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July 7, 8, 9, 2006

From JOHN SCILEPPI ('68): Plans are nearly complete for the Twelfth Annual Greater Marist Spirituality Weekend to be held at Marist College on the July 7-9 weekend. The theme for the weekend is *Spirituality and Aging*, and as always, we will have a "Happy Gang" social each evening. This year Br. Don Bisson, a Jungian Christian spiritual director, will speak on the "Spiritual Tasks of Aging," and Biblical scholar Martin Lang will present "The Life Journey with Jesus According to Luke." We will also have a panel of our GMC members who will discuss their own personal spirituality at this stage in their lives.

There will be small group discussions and opportunities for prayerful reflection and private meditation, activities suggested by last year's participants. We will meet in the Henry Hudson room in the building named for Br. Paul Ambrose, Fontaine Hall; and those staying on campus will reside in the new (and more accessible) Upper Cedar Townhouses.

Costs this year have been lowered. Meals are \$105 (Friday dinner through Sunday lunch). A room (including linens and blankets) for an individual is \$65 for the two nights: with meals, \$170. For couples, \$100 for the two nights: with meals, \$310 per couple. As an added incentive, those sending their deposits by June 15th get a \$25 discount per person. Send \$30 deposit to Maurice Bibeau, 4 Van Wert Place, Hyde Park, NY 12538. Questions may be directed to me: John.Scileppi@marist.edu or (845) 575-3000 x2961.

SAVE THE DATE! MARIST PICNIC AT MOUNT ST. MICHAEL ACADEMY IN THE BRONX ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH. BRING DRINKS AND A DISH TO SHARE.

From **JAMES GARGAN ('59):** I have good news that I wanted to share with all. On March 21, 2006, at noon, the City of New York is renaming the corner of Bank St. and Washington in the West Village at Ptl Thomas J. Gargan Way. It was there on August 17th, 1947 that my father was killed in the line of duty as a member of the NYPD. Any of the B and b's who are in the area that day, I'd love to see. And over the years, if your travels take you to that area of NYC, it will remain a permanent memorial. (garganlaw@msn.com)

From **JOHN HART ('62):** I'm currently professor of Christian Ethics at Boston University School of Theology. This is my second year in Boston. I "commute" from Montana where I've been teaching for the past two decades. I teach in Boston during the regular academic year and in Helena during the summer. My Marist B.A. in Spanish has served me well. After teaching Spanish for a while, then working with Albert Philip in south Texas among Chicano migrant workers, I went on to grad school at Union Theological Seminary in New York where I focused on Christian Ethics and Liberation Theology and was a teaching assistant for Gustavo Gutierrez. I've been working on ecological issues

for the past quarter-century, serving as ghostwriter for a papal homily (Iowa, 1979) and for regional Catholic bishops' statements (Midwest, 1980). I've also been working on human rights issues for indigenous peoples through the International Indian Treaty Council, a non-governmental organization, through which I've met, and become friends with, extraordinary spiritual leaders/healers ("medicine men"/human rights activists). My latest book will be out in September: *Sacramental Commons: Christian Ecological Ethics* (Rowman & Littlefield).

I'll try to make the Marist College alumni weekend in the fall. It's hard to believe it has been forty years since graduation! I'll try to make the Esopus gathering next year. It's been a couple of years since my brother Tom (Marist College, '65) and I drove up to visit both places. He is now in New Jersey working for the diocese of Newark and is married with two sons at Rutgers University. I've been in touch with Jack and Gisela Broderick (in Connecticut) whose two sons are roughly equivalent in age to our kids. Jack and I and Bob O'Handley (at MIT) shared lunch in Boston last year. (drjhart@bu.edu; 617-353-3032)

