



## The Marianists

### **Fr. George Montague**

*70 years of profession*

Community life and service as a Marianist have formed me in ways I never would have experienced had I followed some secular vocation. Since the age of 6, I wanted to be a writer and a newspaper publisher, and from ages 11 to 15, I published a monthly newspaper in my home town of Bandera, Texas. But at Central Catholic High School, I experienced the touch of the Lord, mediated in large part by the mentoring of the “Brothers of Mary,” as the Marianists were known in those days, and by the example of their community life and family spirit—so much so that, despite my father’s wishes, I did not wait to graduate but, with his reluctant permission, entered the order after my junior year of high school. My writing skills, honed already at Central, were buried in deep soil for a while, but then flourished in a new way, beginning with the publishing of my doctoral thesis and some 25 books since. I am amazed at God’s providence in all this.

The call to be “one of the brothers” was and ever has been, primary. The call to the priesthood was a vocation within a vocation, for it has been part of my journey with the Lord, with Mary and with my brothers since my ordination in 1958. My greatest priestly consolation has been in the confessional and in healing prayer, where the healing, forgiving, merciful grace of God is so tangible. When I walk out of the confessional, I feel not only the joy of the father welcoming home the prodigal, but the joy that I, too — no different from those I’ve absolved — am a prodigal returned to the Father’s embrace.

My 70 years in the Marianists have taught me the truth of the Gospel, that life has meaning and joy in giving oneself in service. And doing so, in a common mission with my Marianist brothers under the banner of Mary, has been the most fulfilling joy of my life. Community life keeps me grounded in reality and is a safeguard against independent hubris. I am deeply grateful to the particular Marianist brothers who have inspired me by their wisdom, encouragement, counsel and example. Teaching Scripture at St. Mary’s University has been a life-giving joy. My only regret is the many ways I have fallen short of the Marianist ideal and the good I failed to do. But as Saint Paul says, God makes all things work together unto good, and St. Augustine adds, “even our sins.”