



## The Marianists

### **Bro. Earl Leistikow**

*60 years of profession*

I was born Oct. 24, 1938, in the small railroad town of Parsons, Kansas. My father worked for the railroad, and my mother was a housewife who raised my two sisters and me. I was taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wichita at St. Mary's parochial school in Parsons and graduated in 1956 from the Catholic high school — St. Patrick's — tied in ranking as top student in my graduating class of 25. I was involved in sodality and attended regular Masses at the parish church next door, staffed by priests from Ireland. Inspired by religious teachers, I was interested in becoming a teacher in a religious order.

After a year at St. Benedict College in Atchison and summer work in St. Louis at Alexian Brothers Hospital, where my uncle was a nurse, I met — and was impressed by — Marianist Brother Anthony Sobocinski, who was studying nursing there. Encouraged by my aunt and uncle, I applied to enter the Marianists in Kirkwood and was accepted "conditionally" for entrance to the novitiate at Galesville with the class entering in 1957.

That year provided an intense spiritual experience, overcoming my shyness with social interaction in my group, and studying the constitutions and all aspects of religious life. But we also shared activities — the long hikes to various sites near the novitiate including the Mississippi, Decorah's Peak, Trempeleau Mountain and Lacrosse, Wisconsin. With joy and enthusiasm, our group made first vows at St. Mary's church in Galesville on Sept. 8, 1958, and began our first year at Maryhurst, the motherhouse of the province. It was intended to be "a happy continuation of the novitiate."

The next year, I continued studies at St. Mary's University where, in 1961, I earned my bachelor's degree in English. My first assignment that fall was Vianney High School in Kirkwood, followed by three years at St. Mary's High School in South St. Louis. I then taught at Chaminade College Prep until volunteering to move to Toronto, Canada. There, I taught Latin and French for two years at the new Marianist secondary school, Chaminade College School, before returning to St. Louis in 1969 to teach at Vianney and Chaminade until 1988.

After a year in St. Louis assisting with Marianist textbook work, I spent two years editing publications at the North American Center for Marianist Studies in Dayton, Ohio. From there, I moved to San Antonio as an assistant to the archivist, Bro. Paul Novosal. I have served as an archivist since 1992 and continue today with the National Archives.

My life as a religious has been filled with good times and difficult times, both in the classroom and in personal life. I am grateful for the many brothers and priests who influenced me. I am most grateful for the time God has given me to serve as a teacher and to serve the province of St. Louis and now the Province of the US, and the society. I remember the joy with which the "Te Deum" was sung at our first profession and continue to say "You are God, we praise you!"