



The Marianists

FR. JAMES FITZ

50 years of profession

In the book of Proverbs we read: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Marianist life has given me a vision. It is a vision expressed well in the opening chapter of our *Rule of Life*: "Our goal is to be transformed into His (Christ's) likeness and to work for the coming of His kingdom." In whatever I have done as a Marianist religious, the vision and dream of God's kingdom has been the inspiration for my ministry and life.

Much has happened in the 50 years since I professed first vows. My initial dream to teach mathematics for 50 years was never fulfilled. Little did I dream of the changes that have taken place in my own life and in the life of the Society of Mary during these years. I have served as a high school religion teacher, an adult educator, a director of novices, a member of the provincial administration, a campus minister, a university administrator and in many part-time roles.

During my years, we have seen a world of alienation, hatred and violence (human beings at their worst). But the dream and vision has stayed the same. Our world still needs to see caring, sharing, and forgiving (human beings at their best). The witness power of our family spirit, our community life together, still motivates me. It has given me life, and I look forward to more years of living the ideal we place before ourselves in the *Rule of Life*: "In communities inspired by faith, we seek to live like the first community of Jerusalem, having but one heart and one soul. Thus, we hope to bear witness to the presence of Christ and to show that still today the Gospel can be lived in all the force of its letter and spirit." (article 9).

When I was a very young brother, the musical *Man of La Mancha* opened on Broadway. One song has inspired me over the years; its words speak to the vision and the dream:

To dream the impossible dream
To fight the unbeatable foe
To bear with unbearable sorrow
To run where the brave dare not go

To right the unrightable wrong
To love pure and chaste from afar
To try when your arms are too weary
To reach the unreachable star

This is my quest
To follow that star
No matter how hopeless
No matter how far
To fight for the right
Without question or pause
To be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause

And I know if I'll only be true to this glorious quest
That my heart will live peaceful and calm
When I'm laid to my rest

And the world will be better for this
That one man, scorned and covered with scars
Still strove with his last ounce of courage
To reach the unreachable star

I come to this 50th jubilee year convinced that the world is better for this that we Marianist religious have dared to dream and hope. We have committed ourselves to the dream of Jesus Christ and Blessed William Joseph Chaminade. I promise to give my energy to this proclamation of Christ's kingdom: "a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of grace and holiness, a kingdom of justice, love and peace" (preface for the Feast of Christ the King).