



## Brother Richard L. Thompson, SM

### *Celebrating 60 years of Profession*

On my 60th year of religious profession as a Marianist, I can't help but be filled with gratitude to Almighty God and to our Mother Mary for calling me to be a religious in the Society of Mary. I have been blessed to be surrounded by a community of men who, by their example of dedication and service, have continually encouraged and challenged me to live our vocations more fully. I have been blessed by the presence of many laymen and women who, throughout my years in various ministries, have given me confidence and have challenged me to live my vocation more fully. I have been blessed by the presence of perhaps thousands of teens and young adults who have been placed in my care over the years. I hope that I have modeled in some way the love, care, and compassion of Jesus and Mary, and I pray that they, in turn, pass these on to all they meet in their life journey.

My own life's journey began in St. Louis, MO, where I was born and attended St. John Vianney High School for three years followed by one year at Maryhurst Prep, graduating in 1964. I professed my First Vows on August 22, 1965, in Galesville, WI, and earned a Bachelor of Arts in social studies and sociology from St. Mary's University in 1969.

I then pursued my M.A. in guidance at Texas Christian University from 1971 until 1973 and earned my M.A. in secondary school administration from the University of Notre Dame in 1975. I continued my education with courses and workshops in both counseling and administration at Saint Louis University, University of Dayton, University of San Francisco, and Marquette University, and earned a certificate in ministry leadership from Boston College in 1997 during a sabbatical period. I held or currently hold certifications for teaching in Texas and Missouri and as a secondary school principal in Missouri and Wisconsin, and I am assured of certification as a secondary school administrator in all 50 states through my NCATE-approved degree from Notre Dame.

My academic service began at Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth, TX, teaching religion and history in addition to some guidance work (1968-1973). I then taught religion and served as junior divisional moderator at Assumption High School in East St. Louis, IL (1973-75) before returning to my alma mater, St. John Vianney, to teach history and serve as assistant principal and dean of discipline and academics (1975-1981). In 1981, I relocated to Milwaukee, WI, where, for six years, I served as principal and as the first president of St. Thomas More High School. I moved back to St. Louis in 1987, serving as dorm prefect and later as director of the Resident Student Program at Chaminade College Preparatory School, responsible for the recruitment, supervision, and admission of domestic and international students living on campus. Leaving Chaminade in 1992, I returned to Vianney once again as a freshman counselor, in which capacity I worked with students and teachers for three years to better understand and adapt to different learning styles.

From 1997 until 2002, I served at the Marianist Retreat Center in St. Louis as a member of the youth team directing high school retreats while also serving as director of the Marianist community living on the property. I returned to Texas and Nolan Catholic High School in 2002, this time serving four years as principal, and in 2006, I became director of the Marianist Urban Students Program (MUSP, now known as the EXCEL program) at San Antonio's Central Catholic High School. In this role, I developed and administered the first MUSP in Texas sponsored by the Marianist Province of the United States to help high school-aged Latino boys finance a Catholic high school education and develop leadership and service skills. I have continued to serve in this capacity as well as director of the EXCEL Program at Central Catholic while in retirement at the Woodlawn Marianist Community.

Yes, a jubilee is a time for reflection and gratitude. Sixty years is a long time, although it has passed so quickly. I now find myself thanking God daily for His many blessings and asking that my humble efforts be accepted and transformed so the Father and the Son might be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary.