



## Father Joe Kozar, SM

### *Celebrating 60 years of Profession*

As I look at the past 60 years of religious life, I see the serendipity of historical circumstances and opportunities. I professed First Vows on August 22, 1965, in Marcy, NY, just prior to the decrees of the Second Vatican Council being put into effect. That Advent, the Catholic Church changed. The grand Latin transcendent and universal liturgy gave way to the Mass in English. We went from “dialogue” Mass with a mix of English and Latin to awkward, make-it-up-as-you-go-along, loose-leaf binder liturgies to the return of the beautiful post-Vatican II liturgy that we witness today. As I come to the celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my First Profession, we seem to have some movement to reimagine the liturgical life of the pre-Vatican II liturgies. (*The Lion King* was right—it is a circle of life!)

I grew up in Pittsburgh, PA, and attended University of Dayton, where I earned both a bachelor’s in theological studies and a master’s in religious studies in 1969 and 1973, respectively. I went on to earn a Master of Divinity in Theology from the University of St. Michael’s College in Toronto, Canada, in 1976, prior to my ordination to the priesthood on May 21, 1977, in Dayton, OH, followed by a Doctor of Philosophy in Theology from St. Michael’s in 1989.

My Marianist service has included teaching at Moeller High School in Cincinnati, OH, Covington Catholic High School in Covington, KY, and North Catholic High School in my hometown of Pittsburgh, in addition to program development at the Bergamo Retreat Center in Dayton.

I have been a professor at University of Dayton in the Department of Religious Studies since 1985 and currently serve as Assistant Rector at the university, Director of the Alumni Hall Marianist Community, and as the liaison for the Office of Mission and Rector to the College of Arts and Sciences, the Roesch Libraries, the School of Engineering, and the School of Law. I am fortunate to celebrate a daily Mass on Mondays at the University Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, as well as Masses at the Alumni Hall Community’s Mother of Good Council Chapel, in addition to being a Sunday assistant at St. Patrick Parish in Troy, OH.

I was blessed to celebrate the beatification of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade by St. Pope John Paul II on September 3, 2000, in Rome. When I entered the Order, we saw Father Chaminade mainly as a figure in history, but we are now blessed to see him as the saint that he was and is. The Catholic millennial generation looks back to the time before the Second Vatican Council and to the time of the pre-Vatican II saints as a key factor in working out their contemporary Catholic identity. They want a world with God in it, and I feel blessed to be part of that world. I was also privileged to lead a mixed group of university faculty and staff to celebrate the beatification of Blessed Adèle de Batz de

Trenquelléon, our blessed Mother Marie of the Immaculate Conception, on June 10, 2018, approved by Pope Francis, and I am hoping to be able to celebrate the beatification of our third founder, Marie-Thérèse Charlotte de Lamourous in my lifetime.