

A Transition Period

I was very concerned as to what I would have to do at the college. After about a thirty-year absence, I wondered what would be my work here. I had left the college in 1958 and I was now returning in 1989. At this point I was suffering from malaria and had to take care, at least for a while. I had been here just a short time, and there were already many letters from the various missions I had worked for pressing for information. There were the college activities to get used to if I was to be of any help here, and I was invited to attend the various meetings of the Board of Trustees, but I had to get in rapport with the Province as to its plans and activities. I would eventually get to everything!

When I left the college I had two special Brothers to replace me, Bro. Kieran Thomas, who assumed the duties of training the young Brothers, and Bro. Linus Richard, who had full responsibility for the daily operation of the college. There was no need for concern.

I thoroughly enjoyed the meetings of the board with its quiet, exceptional individuals. Evidently some serious work had gone into the selection of the right individuals. Linus continued our close work with the IBM authorities and had carefully pushed the admission work to provide a full house. He had a judiciously chosen faculty, and his close work with the IBM authorities and students helped to assure us of plenty of applicants and continued our very good community relations.

All this presented the need for new buildings like Champagnat and Leo, the various townhouses, and the Lowell Thomas building. After a number of years of high-pressure work, it became evident that we would need a new young president for the college.

This new president was sent from God for he was young and ready for the challenge. It all seemed incredible, but the new young president had a way with teachers as well as the gift of wisdom. Besides, he was also so attached to the Marist Brothers, and loyal to their traditions, that he and his wife were invited to become affiliated members of the Marist Brothers. What Linus Foy had started would be continued and further developed during the years of service of Dr. Dennis Murray and his wife, Marilyn. He became a devotee of the spirit of the founder of the Marist Brothers and was anxious to be loyal to their traditions. He was not only young and unafraid, but he stimulated his teammates and grounded them in the same courage and gift of vision that our Founder had followed. He had not only taken over from Foy, but had forged on ahead with the knack of having his trustees with him, always at his side.

Behind both of our exceptional young presidents, there had been the old loyal standby always at the ready to spell out what was best for Marist College. I refer to the very first trustee I had selected in the early days, John J. Gartland, Jr. He is still the senior on the Board of Trustees. What this Board of Trustees has achieved is almost incredible. They have never lost the spirit of the Founder, Champagnat, and have been motivated by his example and legacy. That is very much why I felt right at home here at Marist and with the trustees of the college. I still busied myself with the work of the Marist foreign missions annually, which I had been doing right along, but I found it necessary to tell the Brother Provincial that it was time to find someone younger to continue the Marist mission work.