



## The Marianists

### **Fr. Thomas Thompson**

*50 years of ordination*

My vocation is rooted in the fervent Catholic atmosphere that was part of the family, school and parish life in Pittsburgh in the early 1950s. An uncle, Bro. Joe Meder, was an enthusiastic religious whose weekly letters to his mother (my grandmother) and family described the daily life of a versatile grade school principal. The Sisters of Divine Providence at my home parish, St. Basil's, provided a rich devotional atmosphere. (I still correspond with and am grateful to my piano teacher, Sr. Generosa, who introduced me to the joy of music, without which I cannot imagine life.)

I entered at Marianist Preparatory, Beacon-on-Hudson, spent good years there and later returned to teach for four years (before seminary). The Hudson Valley, the beauty of the property, the spirit of the community, the building program and the optimistic outlook of the early 1960s still provide many fond memories.

Seminary education and the international community in Fribourg were broadening experiences and instilled interests, which I still pursue. Before going to seminary, I thought my service as community organist was over; to my complete surprise, I was encouraged to register at the Fribourg conservatory where I eventually attained a *Certificat d'orgue*, a degree cherished to this day. After graduate studies in religious history, I taught at Pontifical College Josephinum, St. Michael's (Toronto), and here at the International Marian Research Institute.

Since entering, I seemed destined for libraries. I came to the Marian Library in 1987, as the technological transformation of libraries was just beginning. It was also the time when there was great Hispanic immigration to Montgomery County (Dayton). A small Hispanic ministry program, originally started by Cubans, was overwhelmed and seeking a priest. I once again took up Spanish and served as chaplain of the Hispanic Catholic Ministry of Dayton for about 20 years; today it is a ministry of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.