



**Eulogy for Bro. Victor Forlani, S.M.
December 12, 2020**

Welcome and thank you for your presence here this afternoon, and to all those who join us online, as we celebrate the life of our dear brother, Victor Michael Forlani. Welcome Bro. Victor's brothers, Michael and Donald, and his cousin Salvatore. Thank you for joining us.

Victor was born May 31, 1943 to Michael and Sabina Forlani. He spent the earliest years of his life in a strong Italian family, living in the Italian enclave of Murray Hill in Cleveland. Some of the major themes of Bro. Victor's vocational story are rooted in this cultural experience of family and neighborhood. In Victor's family, and for most families in Murray Hill, meals were a great place of friendship and conversation. There was always room for one more person at the table with good food and good wine. Meals were always an opportunity for extended conversations and yes, sometimes heated arguments. Yet when the meal was completed hugs of affection were shared by all.

Bro. Victor made his first profession as a Marianist in Marcy, New York in 1962. He received a BS in Secondary Education and a BS in Business Administration from UD in 1965. This was one demonstration of Victor's ethic of hard work and persistence.

From 1965 to 1967, Victor served as a teacher at North Catholic High School. In 1967 he moved to Cathedral Latin School in Cleveland and served as Business Manager. In 1969, he

was assigned to Moeller High School in Cincinnati where he served as teacher and Business Manager. Steve Moeller, the former director of the University of Dayton Counseling Center, recounts how Victor arranged for Steve and other students to visit Cleveland. They enjoyed a grand outdoor pig roast at Victor's brothers. They then went on a tour of Cathedral Latin and the highlights of Murray Hill.

In 1970 Victor went back to Cathedral Latin where he served as teacher and worked with Bro. Frank Nurthen in CL's fundraising efforts. Victor learned well from Bro. Frank. Throughout his years in ministry, Victor always knew how to obtain the resources that were needed for the ministries in which he served.

From 1975 to 1980 Bro. Victor served as principal of Hackett High School in Kalamazoo, Michigan. During his tenure at Hackett, he worked with students, teachers, and parents to redesign the curriculum of the School. He demonstrated his skills as an educational leader and his ability to have the Catholic faith shape the curriculum.

In 1980 Bro. Victor became President of the Bergamo Conference Center. Working with the programming staff, they developed programming for pastoral and religious education needs of the Church and drew people nationally to these programs each year. During these years, we, Victor's Marianist Brothers, we often affectionally referred to Victor as the "Godfather of Mount St. John." He knew how to build relationships that got things done. He knew how to attract national speakers to the Bergamo Conference Center. He was one of the persons who helped negotiate a pretty good settlement from the State of Ohio for cutting through the Mount St. John property to construct I-675.

It was at Bergamo where Victor developed his reputation for hospitality. For Victor, hospitality starts by bringing a small group of people together to prepare a fine Italian dinner with very good wine. The guests would be invited to come to the table for an enjoyable meal. Yet, this table was set for more than a meal, it was a setting for conversations of friendship and for examining the critical issues of our time. Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski developed a friendship with Bro. Victor when she served on the Bergamo Board. She tells several stories how she, Bro. Victor, and Fr. Jerry Chinchar would prepare outstanding Italian meals for a wide circle of friends within the Church and the Dayton community. Through these meals Victor passed on his family tradition of preparing good meals and fine wine as a setting for wonderful conversations of friendship. Of course, there was always lots of dishes and pots and pans to clean up from these grand celebrations. Often as part of these celebrations, Victor would gather the men after the great celebrations to enjoy a good cigar. Victor brought many families together to enjoy an outing at the Italian Club where again the were good Italian meals and the children were introduced to Bochy Ball.

After a short sabbatical Bro. Victor came to the University of Dayton. From 1995 until his retirement in 2016, Bro. Victor taught undergraduate and graduate courses in business ethics and corporate social responsibility as a lecturer in the UD Department of Management and Marketing. In 2009, he was named Marianist in Residence in the School of Business Administration.

A central focus of Bro. Victor as an educator was integrating faith within the business profession. This focus is exemplified in his continued inquiry into the Catholic social tradition

and integrating this inquiry into contemporary challenges of the business profession. This focus and Bro. Victor's ability to transform knowledge into action lead to an integration of the Catholic social tradition into the exploration of contemporary business issues and an appreciation of the role of faith in the vocational journey of the business professional. Bro. Victor had a dream that the undergraduate and graduate students would leave the School of Business and the University with a desire to be transformative leaders. These transformative leaders would grow in their faith tradition and bring this faith tradition and deep professional knowledge to creating an economy and a market place that contributes to the human flourishing of all, especially those at the margins of society.

