



FR. JAMES TOBIN

60 years of profession

It was September 1945! Mom and Dad sent me to Chaminade to begin fourth grade. My brother, Tom, was already a student there in high school. A Marianist priest or brother taught every class through grade and high school. But through those years, Fr. James P. Canning always encouraged me to think about becoming a Marianist priest.

After graduation in 1954, I had been accepted at the University of Notre Dame. But at the last minute (challenged by a Marianist), I decided to try out the “road less travelled” and head to Marynook Novitiate in Galesville, Wisconsin. After the initial shock and homesickness, the seed of a vocation was gradually cultivated and nourished.

Somehow or other at the ripe old age of 18, I knew I had a direction for my life—a mere 60 years ago! In attempting to articulate my reasons for requesting first vows, I put two reasons: 1) to become closer to Jesus and 2) to bring others to Him through Mary. As I celebrate my 60th jubilee, those two reasons are still deep in my heart.

Walking down this “road less travelled” over the years has been quite an experience. I reflect on all the different communities in which I have lived, all the different ministries, and all the people who have touched my life — especially my own family, whose loving support was always with me. And I am so grateful.

My years at Regina Mundi Seminary in Fribourg, Switzerland, were especially wonderful leading up to ordination. And there are two ministries, in particular, for which I am grateful: my 14 years at Saint Louis University School of Medicine, working with medical students and my 15 years as pastor of Our Lady of the Pillar parish in St. Louis. Those warm memories will always be in my heart. And my time in India helped me grow in many ways, with the inspiration of my brothers.

So, what more can be said other than a quote from one of the psalms: “What return shall I make to the Lord for all His goodness to me? I will take up the chalice of the Lord and call upon His name!”

For all that has been — THANKS! And, for all that will be — YES.