

Finis Coronat Opus

It was the end of the Renewal Chapter, October of 1976, and time for us to pull up anchor and to sail on to our various Provinces. It had been a privilege indeed to be associated with the intimate workings with our Religious Superiors of the entire Church. As Superiors we became aware of the widespread work being done all over the globe. The new team had been named, and with its youth and much enthusiasm, it would carry on and even do much better than what we had done. I gave thanks to God for the occasion that is ours and thanked Him for the new team that had just been named and that we trusted would be even more successful than we had been. I thanked the Lord for the closeness with which we all worked together, and with such courage, and for the new team with a much clearer vision of our entire Marist family. We had so much to be grateful for. Surely as we go back to the troops with courage, ready for any job, and in fact for anything that they will ask of us, we must be ready to take the plunge at once, and with courage.

On one of my visits to the United States, being awarded the honorary doctorate at Marist College, which had been totally unexpected and very much appreciated, had surprised me. Years before I had been asked to sacrifice my own graduate studies in order to be able to work full-time and I was quite dedicated to setting up a good graduate program for Marist College. I was indeed willing to accept this privilege, and even if one does not need a doctorate to come to the help of souls in distress, the honor was greatly appreciated when President Foy offered me the doctorate. It was much like the award of the Church called "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice" that was later granted to me at our 1997 commencement in recognition of my work for the Holy See, but it was also honor for the college and for the Marist Brothers.

At this point it is fundamental for me to make reference to one of my closest friends who stood by me during the difficult early years when we were actively seeking the college charter. I expected the help of the Brothers, but this faithful old standby who had been helpful in the early days, and who worked very hard in the college foundation, and continued even when I went off to our Marist missions to serve there, was a perpetual support for the charter, my mission work, and afterwards with President Foy for the continued growth of the college, and even more so when he also became the person in charge of the McCann Foundation. I refer, of course, to my very closest friend among the many dedicated laymen at the college, my dear friend, John J. Gartland, Jr.