



The Marianists

BROTHER TIMOTHY PIEPRZYCA

50 years of profession

The youthful dynamism of the St. Louis Province of the Society of Mary arguably reached its peak in the middle of the 20th century. The cultural and political landscape of that era was the reflection of the New Frontier and the aspirations of the Second Vatican Council.

On the chance circumstance that Marianist Don Bosco High School was within walking distance, while Jesuit Marquette High required a bus ride and costlier tuition, I entered the world of the Brothers of Mary at the impressionable age of 14. There, I met men who like my father, blended prayer, work and intellectual thirst.

The Milwaukee Marianists were prayerful and passionate educators and spanned the generations: from Sanders, Heeley, Horlivy, Eichler, Bussen, Pozzi, and Cris Janson to Jach, Cowie, Towers, Haug, Ernst, Psołka, Barrett and Schilling. These men had a profound influence on their students as well as on the south side of Milwaukee, and an enormous impact on me. The power of the Marianists transcended the sum of its parts. The Society was a life accelerator and talent multiplier. Accepting Cris Janson's invitation, between the lines of the "Aeneid," I decided to hitch my wagon onto our Blessed Mother's star.

The mentorship and example continued through formation with Pieper, Cowie, Fleming, Neumann, Brisendine and Pleva. The gift of the companionship of these men and others was invaluable in forming me as a religious educator. Early years in community introduced me to the Marianists' best: Halwe, Mueller and Cornell at Central; Barber, Androlewicz, Bommer, Heyer and Siefert at St. Mary's High; McBride, Slay, Willett, Wightman, Tobin and Osborne at Chaminade; Meyerpeter, Barrett (my mother went to her grave saying that Joe Barrett was the best thing that ever happened to me) and Schimelpfening in Omaha. I have only to look outside my office window at the Marianist Cemetery to see the names of the many sweet men who passed through and continued to touch my life. I have stayed for them and for the better man they have made of me.

As Judy Collins wrote: "There is an old saying that every time you sigh, a drop of blood falls from your heart. It seems I sigh more now than I ever did, and that probably means my heart has lost many tear-shaped drops. I have lived my life, as we all do, between these sighs, between these drops of blood ... With the passage of time, I am able to speak

of circles that have been completed and old friends with whom I have reconnected. Many have died, each spiriting away a unique impression of me that no one else will ever have, each leaving a ghost of himself behind in my memory. These memories are my treasures..."

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