From **REV. MONSIGNOR JOSEPH R. ROTH ('56)**: It is wonderful to see all those names from the old days. Concerning my time as a Marist Brother, I am very thankful to Almighty God and Our Blessed Mother for granting me those wonderful days. I lost contact with many of the Brothers when I served at the Marist Brothers School in Kobe, Japan, for eleven years, 1963 through 1973. I remember the days of "Jumpin' Joe Roth" and I guess these days are still with me in many ways. Returning from Japan, I spent a year and a half in the seminary and when I left I worked at Metropolitan Life Insurance in NY and in Greenville, SC. Had a great career going there but yearned for the service of the Lord and His Church in a closer way. Discerning my vocation was not always easy, but thanks to God, things came together, and with the help of my Jesuit spiritual director, I went to Pope John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, MA. I was ordained a priest in my mom and dad's parish of Sacred Heart in Bayside, NY. My priesthood has been in the diocese of Charleston, which encompasses the entire State of South Carolina. Over the years I served at The Citadel, the College of Charleston, the Medical University of South Carolina, and Bishop England High School. I became a certified fire fighter and in that career eventually became chaplain Emeritus for the Fire Chiefs. I became State Chaplain of the state Firefighters Association of South Carolina and still hold this position.

I remember the good days in Esopus, the wintry days of sledding the hill near the mansion and the winters in Tyngsboro working in the barn and putting up the buildings in Poughkeepsie. I think about the wonderful Brothers who taught me and the wonderful Brothers in training with me. I am especially grateful to those special Brothers: Paul Ambrose, Kieran Brennan, Conan Vincent, Tarcisius, Cyril Robert, etc. Recently, Frank Backus and his lovely wife passed through this way and we had a marvelous day together. If any of you come to Charleston, SC, please give me a call. God bless you all! You are all in my daily Mass. Know that you are loved and thought of so very often. (Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, 120 Broad Street, Charleston, SC 29401; 854-965-4998; jrr@catholic-doc.org)

From **JOHN (DAVID JOSEPH) MILLER ('57)**: Greetings my dear B/brothers in Christ and Marists All readers. First, you are going to need to grab your bottle of whiteout to cover up the "Rev." that has appeared with my name for the last sixteen years. It is with great spiritual joy that I announce that I am returning to the Catholic Church. Effective June 1st, I will reconfirm my belief (which I never truly abandoned) in the Roman Catholic Church and receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

If you read my article in the last issue of Marists All, you will notice that there were some happenings in my life that I did not personally and spiritually handle very well. After the death of my wife in 1987 and trying to be a "Mr. Mom" to two wonderful daughters, I suffered a nervous breakdown. At the time, sad to say, I felt the absence of my parish. The United Methodist Church came to our aid and offered us physical and spiritual presence. Before long, we found ourselves attending worship at their church, and eventually they approached me (because of my credentials) to apply for candidacy as a licensed pastor. Of course, the most wonderful thing was meeting Carol, who would become my future wife and the mother of my children.

For the last two years, I have been struggling with the question: Jesus, what do you really want me to do? Of course, as a Marist, I asked for Mary's intercession. I talked to many of my friends in the priesthood for advice and guidance. Several months ago, everything came together. I had a meeting with the Judicial Vicar of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston who listened to my story and gave me more advice and guidance.

Please keep me in your prayers as I make another turn in my spiritual journey. (415 Alta Vista Avenue, Glen Dale, WV 26038-1427; 304-843-1181; revjohn2538@comcast.net)

From **KATE HOGAN** (sister-in-law to **BOB HOPKINS ('52)**): (March 5) I spent the day yesterday with Mary and Bob and I can tell you that Bob's remaining days at Spaulding Rehab are dwindling. He eats, he walks, and he climbs. He walks up and down the stairs as part of his daily physical therapy sessions.

Another huge step in his remarkable healing process is his eating two meals a day. Although he still takes food in through the G-tube, he eats a substantial breakfast and lunch the way the rest of us do, by chewing and swallowing. Today, when I talked to Mary at the Rehab Center, she and Bob were having breakfast in the sunroom. She said that Bob was sitting up in a real, non-wheel chair for the first time.

We are all so thankful that there are all of you out there who have contributed to Bob's support system. There is no doubt in my mind that all of you combined have contributed enormously to Bob's recovery. He loves the visits and the phone calls he gets from the outside world. This support has motivated him to continue to bravely face his present rehabilitation challenges, and, better yet, to make plans for his future. Both he and Mary send you all their best love and showers of hugs and kisses.

(May 8) He is walking a bit on his own now with lots of physical therapy support. He still wears a back and neck brace to allow the broken bones in the neck and back to fully mend. He expects to be rid of these braces soon. Mary continues to be at his side night and day attending to his medical and personal needs.

