



Today's MARISTS

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A Marist Chaplain at the Claremont Colleges

- Fr. Joseph Fenton

Below the dramatic San Gabriel Mountains that tower over Southern California and 35 miles east of downtown Los Angeles along Interstate 10, the transcontinental highway that connects the Pacific with the Atlantic oceans, are The Claremont Colleges. A consortium of seven small, independent, undergraduate colleges and universities, modeled on Oxford University in England, they are among the most esteemed higher education institutions in the country.

Kevin Starr, the eminent California historian and former Librarian of the State of California, writes that “together with the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Southern California, The Claremont Colleges form the intellectual center of southern California today.”

Pomona College was established in 1887, and in 1925 Claremont Mens' College (which became Claremont McKenna College in 1946), Scripps College for women and Claremont Graduate University were founded. Later Harvey Mudd College in 1955, Pitzer College in 1963 and the Keck Graduate Institute of Applied Life Sciences in 1997 were established to create the present consortium.

From its beginning the chaplaincy was integral to Pomona College's mission. The college was originally affiliated with the Congregational Church, but in the 1970s the interfaith Office of the Chaplains was

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Provincial LETTER



Father Ted Keating, S.M.,
Provincial

Dear Friends,

We are still recovering from the horror of the suffering of Haiti as we move closer to the celebration of Holy Week with its dramatic movement from the Cross to the Resurrection. We know from listening to and accompanying people who suffer that we have to take their suffering seriously. We cannot

just wash it away with sunny day phrases. They want to be heard where they are, not where we would wish them to be.

Our Founder talked and wrote a great deal of the inspiration of the Society in Mary's commitment to be with the Church in his times as she had been with the newborn Church. He never stated definitively what he perceived that moment of its birth to be. He spoke much of our seeking to be like Mary in the midst of the Apostles at Pentecost, so many assumed that he was speaking about those sunny moments of the new Church empowered by the Spirit and ready to go off and bring Christ to the world with enthusiasm and joy.

But an equally important moment for the Founder was Mary at the foot of the Cross with John, as they became Mother and Son to one another. Then in the Gospel of John, the centurion pierces the side of Jesus and "water and blood" flow from His side, symbolizing the birth of the Church in Baptism (the water) and Eucharist (the blood). This theme is taken up by a whole history of writers, especially in the ancient Church, who see that moment as the birth of the Church under the patronage of Mary, Mother of the Church and our Mother. This was a central theme of the view of Mary by Vatican II in the document on the Church, *Mary Mother of the Church*.

Here the Church is born as Jesus' side is pierced and as Mary's heart is pierced with agony as the prophet Simeon had predicted in Jesus' infancy. Mary is present at the Church at its birth and mothers it into

being as she had mothered Jesus so many years before. And she also mothers John and all of us into becoming other Christ's in this communion we call the Church. Having been overshadowed by the Spirit in her conception and in the annunciation, she is now the very presence of the Spirit to us.

The truth is that Marists take seriously this original inspiration of the Society and seek to imitate Mary by being present wherever the Church is being born—where the Word of God is being proclaimed and heard even when it is inconceivable, where the Gospel is being witnessed to in the midst of tragedy, where the Church is trying to emerge in the midst of poverty and oppression, where human suffering would try to make the reality of the Church incomprehensible. The Marist is also faithful to his calling when he stands at the foot of the cross with Mary contemplating the unthinkable occurring to the Innocence of God come among us in her Son, violently crucified by the civil and religious authorities with the crowds jeering for having come among us as the love of God. Not a pretty picture of the world.

In Jesus' final flow of water and blood, the Sacraments are born; Church comes into being; and we are with Mary, seeking to do Mary's work, now as one of her own.

This is a darker, but often more realistic, reflection on our Marist calling in so troubled a world as ours. It is no wonder that our Founder asked us to spend time each Friday afternoon of our lives contemplating the crucifixion of Jesus. And what it means about who we are, how we see the world, what we are called to be in its midst. We have no trouble taking suffering seriously in those we encounter. We know what creative suffering can do when brought to Christ in the power of His Resurrection rather than projected outwards in blind violence and retribution. Mary will be there still in the Upper Room, but it will be no wonder why her presence is so powerful there. No one

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established with a full time Catholic priest, Protestant minister, and Rabbi. Today, the Chaplains minister to a growing multi-cultural and multi-religious Claremont Colleges community.

