



The Marianists

FR. PAUL FITZPATRICK

50 years of profession

Often in my life, I have thought of that quote from John 15:16, “You did not choose me, but I chose you.” I entered the postulate at 16, knowing that I wanted to be a teaching brother — though I could have been a teacher without being a brother, and I doubt I could have explained the choice. A year after I made final vows, I realized that whatever gifts I had in ministry, I could best give them through sacramental ministry, and my call to priesthood finally made sense to me. As I’m fond of saying to folk (and this confuses them completely!), “Some of our men are so gifted and talented in ministry that we don’t want to tie them up by making them say Mass and hear confessions, so we let them stay a brother.”

When I was 11 years professed, one year short of ordination, it became clear to me that the heart of what I wanted to do with my life was to support others in their faith in God and nurture my own faith in God through that. I finally understood that God had put me exactly where the deepest desire of my heart could find a path. That desire has played itself out in many ministries.

When I realized I was getting to be more of a parent than an older brother in high school ministry, I asked for a change to parish ministry. When I realized my greatest gift was teaching, I asked and was given permission to pursue doctoral studies at 45 years of age. I asked myself what I would have the energy to spend the rest of my life studying, and I said, “Scripture!” I have not been disappointed. Amazingly, work appeared at the seminary in Boston when I finished my doctoral studies in Rome.

In 2010, I was asked to come to Honolulu to coordinate the program of Academic Preparation of the Permanent Deacon Candidates (and their wives) for the Diocese of Honolulu out of Chaminade University, to which I said yes. When I finish this assignment in about four more years, I will have trained about 35 to 37 men to preach in the Diocese of Honolulu. What a gift God has given me as a “final act” in my career in full-time ministry. I must admit, it seems to me, the most rewarding ministry in which I’ve ever been privileged to serve. In all the desires of my heart and life, which I strongly believed God wanted for me, my Marianist superiors have supported me; and for this, I am grateful.