Good news regarding Bob's future employment. His principal at Trinity High School has worked out a deal with him to work part time for the 2006-2007 academic term. He will teach three classes a day, five days a week: AP American History, economics, and a regular American history class. Bob seems to be very happy with this proposal. (gokate@comcast.net)

From **ERNEST BELANGER ('55)**: (to David Kammer): Hi, David. I gave Bob (Hopkins) a call today as you gave us his phone number. I had to be careful about the six-hour difference (from Spain), but I lucked out and was able to speak briefly with him. I don't think we know each other, but when I mentioned that I was little Joe's youngest brother, he said that I sounded like him. It's all in the genes! He did pass along the good news that he was now able to swallow his food. He sounded in good spirits. I just wanted him to know that there are people around the world thinking and praying for him and his family. (ebelanger@telefonica.net)

From **DON EDWARDS ('57)**: A lot of things have been going on here over the past month and a half. The prostate bone cancer is not going as well as it might. But the doctor said after I asked him last week about what I should say to friends and family: "You are not in imminent danger of dying." That's nice to know. Otherwise, things are progressing in the spirit of the Lord. I am now singing with our church choir and am sort of getting ready to do some solo work. Elaine and I visited our son and his family several weeks ago. The kids, Theo, almost three, and Jack, almost five, are precious. Even their meltdowns are exciting. The Lord is good. Each day my faith and spiritual life become more peaceful and powerful. Love, peace, and friendship (Donald.j.Edwards@snet.net)

In Memoriam: **Brother Joseph DiBenedetto ('59)**

From **BR. DON NUGENT ('59)**: Just wanted to let you know that Joe D. passed away on Saturday morning (March 18). The cancer he had been fighting for the past three months took a strong turn on him, and he weakened very quickly here in the novitiate the end of last week. By Friday night he was not able to stand or get up the stairs to his room. On Saturday the local ambulance squad brought him down the stairs for us and took him to Benedictine Hospital and to hospice there. It was his hope to get to Lawrence for hospice near his family. That was not to be. He died soon after arriving at hospice at Benedictine. He died quietly and peacefully, simply slipping away without regaining consciousness at around 11:00 on Saturday. Expressions of sympathy may be made in the form of contributions to the Marist Brothers in Esopus. Cards and notes of sympathy to his family may be sent here as well in my name.

From **GEORGE CONBOY ('58)**: (to John O'Connell) Thanks for contacting me about our loss of Br. Joe. It was the late summer of '55

when we old timers welcomed Joe and his classmates as they joined us as juniors in Esopus. Because we were in different provinces, after the College I didn't run into Joe until recent years on my visits to Esopus.

My last memory of Joe was when he took some time from his work with retreatants and ran over to Holy Rosary to greet us briefly and welcome us all back to our former home. Joe was just one of those guys that you can never forget, who was loved by all.

I remember when we drove the length of California last year with several classmates visiting other former classmates around the state. We called many of those whom we would see at the April reunion in Esopus. We passed around the phone and each got a chance to greet our Brother John Cherry for about an hour and talked about seeing him in a few weeks at the reunion, but God had other plans and took John home before we got to see him. And now Br. Joe was taken home just before we would be seeing him at our next reunion.

In one of the e-mails I received concerning Br. Joe, it was suggested that perhaps his friends could make a donation in his memory to the Marist Brothers for the maintenance of Esopus. Br. Joe worked his final years to maintain a beautiful retreat available to Marist students and many others. I think that a generous contribution according to our means is a wonderful suggestion, not only in memory of Br. Joe, but also in memory of those Brothers whom we loved so very much. As a matter of fact, it would be wonderful if each of us brothers (small b) could remember the Marists in our will.