“One of our major goals is to create the environment where students, regardless of their faith perspective, see us as their chaplains,” says Fr. Joe Fenton. “We minister, never proselytize, to everyone; so it is very important that we can relate and interact with students who come from all over the world with diverse religious traditions.”



Muslims, Hindus, Christians of all types, students of eastern philosophies and neo-pagans find a welcome at the McAlister Center for Religious Activities. Among the major religious traditions, the Chaplains observe the Holy Month of Ramadan, the Jewish High Holy Days, Passover and Holy Week and Easter for the Christians as well as the Hindu celebrations of Diwali and Holi.

“As many Catholic students, as well as other students, are struggling with their faith or seeking an adult spiritual dimension, we are witnessing a revival of religion on our campuses today,” says Fr. Joe. “That means our students are looking into a variety of new religious and spiritual perspectives for which we must provide the guidance.”

While the Chaplains minister as if they were at a religious institution, The Claremont Colleges are private

and secular. The Office of the Chaplains is funded by the colleges, and the Chaplains are directors of the Claremont University Consortium. In turn the Chaplains serve as spiritual leaders to the entire community.

The highlight of the year is the Office of the Chaplains’ Baccalaureate Ceremony, the one Commencement event common to the seven graduations of The Claremont Colleges. Throughout the year, the chaplains celebrate religious services and retreats, participate in the academic life of the colleges, sponsor special events, especially in the area of social justice, and so assist the students in their religious and spiritual development.

“The key to this ministry is to enjoy the students,” says Fr. Joe, “which is to say be open, non-judgmental and a good listener.”

Fr. Joe Fenton has been a professed Marist since 1966 and was ordained in 1972. He presently serves as the Chaplain Administrator of the Claremont Colleges in Claremont, California.

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knows the world's suffering better. No one takes it more seriously. She never forgot it in the midst of Easter joy and we are called to make her the model for our own Easter faith as Marists, ready to be with her wherever the Church is being born—Calvary or the Pentecost explosion of joy and peace. She is truly the Mother of Sorrows as she has been so much represented among the world's poor and forgotten.

Mary continues to mother the Church into being “even in these faithless times” to use the language of the Founder. The world's faithlessness is no match for the power of God's hope, God's compassion, God's peace. Mary seeks to bring the world's suffering into her “embrace of all.” We don't have to be Pollyanna to be Marist. We can live at peace in the midst of the world “just the way it is.”

I would like to recall in memory, Peter Allen, SM, an English Marist, who died in 2005 after many years of suffering from an illness like what we call Lou Gehrig's disease here in the States. He wrote a magnificent essay on this theme in 2003 that I have borrowed liberally from for this note. It is an extraordinarily creative use of Marist images and sources to understand the meaning of suffering as a Marist. Perhaps only he could have written this profound essay.

Father Ted Keating, SM

Part Two The Marists in West Virginia THE MARIST PRESENCE IN THE MISSIONS OF WEST VIRGINIA

In 2010 four of the 12 Marists in West Virginia continue the 108-year history of Marist pastoral ministry in the hills of Central West Virginia.

Around the turn of the century, Bishop Patrick J. Donahue (1849-1922) was the head of the Diocese of Wheeling. He obtained an "enlarged supply of priests" for the territory of Buckhannon and Richwood, an area almost twice the size of the State of Delaware, by entrusting its pastoral care to a religious congregation with a missionary spirit.

He chose the Society of Mary, known as the Marists, for this mission field. For first appointments to the district, the Society of Mary recommended to the bishop the Reverend Nicholas Hengers, who had come to the Diocese of Wheeling the previous year and was stationed at St. Michael's in that city. The choice was a felicitous one and the appointment marked a turning point in the history of these missions.

Father Nicholas Hengers was a native of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. He joined the Society of Mary and came to the United States of America, where he was ordained a priest on June 21, 1901. His missionary zeal, although driving and unflinching, always remained methodical, practical, and prudent.

On December 15, 1902, Father Hengers, poor in missionary experience, poorer in cash, but rich in hope and apostolic zeal left Wheeling for Buckhannon, where he took up residence. He was joined, after a short time, by Father John Glodt as assistant and later by Father John Capesius. After a year or so, Father Joseph Delaire succeeded the latter.

