



Father Paul E. Fitzpatrick, SM

Celebrating 60 years of Profession

Though I have served in many varied ministries over the years, what gave me energy in all of them was the possibility of supporting people in their faith life. Whether it was in high school retreat work, sacramental ministry and preaching in parishes, teaching scripture at the university level, leading many biblical study trips, or family ministry, what got me out of bed every morning was the possibility of supporting others and being supported by them in their graced search for God.

Born in Brooklyn, NY, my family moved to Garden City on Long Island when I was five. It was there that I attended St. Ann's School, followed by Chaminade High School in Mineola and Marianist Preparatory in Beacon. I professed my First Vows on February 11, 1965, in Marcy, NY, and earned a B.A. in Philosophy from University of Dayton in 1968.

When I was looking for a discipline in which to do graduate studies, Jack McGrath told me to pick something that I would have the energy to spend the rest of my life studying. I chose scripture, and I have not been disappointed. It is, for me, the rich earth that irrigates the soil of my own search for God and the vehicle in ministry which allows me to support others in their search. As a result I went on to earn several more degrees—Master of Religious Education (Seattle University, 1975), Master of Divinity (University of St. Michael's College, 1977), Master of Pastoral Counseling (Loyola University Maryland, 1985), Licentiate of Sacred Theology (Weston Jesuit School of Theology at Boston College, 1998), and Doctor of Sacred Theology (Gregorian University in Rome, 2001)—in addition to earning *Élève Titulaire* status in biblical studies (École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem, 1996). With the conclusion of my seminary studies at University of St. Michael's College, I was ordained to the priesthood on May 28, 1977, in Marriottsville, MD.

I was not always the student, however, teaching both French and religious studies at Cardinal Gibbons High School in Ft. Lauderdale, FL (1968-69), Chaminade High School in Mineola, NY (1969), and Chaminade High School in Hollywood, FL, where I also held the position of director of guidance (1970-74, 1978-81, 1986-87). My service also took me to Colegio San José in Puerto Rico, where I taught religion and served as director of campus ministry as well as part of the administrative council (1981-84). I served as school chaplain and continued teaching religion, plus Spanish and Latin, at Xavier High School in Middletown, CT (1988-90) while concurrently serving as Associate Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Vernon, CT (1987-90) before becoming Pastoral Associate at St. Joseph's Parish in Eldersburg, MD (1990-95).

I moved from secondary education to the university level in 2001, serving as a professor of Old and New Testament and Christian-Muslim dialogue for the Archdiocese of Boston at St. John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, MA, until 2010, at which time I moved to Chaminade University of Honolulu, HI. There, I served as a professor of both graduate and undergraduate scripture courses, as

director of the master's program in pastoral theology, and as director of academic formation of the Permanent Diaconate for the Diocese of Honolulu.

At this stage of my life, as I keep trying to transition into part-time pastoral ministry as a retreat chaplain at the Marianist Family Retreat Center in Cape May Point, NJ, I hope that I can continue to find ways to nurture the faith life of the people of God. I suspect I will do this both to keep my own search for life alive and out of gratitude for all who have supported me over the years—from my parents, the sisters I had in grade school, the brothers at Chaminade, my Marianist confrères the last 60 years, and all the lay people I have served with, plus those I have served whose faith search has inspired my own, lifted me up, and will eventually bring me home.