Sadly, we will not see Joe at this reunion, but we can celebrate the life of a good man that we all loved. We share the sorrow that his family and Brothers must all feel, and we rejoice knowing that Joe rests in peace. (gconboy1@cox.net)

From **TOM FAHEY ('58)**: I remember Joe D. as a wisp of a young man with a cheerful smile and fun humor. We were at table for a while in 1955 at the prep, and at one meal Joe was laughing so loudly, Br. Master rang his bell, or gong (or whatever he used), and glared at our table. We all broke up! Little Joe D. had his napkin over his face and head down for laughing so hard. Br. Joe Damian finally smiled, and we all calmed down. Keep the laughs up, Joe D. I miss you. Thanks so much for your cheerful spirit. It will be with us always. (Faheyjt@aol.com)

From **DAVID KAMMER ('42)**: *As most of you know, Gus Nolan and I have been involved with Marists All from its beginning. We are pleased and grateful to have Vince Poisella manage the editorial work; he is doing a great job. As we moved from typewriter to the electronic age, Rich Foy did a yeoman's job in creating a Marists All web site. He has kept it up to date and in top condition. Early on, Jack Noone moved all of our past issues onto the site. That took much time and effort; we are very grateful to Jack.*

All of us who are still active in the publication are getting older. I am pushing 85. We need people to step up to assume what we do. Gus is still caring for the printing and mailing of each new issue from Poughkeepsie. I keep track of our postal mailing list and send labeled

envelopes along to Gus. I also keep track of our e-mail address book and notify our people about the appearance of each new issue on the web site. I shepherd the donations and pay the bills.

We are asking if there are younger people out there who might take on some of the work. We are looking for interns who might work with us for an issue or two and then fully take on some of the tasks. Vince will continue to coordinate, revise, edit, and publish the four issues each year. But he also will need a backup. If the four of us, including Rich Foy, with his computer expertise, each had an intern, we would feel relieved that this effort will not end when the day comes we cannot continue this work. With electronic communications more advanced than in 1988 when we began, moving some of the tasks over to other interested parties will not be difficult. We need those who may step forward who believe that what we do has value and would like to see our efforts continue. Please consider getting in touch with us.

I want to take this opportunity to thank some of our readers for supporting us financially. Most recently, they are: Mo Bibeau ('50), Bob Hopkins ('52), John Miller ('57), Jack Redmond ('51), and Tom Simmons ('63). Our financial resources are a little under \$1000. Most expenses involve those who still would like to receive a hard copy of each issue. Electronic copies do not cost us anything!

Esopus Gathering

Our readers have been following the reconnecting of Marists and former Marists (Big B and small b Brothers) as John O'Connell ('58) began to compile a directory of those who experienced training together in the mid to late 1950's at Esopus and Tyngsboro. He made an effort, helped by the gifted memory of George Conboy ('58), to contact everyone who went through those halls fifty years ago. The inspiration that motivated this initiative was the quiet death of Vinnie Hall. Oke wanted to be assured that another of our brothers would not die without our awareness. He first brought people together to be with Bill Reffelt during that last year or two before he was taken by lung cancer. From then he has not stopped, despite back and prostate problems. And so, out of this effort began the April gathering at Esopus. This year the weekend was scheduled for April 21-23. The following electronic communications involve regrets by those who could not make it and the responses concerning a weekend well spent. Greg Ballerino, who flew in from California, took pictures. Those of you who would like to see these former juniors, postulants, and novices fifty years later might want to check out Greg's website for photos: <http://ballerinophotoart.blogspot.com> (Editor)

From **BILL MALONEY ('57)**: I really appreciate the thoughtfulness behind the "multi-signed" Esopus birthday card you all sent me from the Gatherers last year: a bunch of born-again "youngsters" recalling humorous/athletic/spiritual flashbacks. While visualizing the faces/personalities/deeds of the participants, I couldn't help reflecting on their/our parents, brothers, sisters... truly generous parents/families. Now we're older than their/our parents were then, visiting us at Esopus. We are rather true adults/elders now, jocks no

more. "See how they love one another!" and "See how they enjoy each other!"(10005 NE Shaver St., Portland, OR 97220; 503-252-8469; wkmaloney@msm.com)

From **RICH KOCHESKY ('57)**: Sorry, Oke, I won't be able to attend the get-together. My grandson, almost two, is visiting that weekend, and I never miss an opportunity to visit with the little guy. He's taken a particular affection for "Grandpa" and the feeling is mutual. By the way, I love what you guys are doing in reconnecting old friendships. Keep up the good work. (30 Brunswick Ave., Bloomsbury, NJ 08804-3008; 908-479-4374; kochesky@worldnet.att.net)

From **RAY LANDRY ('56)**: Only my inability to bi-locate keeps me away from the Esopus gathering. I did get to Joe D's funeral. I hope to make it to Esopus next year. Thanks for all you do. Take care! (6 Appletree Lane, N. Reading, MA 01864-2803; 978-664-2248; drklandry@attbi.com)