The name Richwood, originally Rich Woods, derived from the rich, loamy appearance of the soil in the surrounding forest region in which the town stands and first applied to the section between the Cranberry, Cherry, and Gauley Rivers, known as Hinkle Mountain. The first Mass ever offered in it was celebrated by Father DeLoan of Weston on January 1, 1902. At the close of 1903 a church was built by the congregation. The building was soon found too small for the congregation. It was apparent to Father Hengers that the importance of Richwood could not be ignored, and as early as 1905 he transferred his residence from Buckhannon to Richwood.

During the summer and autumn of 1905 a church and a small rectory were built. These buildings were erected against the side of a hill and the left bank of the Cherry River; but, while Richwood was expanding, other localities also claimed the attention of the Marist missionaries. *(to be continued)*

The Marist story in West Virginia will be continued in the next issue of Today's Marists.

“When My Brother Became a Marist I Became a Member of the Marist Family”

Being part of the Marist family is not a figure of speech for Irene Schaefer – it is a tangible, lived reality, due to the close relationship she has had over the years with the Society and her brother, Father John Ulrich.

Irene, an RN, was always close to her brother John, the two of them the oldest girl and boy in a family of eight children. And when John went away to seminary, their connection did not end. “I made sure I visited him in every assignment he had,” she recalls. And whether Irene visited him at the seminary, in Boston or Atlanta, meeting friends he made in Ireland or at the Society’s house in Rome, she came to know the Marists as more than her brother’s congregation. “I was always welcomed and treated like Marist family – they are such a warm and loving and down to earth community,” she says.

Distinctions between spiritual family and family of birth blur, as John has spent his vacation each year since seminary with Irene and his siblings, perhaps bringing another Marist along, such as Father Kevin Duggan, who ministers with Father John at Newman Center Campus Ministry at California State Polytechnic in San Luis Obispo, CA.

Coming to know the Marists, Irene’s affection and admiration for them led her to become a donor to the Marist Retirement Fund. “I decided to start contributing to the retirement fund because it is evident that each year more and more of their order are retiring and every religious order needs more assistance for their aging religious.” Irene likes how “Marists take care of their own. Marists have made a conscious decision to keep older Marists as a part of the communities so they are still with their brothers and continue to have a useful existence.” She supported projects such as the one-level rectory in Atlanta, where bedrooms with attached bathrooms make it possible for less mobile members to stay within the Marist community. “Older Marists are respected for what they can still contribute. Everyone knows what they achieved in their ministry, whether they were teachers, administrators, missionaries in far off lands or parish priests, and they are respected.”

Irene wishes all those who feel connected to the Marists – by blood or by faith – would contribute to “the unsung heroes” benefited by the Marist Retirement Fund. “Seeing all these priests grow older as I grow older - I have been impressed by the Marists’ strong sense of community, and I want to support that.”



**IRENE SCHAEFER AND
FR. JOHN ULRICH, SM**

Contributing to the
UNSUNG HEROES



Mr. Lou Mallis

“To Christ Through Mary”

is the 2009-2010 theme for the school year at St Peter Chanel High School, a place where “The Marist Way” is ingrained in our everyday life. The strong presence of Christ in our school can be attributed to the influence of the Marist Fathers and Brothers who founded this school and taught and lived here from 1957 to 1996.

Participation in both the 2007 and the 2009 Marist Conferences for North American Marist Educators held in Quebec and Detroit validated for me that St Peter Chanel High School in Bedford, Ohio is still teaching and living the “Marist Way” at our school despite the fact that professed Marists left the school in 1996. We give our best effort to model and teach our students to be like Christ in a

Marian way.

“THE MARIST WAY” AT ST. PETER CHANEL HIGH SCHOOL

Many ask us questions about how we can continue to teach strong Marist values without the presence of a priest in this school. The answer is very simple. We were profoundly influenced by the priests and brothers of the Society of Mary that were here with us for

many years and came before us. Those Marists have been an enduring inspiration for our faculty and our alumni. The Marist Society taught us that Christ and Mary will always be present in our school. Christ is alive her with and through Mary.

In May 8, 1953 Archbishop Edward F. Hoban donated thirty three acres to the Society of Mary and signed an agreement with the Very Reverend Edward McGrath, S.M., Provincial of the Marist Fathers. The Marists who are called to be educators and work with the young as a part of their religious charism agreed to establish St Peter Chanel High School. The school opened its doors on September 4, 1957 to 116 freshmen and to one of the finest faculties in the State of Ohio. Father Mark Edwards was named the first Principal, and five other Marist priests were assigned to Chanel: Fathers James Gilbride, James Hartnett, Gerald Hageman, Thomas O’Donnell, and Andrew McCormack. I grew up five blocks from this school and there was never a doubt in my mind that I would attend Peter Chanel, a decision that I’ve never regretted.

