



## **BROTHER THOMAS GIARDINO**

*Celebrating 60 years of profession*

**60** — It's a big number! A lot of days. What makes them real and a joy for me is reflected in my favorite article [91] in our *Rule of Life*, "To the end of our days, we are happy to spend our lives and our strength in Mary's service since they belong to her ..."

The path of Marianist days began for me as a search for freedom, even if I didn't realize it fully then. Still, through the years, I have felt that spending my strength in Mary's service for others led me to community life and apostolic ministry; as the psychologist William James put it: Wherein I felt most deeply and intensely alive and active such that a voice inside me said, "this is the real me."

It is all grace for which I am irrepressibly grateful.

At the ceremony for my 50<sup>th</sup> jubilee, the formula for renewal brought tears to my eyes when I read, "... forgive all my past infidelities ..." At 60 years of Marianist life, I am still so aware of them, as they are also part of the "real me." However, along the freedom path, I've come to experience God's unconditional forgiveness and love. All grace ...

I am indebted to the influence of my parents, relatives, friends, vowed religious brothers and Lay Marianists. In particular, I think of Fr. William Ferree, who provided me with an expansive vision of the Marianist horizon, and Bro. Hugh Bihl, who mentored, blessed and challenged me to deepen my understanding of gospel freedom in a Marianist perspective. They all were Mary's instruments who gifted me with apostolic activities I never dreamed of as the youth who took the first step, under grace, on the road to freedom.

All those days and the ones to come "belong to her."