San Antonio. In 1969, the Marianists provided him the space for a studio and gallery on the campus of St. John Vianney High School in St. Louis. For the next 40 years he worked as an artist. His creations adorn churches, parks, corporate headquarters, hospitals and schools in St. Louis, across the United States and in several international locations.



Father Gerald Pleva, SM

**Father Gerald Pleva, SM, 74**, died Sept. 25, 2013, in San Antonio. Father Jerry started his career as a Marianist educator, teaching religion, English and history at Marianist schools in St. Louis. He earned three master's degrees before completing seminary training. He was ordained in 1977 in Milwaukee and worked for the next six years as chaplain

and teacher at Central Catholic High School in San Antonio. He returned to Milwaukee to work at Thomas More High in 1983, until he was called to do formation work in Bangalore, India. When he returned to the United States, he served as associate pastor at Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in Helotes, Texas. His last full-time assignment was as associate pastor at St. Anthony parish, a Marianist parish in Wailuku, Maui, Hawai'i.



Father Thomas Stanley, SM

**Father Thomas Stanley, SM, 91**, died Nov. 15, 2013, in Dayton, Ohio. Father Tom began his career as a teacher in Marianist high schools in New York before entering seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland. He was ordained in 1950. He spent the next several years as chaplain at the postulate at Mount Saint John and director of the retreat house in Dayton, Ohio. In 1956, he was called to serve as president of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico. In June 1961, Father Tom returned to the University of Dayton to serve as the first provost and assumed other administrative duties. In 1967, Father Tom was elected to serve in the Marianist Generalate in Rome. He held this position for five years before returning to Dayton to direct the newly formed campus ministry office at the university. In 1974, Father Tom was called to work in Nairobi as the first Africa area coordinator, a position he held for three years. In late 1981, Father Tom began a 15-year assignment as pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Portage, Mich. He moved to Hollywood, Fla., in 1996 to work as a part-time chaplain at Nativity Parish. He retired from full-time ministry in 2000.

**Memorial:** To make a memorial donation in the name of a Marianist, use the envelope enclosed and provide the name of the brother or priest you wish to honor, or go to [marianist.com/memorial](http://marianist.com/memorial).

# HONORING THOSE WHO SHAPED HIS LIFE

*Bill Adams, a California businessman, never forgot the value of his Marianist education.*

BY JOHN SCHROEDER

Chaminade High School, a Marianist school in Santa Cruz, Calif., closed more than 70 years ago. Even so, those who visit the Chaminade Resort & Spa conference center that operates on the property today can learn something about that long-ago Marianist presence. Why? Because Bill Adams insisted on it.

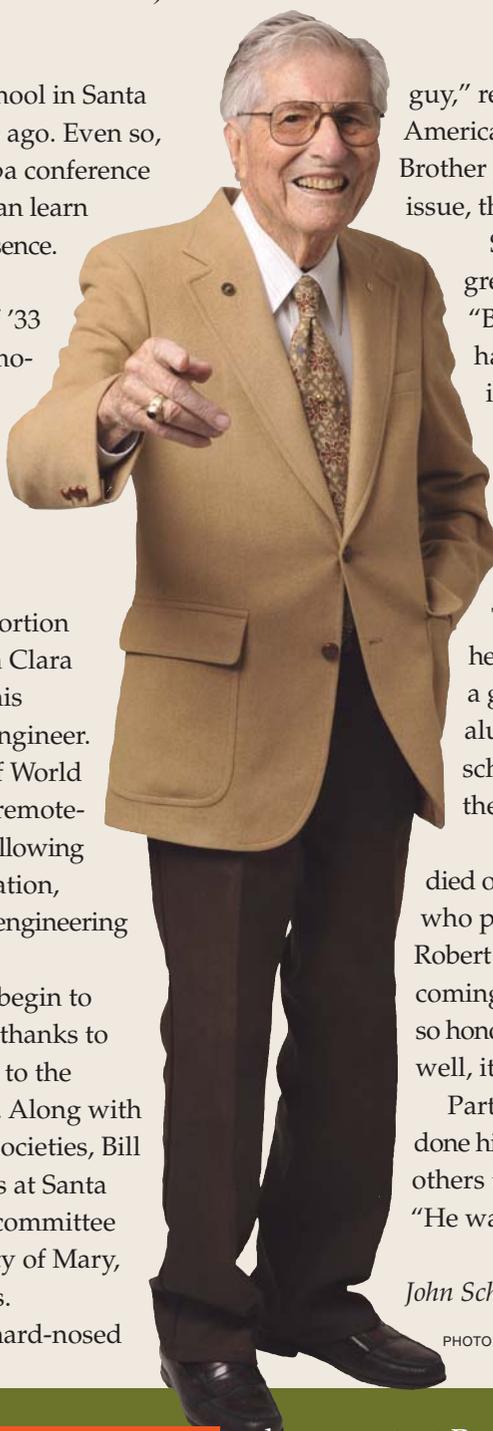
Some years ago, the Chaminade Class of '33 alumnus took the lead in having a commemorative plaque installed at the site because he wanted people to remember the high school — and the impact its graduates have had all across the country.

