



The Marianists

Brother Delmar Jorn

60 years of profession

I am the youngest of four children, born in the farm country of Illinois, 75 miles northeast of St. Louis. My sisters are 92 and 89, my brother is only 83. My education included eight years in a one-room country school, a public high school and two years of college at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, where my vocation story began. I am not an initiator, nor a volunteer, thus I have not asked for assignments or made plans for my future, and yet God has deigned to work with me in that way.

I asked my Newman Club chaplain at Bradley for advice on joining a brother's congregation as I had never met a religious brother. He took me to meet a former Marianist who gave such a good story of the Marianists that I joined mainly on his recommendation. I was accepted without having met a Marianist. At the novitiate, Bro. Joe Barrett asked me to take care of the chickens; at Maryhurst, I helped in the archives. At the San Antonio scholasticate, Bro. Arthur Goerdts, a librarian and my director, urged me to earn a library science degree, and I did so at Catholic University — thus, my ministry as librarian for 32 years in the U.S. and Nepal.

I had no real desire to go on a mission to another country. Years before, I had casually mentioned to the provincial that I would go on a foreign assignment if I did not have to learn the language of the country, as I am very poor at learning languages. That was surely a safe statement. However, when we moved our India personnel to Kathmandu, we received visas by working in an English-speaking Jesuit school — meaning, I did not have to learn another language. And so I went to Kathmandu (after 36 years still no second language). One of my majors at Bradley was geography, so I knew where Nepal was.

When our time in Nepal ended, I took a sabbatical in Manila and then to our novitiate in Ranchi. The language of our formation houses is English, and so many of my years in India have been at our novitiate and aspirancy in Ranchi, and now two and one-half years at the scholasticate in Bangalore. In 2001, I was asked to be regional archivist, 43

years after my first archives work. The day I arrived in Kathmandu in 1982, our director, Bro. Jim O'Hara, asked me to be treasurer. That job included Nepal and India for the next 10 years, and it came back to me in 2006 when I was named head of temporalities for the district.

So at the age of 80, after two spinal operations, I am able to cycle for two hours each Sunday. Will God, through Fr. Oscar or the Government of India, ask me to continue doing what I am now trying to do: be a role model of an elderly Marianist, helping with accounts, completing the archives?

During all of these 36 years in Nepal/India, I have experienced God and Mary's care through my superiors of the St. Louis and U.S. provinces, and through all of the Marianist brothers and sisters — yes, I have taught Indian Marianist sisters, past and present in India and Nepal.