I cannot find words to explain the impact the Marist Fathers had on my spiritual, mental and physical development and well-being as a student at Chanel.

“The Marist Way” continued on page 7 . . .



Student Eucharistic ministers.



Students work together in school library.



Fathers Edward O'Connell, Gerard James, Phillip Gage, Peter Blanchard, Paul Cabrita, John Jazwiecki, Frank Kissell, Joe Hurtuk, James Gilbride, Jim LaCrosse, James Callow, and Father Ripp all had a tremendous impact on my life. The examples below are only a few ways they had an impact and helped to form me into the man I am today.

The Marists lived and taught at the school, so they were available to us

for twenty four hours each and every day. They were second parents and fathers to us, not just our priests and teachers. They had an impact far beyond the boundaries of the school in the Bedford community. These men went far beyond their ministry of teaching. I can remember Father James who planted every tree on the grounds and took care of the thirty-three acres given to the Marist community. Father O'Connell developed and coached the swim team, while teaching us about Social Justice. He also made sure that we understood that this was part of our Marist education and that we took what he taught us about justice seriously. Father Gilbride coached us in football, basketball, was the Athletic Director and also served as the Principal and taught Math in his spare time. Father Jazwiecki took care of the finances helping to build the strong foundation that enables us to stay open today. These examples are only a small part of all that these men did for this school and in this community. The common thread that ran through all their lives, the thread I try to emulate in my life today, is that they were involved with us and led us by example. They did not do what they did to be recognized, but in the way Mary did, in a "hidden and quiet" way. They patterned their lives after the Mother of Jesus. They practiced humility, self denial, love of God and neighbor with excellence. Many of the priests that taught me, made Mary's spirit permeate the very air that we breathed.

Their example and teaching is why the "Marist Way" is still alive and flourishing at St Peter Chanel High School. We are living it. The alumni and lay teachers who had the pleasure to be taught or to associate with the priests of the Society of Mary have made a profound impact that has endured in our community. We make it a point to live our lives in a Marist way. The men who founded this school taught me that they were here to teach for the glory of God and in honor of His Mother and today I hope to be able to carry on that tradition. The 2007 and 2009 Marist Educators Conferences validated my sense that St Peter Chanel High School is alive and well, teaching the "Marist Way". We can only do this because the Marist Fathers and Brothers have given my colleagues and me the insight and education to keep Father Colin's message alive in our school. That message is, "To Christ Through Mary"

Mr. Lou Mallis is very proud to be a part of the faculty of St. Peter Chanel High School in Bedford, Ohio for 30 years and to continue the traditions of the Society of Mary at the school.

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VOCATIONS – A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE - by Jack Ridout

Every day we can see that changes are appearing much faster due to the Internet, cell phones, social networking etc. and youth are at the forefront of these changes. They have readily adopted and adapted them as part of how they live, act and react with each other.



Jack Ridout

In the past, the Church and society in general were the religious and moral compasses. Now, we see how other significant influences approach the same issues. The idea of being quirky, following your own path and ignoring the wisdom of the past, including the Church and society, has become part of our everyday life.

We are amidst people who rely heavily on the Internet for news and information instead of a newspaper – that's *a different experience* from ours. We are amidst people who have grown up with the anonymity that computer communication allows – *a different experience*. We are amidst others who value being alone and spiritual in a forest and not sitting and praying with others in a church – *a different experience*.

What does this have to do with vocations? Plenty!

Responding to a vocational call is counter-cultural to everything mentioned above and is *a different experience*.

We are all called by Jesus Christ to a life of holiness, for some as a single person and others as married people. There is another group, consecrated religious, who take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience while serving God and us, His People.

Throughout history, the number of religious sisters, brothers and priests has fluctuated, with the most recent being a high number of vocations following World War II. During the past 40 years we have seen those numbers greatly reduced, but a recent study has shown an increase in vocations for some congregations.

What have those congregations done to increase vocations? They have re-established a “culture of vocations” in their schools, parishes and families, but more important, in their own hearts. It is *a different experience*.

How can we do the same?