## AN INDEFATIGABLE SPIRIT

Bill could have laid claim to a substantial portion of that impact. After graduating from Santa Clara University in 1937, he quickly established his credentials as an accomplished industrial engineer. Working for General Electric at the outset of World War II, Bill led the effort to design the first remote-controlled turrets for high-altitude aircraft. Following the war, he joined Food Machinery Corporation, where he worked for 34 years in a variety of engineering leadership positions.

But a distinguished career track doesn't begin to describe what Bill accomplished in his life, thanks to an indefatigable spirit and a deep devotion to the organizations and institutions he held dear. Along with active engagement in several professional societies, Bill served in numerous alumni board positions at Santa Clara University, and on the development committee of the former Pacific Province for the Society of Mary, among many other volunteer commitments.

"Bill was a very generous guy — and a hard-nosed



guy," recalls Marianist Brother Robert Juenemann. Bill, an American of Swiss heritage, was "an insistent Swiss," says Brother Robert. "Once his mind was made up about an issue, there was no more discussion."

Since the two first met in the 1960s, Brother Robert grew to admire Bill for his kindness and his tenacity. "Bill never missed an alumni dinner or luncheon. He had a tremendous love for the the Marianist presence in Santa Cruz," he says. "He remembered the great teachers he had in high school, and the foundation they laid for the rest of his life."

In more recent years, the work of Marianist Father Jim Heft and artist Joseph Aspell (a former Marianist brother) also deeply touched Bill's heart. To say thanks for the Marianist impact on his life, he established a living endowment in 1990 — making a gift that now totals more than \$54,000 to underwrite alumni activities, fund scholarships to Marianist schools and provide support for elderly members of the Marianist community.

Active almost to the end of his 96 years, Bill Adams died on Sept. 10, 2013, joining his beloved wife Marijane, who passed away in 2005. "He loved his wife," Brother Robert recalls. "You could not talk to Bill without Marijane coming into the conversation. He'd always say he was just so honored that she agreed to go out with him. But she did ... well, it made his life."

Part of Bill's character was to remember those who had done him a favor — both large and small — and to encourage others to remember as well, according to Brother Robert. "He was a good man, a very generous man." ■

*John Schroeder is a freelance writer from St. Louis.*

PHOTO COURTESY BILL ADAMS ESTATE

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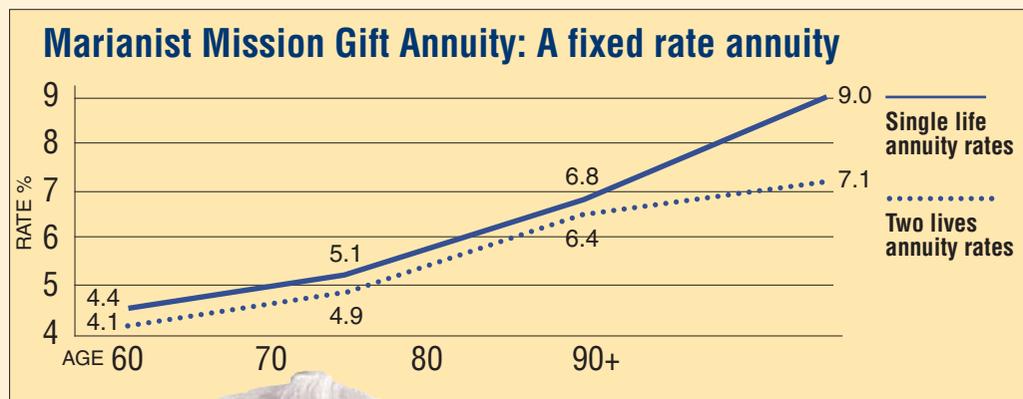
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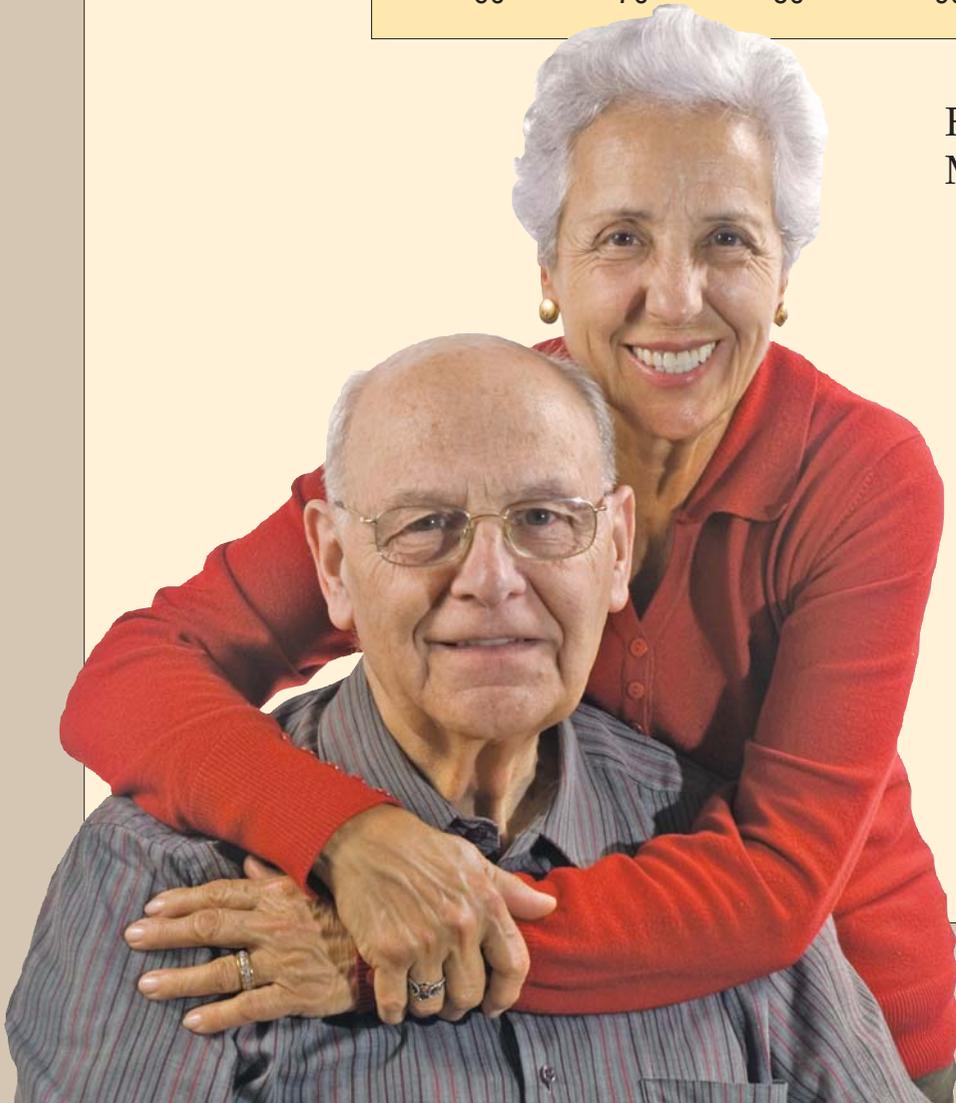


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