From **BR. RENE ROY ('60)**: Close but no cigar. That week I will be in Newburgh, NY with Br. Jim Halliday, a teacher from CCHS, and ten students. We'll be working with Habitat for Humanity. The 21st is our last day, and that night we'll be going to a Yankee game at the Stadium. We leave for MA early Saturday morning. I'm driving one of the vans, so I can't stay behind. I'll take a rain check on next year. Have a good time, and thanks for organizing this. (rdavroy40@yahoo.com)

From **BERNARDO ORTUOSTE ('58)**: I can't make it physically to Esopus, but I'm with you all in spirit. As you know, I passed out on the sofa and my wife Edith couldn't communicate with me. She had to call 911. They took me to the emergency room where I remained unresponsive. I remained in an unconscious state for two days. Fortunately, things turned for the better, and I awoke after two days and found it strange to see the line-up of Edith, my daughter and son-in-law, my sister, a niece, and a priest. When I saw the priest, I realized I might be in some kind of trouble. Without much ado he administered the Last Rites. I felt much better and wondered what the fuss was about. Edith said she was happy to hear my voice and narrated the events of the previous two days. The diagnosis was viral meningitis, the cause of the temporary loss of memory. They gave me antibiotics for fourteen straight days. I'm now at home and doing some physical therapy. I attended the first and third gatherings in Esopus and plan to attend again in the future. May you have a good reunion and develop a closer relationship like those in the Prep, Tyngsboro, and Poughkeepsie. (Bernie.Ortuoste@yahoo.com)

From **JOSEPH ANSELM PICCIANO ('59)**: John Michael Collins and I had a more than pleasant dinner in the first week of March at the Café Loup in Manhattan. We are born on the very same day and year. Hope the gathering in Esopus may fulfill all the good hopes which attend its coming. Two weeks from today I'll be about to board the plane for Kuala Lumpur. Warmest regards, fraternal affection, and all that! (718-789-3683; joziefiro@juno.com)

From **GREGORY R. BALLERINO ('57)**: My first Esopus gathering was a wonderful experience of creating new friendships, visiting familiar buildings and fields, and enjoying nostalgic Marist Prep memories. I walked to the river, down the same paths, seeing the same rocks and slate that were sentinels more than fifty years past. Who knows how long they were there before that? I visited the fields where we played softball, baseball, and football and where we also had the exciting bonfire before the Thanksgiving Army/Navy football game. The handball courts and horseshoe pits are gone. Inside the Prep buildings, the kitchen and dining room appear not to have changed. The same tile, the same kitchen equipment, the same kitchen aroma. The chapel loft is gone. Other common rooms still retain their distinctive character. Holy Rosary is a faint memory for me. It was just a place to paint Army/Navy signs on white sheets, to store the hand-made torches we used and to gather the "team" before parading around the bond fire. I can only imagine what the house could look like if fully restored.

Thank you all for the weekend experience. Perhaps we are developing a contemporary critical mass of Marists, a different "image of a brother." Each one of us in our social and spiritual interaction with others plays forward the generous, loving, caring, and inspiring Marist spirit. Add to that our humanity and common sense, and we have the small 'b' brothers. I truly appreciate who you are, and I trust we created new friendships.

As for me, knowing that I have lived more years than I have left, I'm doing all I can to move forward and create the future I want. Toward that goal, I am creating a new career and new possibilities, developing my passion for photography and electronic art, presenting a view of the world as I see it and experience it. Nature shows me a world that is diverse and compatible. In Nature, there is no judgment, no jealousy, no hatred. Nature seeks balance, harmony and order. I realize that who I am is the possibility of financially and creatively succeeding as a photographer, teacher and digital artist, marketing and selling my photography and digital art online and offline. I'll find my audience and they will find me.

