

Society of Mary

Marists in the United States



June 10, 2022

Life Goes On

by Tony O'Connor, SM, Pastor, San Felipe de Jesus, Brownsville, Texas

On the weekend of the 4th and 5th of June I had the unenviable task of reading to the people of San Felipe de Jesus Parish a letter from the bishop of Brownsville announcing the withdrawal of the Marists effective August 31, 2022, after having established the parish in 1996 and having served it to this day.

For me it was a little more difficult than in other moments when I have been involved in our withdrawal from parishes and schools, in Peru and Venezuela, and also that of the regional withdrawal from Venezuela. My departure from here means that for me, after 42 years ministering outside my own country of New Zealand, I am to return. During this time I have changed; the people I left behind have changed or died; and with a creaking door, which thanks be to God has not fallen off its hinges, I face a new adventure in twilight years which I intend, please God, to be full of sunshine.

Every place where I have lived and worked has had its charm and the people in distinct ways in different places have been just great. One can't compare places or peoples. I have been blessed.

Mission has become more for me: giving people access to the power; helping everybody in any way; letting Providence act and not worrying unduly if at all.

Here in San Felipe what I have enjoyed most is: "Sembrando Alegria" the summer program for youth and children; collecting cans off the street and selling them for the food bank; building up a network of can collecting collaborators; setting up the parish as a haven for thousands of central American migrant minors coming to breathe, eat and pray outside their detention centers; feeding the needy here in Brownsville and more so over and up the river in Mexico including in Reynoso and Matamoros; taking clothes, shoes, blankets, jackets and diapers over the river for those in need. Ministry has never been a problem for me. When being open to anything and being creative, great things can happen around you and even despite you. It is not about me. It is about Him and all of us.

My greatest challenge always has been, strange to say but true, "to be and continue to be a Marist". But 52 years down the road has taught me to be a "child of the Spirit", "to collect dreams on the way and live by them" and to collect nightmares to face or flee from as well. All is clearly engrained in my mind and my heart.

The parishioners of San Felipe are going to miss those 26 years of a Marist Parish. Marists Hector Cruz, Joel Grissom, Brother Albert Philippe, FMS and Michael Seifert are all part of a legacy. Me too, I guess. My trousers keep falling down and I have been referred to as a "street person" but the people will miss me and I will them.

There is something unique about this community. But there is a sobering thought in the saying. "The King has died. Long live the king." We pray and trust that the new king, the pastor who takes over on August 31st and the two young Jesuit priests who will help out on a part time basis with this special group of simple loving people will all be in good hands.



Retreat for La Salette Missionaries

From May 23-27, 2022, Fr. Ted Keating, SM facilitated a retreat in Attleboro, Massachusetts for the La Salette Missionaries and their Province of Mary, Mother of the Americas,

Fr. Ron Gagne, M.S., Director of Communications for the La Salette Province shared the following write-up.

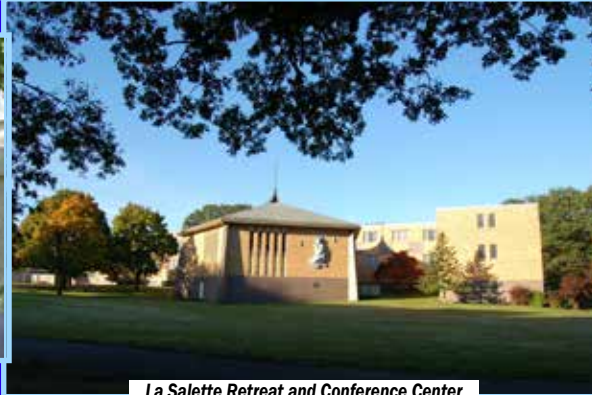
“It has been a very enjoyable and uplifting retreat given by Marist Fr. Ted Keating on Marian Spirituality – rooted in Mary as Mystery. It was a call to Prayer and Contemplation.” His mixture of scripture, paintings, poetry, and music was fascinating and intriguing. His biblical reflections on Mary and other scripture passages help us plumb the depths of the Word of God and connected it to our daily life of faith.

Fr. Ted’s joyful personality added much to his presentations. He is truly a person of deep faith, extensive ministerial experience, immersed in your Marian charism. We thank God for these few days with him, his stories, insights, and other gifts made evident in his time with us. We have much in common with his community and their longstanding ministry as a Marian Congregation.”

If you are interested in receiving the resource materials from the retreat please send an e-mail to: smpublications@maristsociety.org.



Fr. Ted Keating, SM



La Salette Retreat and Conference Center



Fr. Ron Gagne, M.S.

Fr. Duffy, SM Returns from Sabbatical

In December 2021 Father Jim Duffy, S.M., pastor of Our Lady of the Assumption (OLA) in Atlanta, Georgia, announced to the parish that the Provincial of the Society of Mary was sending him on a sabbatical to the Redemptorist Renewal Center in Tucson, Arizona to rest and rejuvenate, both spiritually and physically.

In notifying the parish he said, “I am tired and I do need to re-energize myself.” He also said that, “I truly look forward to coming back as your Pastor with renewed Hope and Vision.” Fr. Duffy returned to OLA on June 3, 2022.

Read more about his sabbatical [HERE](#).





NOTRE DAME

Pontiac, Michigan

8th grade Class Trip to Washington, DC

The 8th grade class from Notre Dame Middle School in Pontiac, Michigan recently visited Washington, DC for their annual class trip. During their trip they visited many historical sites and museums. They visited the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and Fr. Joe Hindelang, SM, Provincial for the Society of Mary in the U.S., celebrated Mass with the group in the [Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel](#).



Marist School

Atlanta, Georgia

9th Grade Class Trip to Six Flags Over Georgia



**1st Communion at
Sand Felipe de Jesus**



**Confirmation at
Sand Felipe de Jesus**



SM Publications received a request from Alan C. Mitchell Associate Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins Director at The Reverend Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J. Institute on Sacred Scripture at Georgetown University, Department of Theology, to circulate a request from Sr. Noel Keller, R.S.M. at Misericordia University in Dallas, PA. The Institute on Sacred Scripture at Misericordia University has decided to do a series of webinars over the course of the year. The webinars help us to continue our pursuit of Scripture study.

Click [HERE](#) for more information.



The Archdiocese of Atlanta, Georgia will celebrate the 25th Eucharistic Congress on June 17-18th, 2022 at the Georgia International Convention Center and Gateway Center Arena.

The Archdiocese of Atlanta's celebration of the 25th Eucharistic Congress is welcome news to the thousands who have experienced these joyful events since 1996. This year marks the inauguration of our Eucharistic Revival in the archdiocese. With the addition of three new tracks, a family track, a Burmese track, and a social justice track an even more exciting event is anticipated!

Focusing on the way that our Encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist both encourages and empowers us to share the love of Christ with others, speakers in all tracks will be giving their own personal witness of the power of this Encounter.

As an added inspiration, there will be an opportunity to venerate the relics of two men who lived out a love for the Eucharist, Blessed Carlo Acutis and St. Manuel Gonzalez Garcia. Exhibits along the main concourse will highlight ways that people can engage in a more intentional way by getting directly involved in a social justice ministry.

Learn more at [HERE](#).



This will be the last Society of Mary USA E-Newsletter until mid-August. We look forward to sharing more news about our Marist ministries with you when this publication resumes!

In the meantime, we encourage you to continue following our posts on the Society of Mary USA [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

Thank you for your continued support! Wishing you a safe and relaxing summer!