



The Marianists

BRO. FRANCIS HEYER

75 years of profession

Oh, what a life of blessings! What gifts God strewed in my Marianist path! For every quirk in my character, He gave me a way out; for every fault, He doled out mercy; for every psychosis, He granted me release; for every bipolar dichotomy, He provided me with integrity.

There should have been no surprise in any of the above. After all, I was under the protection of the Mother of Perpetual Help from at least the age of 10 (1931). Every member of my family went each Tuesday during the Great Depression (1930-1940) to one of the 11 (!) O.L.P.H. services in our parish. The Great Depression was an era of much "one-for-one" religion, i.e. one went to church and/or prayed, and one received a favor. No R.S.V.P. memo was needed, just an "Amen."

My subsequent life as a Marianist made possible a full flowering of this devotion into a mature alliance with THE WOMAN whose mission was and is to bring people to believe meaningfully in Jesus Christ, her son. Was this life perfect then? Certainly not in my case. I denied my Lord all too often, not in so many words as did the struggling Peter, but time and time again, by not hearing Mary say, "Do whatever He tells you."

Would that I could appropriately represent my 75 years of consecrated life! If I count, in my Marianist life-span, whatever was lost from lack of effort, what was missing due to poor decisions, what was denigrated by sin, what was left unrealized for lack of fortitude, what were merely delusions of grandeur, and subtract the total from my life's work, what would be left "to crow about"? Humanly speaking, "not much!"

But, in the consecrated life, whatever is not downright wicked is God's work. So, it seems that He was using me for His purposes. Hence, whether I was teaching, or coaching speech, **or teaching**, or designing a laboratory, **or teaching**, or mentoring affiliates, **or teaching**, or climbing trees, **or teaching**, or mowing grass, **or teaching**, or maintaining light/plumbing fixtures, any good that was interwoven was God's good.