Who I am is the possibility of being authentic, committed, and courageous, the possibility of passionately risking everything and gaining everything. Each day I make a contribution to my life and those with whom I come into contact. I am at peace, in harmony and alignment with God. (3212 Sage Road, Fallbrook, CA 92028; 760-451-0839; ballerino9096@gmail.com)

From **LEO BYRON ('57)**: I attended my first Esopus Gathering of the B/b's. I was not sure what to expect; I had left Tyngsboro in '57 part way through my postulant year, after spending my junior and senior years at the Prep. I arrived Friday at mid-day and, as there was no one around, I took a walk through the old place. It was empty. Gone were the chapel and the library and the vitality of us. "Us," was, after all, over fifty years ago. I walked over to the cemetery where there had been only a few graves when I was last there, and now there are over two hundred. Gazing at the names on the headstones gave me a feeling of nostalgia and some sadness; there in front of me were

some giants in my life: mentors, confidants, and friends. Can we forget Br. Joseph Damian or Br. Pius Victor or Br. Stephen Urban? If there was someone who was going to be immortal, he was the guy. They could all be remembered because they were all so special. Then there were names there and in our hearts, like Lacroix, Reul, Pochintesta, Joe Di, Reffelt. Hey, these guys were ...us!

Now there is a new life at the old Prep, a contemporary, vital one for families and young people who need to get away and hear a new message and have a new feeling. I say God bless, and I pray that the Blessed Mother smile on that wonderful place of memories and provide Br. Don Nugent and his volunteers with resources to carry on.

Reunions are usually a particular class year getting together, but with us it is, as Oke puts it, "a gathering." We look at the guys before us and behind us as one group. I think that is because we shared something special: a desire to serve God in some way and a desire to help kids and other people and even make this planet a better place for our having been here. Meeting my B/b brothers on Friday and Saturday was quite a thrill. Why, I even recognized four of you! No, it was not early Alzheimers; it was just Nature playing her game. Although it seems like just a few years ago, it was almost half a century.

It was amazing to have such a comfort level with everyone. It was as if we had been seeing each other on a regular basis through the years. There was such an open, friendly air as we talked and caught up on the past years and what is going on today. There were three of us who left during the training years. There were three of you who are still big B's. I was amazed and awed at how long the rest of you had been big B's. It was just as amazing what your former big B's were still doing: teaching, counseling, forming or supporting help groups, raising families.

I was interested in why people left and about their re-entry into the lay world, and of ... girls. I think the town of Esopus must have wondered where all the laughing was coming from. That should have been videotaped! It was a great weekend, with many fond memories, reflections; but above all, lots of good humor and plain old belly laughs. (leo20@comcast.net)

From **FR. EDWIN L. KEEL S.M.:** (March 19) Fellow Marists, greetings from storm-ravaged New Orleans: The water has long since been pumped away, but the city has a long way to go to recovery. Large swaths of the city are still uninhabitable. Trailer parks, or individual trailers near some ruined homes, are sprouting up all over. Most businesses and public services lack sufficient employees to operate at full capacity. After the hiatus of Mardi Gras, the grim and challenging work of rebuilding lives and the city goes on. It will be years, if ever, before the area returns to anything like what it was, and there is still a long, long way to go before anyone's life here can feel like "normal." So the greatest plea in the hearts of the people here is "Please, don't forget us!"

I find our people in good spirits. It has been hard, and the shock of the disaster has not entirely worn off, and recovery has clearly been

draining physically and emotionally, but they are hanging in there and slowly getting their houses, their lives, and their parish back in functioning order. I have asked our Marists in Slidell how best to use money sent by our Marist Laity. They asked that it be put into their parish's rebuilding fund. They feel that the "resurrection" of their parish as a spiritual center for their lives and the life of their community is a vital need. To those groups who sent funds, I repeat my thanks to you and on behalf of the Slidell Marist Laity.

May you continue to share a compassionate solidarity with your fellow Marists who have suffered so much loss. Hold them in your hearts in prayer. Pray that they, and all of us, may truly experience new life in Christ during this time. (1706 Jackson Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70113-1510; 504-524-5192; edwink@bellsouth.net)

Links: Those who are so inclined and would like to explore the Marist world beyond *Marists All* may wish to delve into the following websites:

Marist International www.champagnat.org

Marist USA www.marist.br.com

Esopus Retreat House [newsletter84.html](#)

Marist Australia www.maristoz.edu.au

The Spring 2006 issue of the *Today's Marist Brother*, the US Province Newsletter highlights the current use of the Esopus property. If you haven't received a copy, contact Brother Hugh Turley or Brother Timothy Brady at www.maristbr.com.

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