

Cupertino Marianist Community
December 2014

Greetings from Cupertino!

Thank you for your greetings, encouragement and prayerful support. My hope and prayer is that you, too, are living fully in the present with gratitude for the past and hope for the future!

I have now begun the practice of greeting each new month as I used to greet each new year! With fresh enthusiasm I enjoy life with my fellow brothers here, welcome guests and keep in touch with many throughout the world by phone and internet and sometimes by letters! My daily hikes in the park or in the neighborhood have been especially life-giving these days as we experienced the mild and colorful California autumn even as we prayed daily for rain. I continue to concentrate my prayer on the daily Scripture readings before writing a page in my notebook to share with many fellow pilgrims via internet in what I now call my desktop ministry. I am grateful for the comments that many of you send me from time to time as we help each other better understand what God is saying to us at this point in our lives.

Anniversaries that I originally targeted for a follow up to my letter of August 20 have come and gone. First was the community jubilee celebration on September 12, the feast of the Holy Name of Mary (one of those four days when we Marianists pray for all those who touch our lives in a special way).

October 12, Feast of Our Lady of the Pillar, Columbus Day and my parents' wedding anniversary was another possible date to write. I was especially mindful of you on the Marianist World Day of Prayer which is always linked with this feast. Our traditional Halloween party organized by Grace for the staff and their families was very lively this year, thanks to a magician who held young and old spellbound!

Then came November 1, feast of All Saints, and forever to be remembered here as the day when God called our Brother Pat McMahan to himself in his 60th jubilee year. Bishop P.J. McGrath graciously attended the Mass of Christian Burial. Ms. Nancy Romano helped Brother Tom Redmond prepare the program and Brother Howard Hughes assured the music, as he does so faithfully for all our liturgies. We also remembered the faithful departed throughout the month, especially those whose names we placed on our altar.

Our 70th anniversary group was reduced to three after the deaths of Father Joe Priestley in Honolulu and Brother Jimmi Masuura in Tokyo. (Don't be confused by the Japanese spelling. Jim Masur was born and raised in Pittsburgh but at a certain point in his years in Japan became a Japanese citizen and a full-fledged member of the Province of Japan.)

With the death of Brother Pat, and both Father Joe Hartzler and Brother Jim Christiana on special assignment, our community has been reduced to 28 very active Marianists, ranging from Father Larry Mann, who at 98 is now the oldest priest in the SM, to Brother David Betz, who was born 41 years later! Father Larry delights in surveying the community from his place in the dining room, checking attendance, including inquiries about guests he doesn't recognize.

Brother David is liaison to our kitchen staff and schedules activities here and beyond. He has also joined Brother Bill Bolts on the Board at Archbishop Riordan High School to help keep the Marianist spirit alive there. Brother David along with Brother Ed Shiras sing in the Saint Joseph of Cupertino parish choir while Brother Jim Vorndran is a faithful Sunday parishioner. Several attended the Bishop's Open House for Religious; some also attended the Serra Club's annual dinner tribute.

We have regular bingo games. One of the frequent winners is Brother Tom Deasy. When asked his secret for winning, he replied "If I told you, it would no longer be a secret!" Others go off for meetings and retreats, returning with fresh stories to share. Brother Skip Matthews finally received a release from his doctors so that he could return to his very active life centered in Chaminade, West Hills. Brother Dennis Schmitz has been appointed to be our official visitor, replacing Father Paul Marshall, and thoughtfully schedules stopovers between Honolulu and Saint Louis.

Father Manuel Cortés, our Superior General and Brother Maximin Magnan, Assistant for Education, devoted a week of their life to a leisurely visit with us as part of their general visitation of the Province of the United States.

When Thanksgiving Day suddenly arrived, I decided I could delay this letter no longer so I finally began a first draft. Since then we've had some welcome rain and we began a new Liturgical Year marked especially this year as the Year of Consecrated Life. As I write we are rapidly approaching the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, another of those special days of prayer for all those with whom we are associated.

And so I continue to be with you in thought and prayer, hoping that you find peace in these days of Advent despite the pre-Christmas rush. I want to make Father Bill Meyer's reflection my own: "Advent challenges us to see our lives not as a disjointed set

of experiences and circumstances, but as a pilgrimage to God - a journey in which every moment, every step, is a new revelation of God's presence in our midst. The Advent season calls us to be watchful."

May your Christmas be joyful and the New Year promising!

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