



The Marianists

Fr. John Manahan

50 years of ordination

The longer I live, the more jubilees I celebrate. That is the result of a long life in the Society of Mary. Since I professed my first vows in 1954, I have celebrated 50 years in 2004 and 60 years in 2014. This pattern persists. Because I was ordained a priest in Fribourg, Switzerland, in 1968, 2018 marks 50 years as an “ordained brother.” It doesn’t seem that long ago, but calendars always tell the truth.

My ministry since ordination has been pretty much as it was before. I’ve worked in high schools as a teacher, counselor and campus minister; in retreat houses in Galesville and Glencoe, and from 1995 to 2006 at Holy Rosary parish in San Antonio. After a semester at Oblate School of Theology (Ministry to Ministers) I became an associate pastor at St. Francis de Sales in Cincinnati. Since that time, I have lived and worked at the Marianist Residence and Woodlawn communities in San Antonio.

I believe that being an ordained brother gives me the opportunity to serve the men with whom I live. We are ordained primarily to serve in community. Our ministry beyond the community is important, but it is not the reason we were ordained in the Society of Mary. Over the years, I have tried my best to be present and available to my brothers. I hope I have been “a brother to my brothers” — sharing in our common life and supporting them along the way. In the end, only God and the men with whom I have lived can judge how successful I have been.

Community life has been the catalyst for any growth I’ve experienced over these years, and I am grateful to all the men who have shared their lives with me. As an only child, community life has been the experience of family beyond the nuclear family for me. Living with my brothers has taught me a great deal about life and love, and for this, I am thankful.