



FATHER EUGENE CONTADINO

Celebrating 50 years of ordination

“Describe your life as a Marianist religious.”

It has been a wild ride filled with successes and failures, sin and grace, light and darkness. Looking back, I see the hand of God in the brothers and friends, men and women who have come into my life. After all, I have never been out of those divine hands, and the God who promises eternal life has delivered over and over again to make resurrection a real experience in my life. My life has been both a walk with a community of believers and a constant search for the now-revealing God.

This life is a gift from God! It is not only the very breath I breathe, but I have been blessed with opportunities to work with people and in places I never dreamed possible. These experiences, coupled with the people with whom I have worked, have lifted me far beyond any dreams I ever had about what I could accomplish in this life. People have been good to me in so many ways, but most of all, they constantly have encouraged me to go further than I ever thought I could. I entered religious life believing that I was part of the scenery; there were always men and women around me who were more talented, brighter, faster, kinder, more outgoing and more everything. That attitude did not last.

What changed? I believe it was God in the form of my brothers and the men and women with whom I worked over the years who lifted me beyond my original view of myself. I have had great teachers and wonderful companions on the journey. I have been gifted with the time and space to, listen, to read and to reflect on my life as a contemporary believer. Each opportunity offered to me was accompanied by a community of men who supported and challenged me. I have been blessed to work every day in places where God’s presence not only is acknowledged, but where the invitation of the scriptures informs the very work we do. I work with and have been carried by holy men and women.

As I look back over the past, I see that being a member of the Society of Mary has been a gift to me. I have been given opportunities to teach, to preach, to travel, to meet people — all beyond my wildest dreams. Sometimes I laugh interiorly at what doors have been opened to me because of my belonging to this religious congregation. I have been blessed to work with men and women who not only have a sense of mission, but who

are willing to give their lives every day to further the Gospel vision. It has been an exciting ride, and it is not over yet!

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