In 2003 Dean Sam Gould charged the Management and Marketing Department to add an ethics component to our School of Business Administration core. Victor was a leader in creating the "Walk the Talk luncheons" with students and business professionals. There were annually 15 of these luncheons each year. Victor created and taught MBA 758, The Principled Organization.

In 2009, Victor founded the Center for the Integration of Faith and Work to encourage students to explore the religious and spiritual dimensions of business, concentrating particularly on the ways Catholic and Marianist tradition can influence the way we work and lead. Although ethics was a key component of the Center, the Center went beyond ethics and looks at how values, personal commitment and character are inseparable for leadership ability. Bro. Victor was, not only, catalyst and founder of the Center for Faith and Work, he also shaped the work of the Catholic and Marianist Identity Committee in the School of Business, and the Walk the Talk luncheons.

Bro. Victor has touched the lives of hundreds of students and business professionals, helping them shape careers that are successful, humane, and full of faith. His philosophy of education was rooted in Catholic social thought and the Marianist tradition of social justice. Bro. Victor facilitated conversations within the School of Business Administration to view the business profession as a calling – as distinct from a series of jobs -- a deeper sense of purpose and social awareness is fostered and, at the same time, creates a culture of business integrity.

During his time in the School of Business Administration, Victor was a builder of relationships within the School of Business and across the University. In his courses in Business and Social Responsibility and Business Ethics, Victor would draw resources from across the University. To provide his students with an expanded vision of social responsibility, Victor would bring faculty with expertise in the Catholic social tradition, sustainability, and racial justice to present in his classes. This interdisciplinary work not only enriched the students' learning, but gave faculty an opportunity and challenge of presenting their passion for justice with business students.

Bro. Victor also led by example. In 2002 he was troubled by the growth of predatory payday lending practices. He challenged his students in his management class to work with local credit unions to devise a long-term solution to help families living paycheck to paycheck and avoid the high fees associated with payday lenders. The resulting StretchPay lending program is highly successful and now used by 58 credit unions in eight states.

Victor was an initiator and participant in several reading and study groups in the community that addressed the critical issues of our times. Judge Michael Merz who participated in several of these groups describe Bro. Victor as a “Pope Francis educator.”

His Colleagues in the School of Business experienced Bro. Victor as a person of warm friendship with a deep passion for justice. He was passionate about the integration of faith within the vocation of the business professional. As Irene Dickey put it, “Victor was a gentle and kind presence, always with a smile and a sense of joy. He dedicated himself to the hard work of making the world a better place. I would add that after he "retired", he still worked more than most full-time people still on the job.” She continued, “For me, Brother Victor was one of the kindest persons I have ever known. He was a connector. His Center provides academic programs, seminars and symposiums, and interdisciplinary reflection as well as opportunities to participate in prayer and cultural activities. It is a trusted resource for the melding of faith and work in our lives. His conversations with business professionals brought in to speak with students were meaningful and impactful regarding areas for everyone's professional and personal development.” Another faculty friend describes him as having “saint-like” qualities. Others remarked on his wonderful sense of humor and the ability to pull pleasant tricks on fellow faculty members.

Upon hearing of his death, a number of people on campus reacted to the sad news. Paul Benson, Provost, said: “Bro. Victor was beloved across campus and did such valuable work in the SBA for many decades. He will be much missed.” Eric Spina, president, had a similar reaction: “He was an extraordinary blessing to UD.” All of us on the campus, interested in social justice, were

quick to invite Bro. Victor into our conversations. He had great insight into the functions of the economy and the market place, and especially how these institutions must ultimately serve people at the margins.

Conclusion

In recent years, the Marianist Family of lay and religious members are exploring what the Marianist charism and tradition brings to building the Church and Society. I believe Bro. Victor's vocational story reveals three important themes of this Marianist contribution – Creating a culture of hospitality and encounter, educating to integrate faith into the professional life, and championing social justice.

Victor was not only a good cook and a setter of a fine table. In educational work and in his friendship, he created a culture of hospitality and encounter.

Out of his deep spiritual life and faith, Victor was an outstanding educator that enable students and faculty to reflect on how their faith tradition would shape their professional life. He educated and formed business professionals to be transformative leaders.

Victor was deeply sensitive to how people suffered from systemic injustice. As a teacher and scholar, he was dedicated to showing how the economy and markets could be transformed to provide greater human flourishing for all.

Victor, you have given a wonderful story as a creator of a culture of hospitality and encounter, as an educator that integrated faith with professional life, and as a passionate champion of social justice. In your place near the throne of our God and with the Blessed Mother of Jesus, intercede for us so that we remember these lessons you have given us.