



## **BROTHER JOHN LEMKER**

*Celebrating 70 years of profession*

In my many nature photography adventures, I often have found myself “standing in awe” at the beauty of God’s creation. This jubilee time of 70 years is truly another time of awe and wonder at God’s presence in my Marianist life. Ministries developed surprisingly — actually the work of the Holy Spirit — and with them came profound influence on my spiritual life.

As I transitioned from teaching physics and math, and earth science (all sources of wonder) to director of a Scripture Study program for the Diocese of Kalamazoo, there came a deeper understanding of my call to Marianist life. The presence of Mary as portrayed in the Gospels of Luke and John became a major influence on my teaching and personal life. “God asks us to follow in a special way Jesus Christ, Son of God, Become Son of Mary for the salvation of all” (Rule Art. 2). The last 20 years at the novitiate have been such a blessing to ponder these words and reflect on the communion of saints, Mary, Joseph, John, Chaminade, family and all the living ones in Marianist communities.

I also have been blessed to be with all the men beginning their Marianist journeys. I have had time to discover first-hand what Gerard Manly Hopkins said in his poem “The World is Charged with the Grandeur of God” and to photograph a bit of that grandeur. Gallery Saint John has been a wonderful instrument in allowing me to share this grandeur with others and invite them to “stand in awe,” to reverence God’s creation and to contemplate God’s presence. Photographer DeWitt Jones expressed it this way: “God gave me photography so I could pray with my eyes.” God gave me the gift of being a Marianist for 70 years that I might pray in awe and grateful joy with my whole being.

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