



BROTHER JAMES JAECKLE

Celebrating 60 years of profession

My call to be a Marianist religious started before I even started. I was attracted in high school by the work and service of a number of religious who worked at Central Catholic and the boys camp, Tecaboca.

In novitiate, we were asked to choose one of three ways to serve as a Marianist: teacher, priest or working brother. It was an easy choice. Though I didn't know much about the working brothers, I could see myself there. Scholasticate was hard because of the academics. I was told to get a degree or leave. I struggled to the end but got the degree.

My first assignment was in St. Louis at Maryhurst on a crew of working brothers. Work was long and hard, but I learned a lot. I discovered that the brothers with whom I was working were self-taught and couldn't teach me. I started going to trade schools in plumbing, electrical and refrigeration/air conditioning —I loved it! Soon I was placed on my own at Vianney High School where I had the school, the residence and the grounds.

After two years there and six months at Chaminade, I was off to Texas to teach the scholastic working brothers, care for the buildings and serve on the formation team. It was more than I could handle. Fr. Quentin came to my rescue. He said, "Go to the shop and just have fun." I did and, in this environment, I was able to grow humanly, psychologically and, eventually, spiritually.

After nine years of formation and three years as director, I was asked to attend the I.R.F. (Institute of Religious Formation). God's grace in abundance! Nine months of study and a 30-day retreat in Spain were major graces.

I returned to formation work in San Antonio. I closed the shop and sold most of the equipment. I began doing spiritual direction and directed retreats. After settling in to a new community on Woodlawn Ave., I started working with Ministry to Ministers at Oblate School of Theology and have been with them for 38 years. During this time, I continued to provide maintenance at the Marianist Residence and was director of St. Joseph Health Care community. I spent the next few years as a patient and a member of the team for the Care Center.

One of the gifts of the 30-day retreat was to appreciate that all things are a gift from God. Living this out and trying to be faithful to the graces continues to be a grace and a challenge.

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