



Venard Memories

Members of the Class of 1963



Venard Memories



Graduation Ceremony, 1963

Photo: W. Forres Stewart

Requiescant in Pace

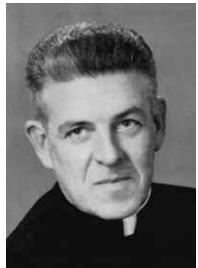
Richard Carr	Thomas Sims
John Hirst	Randle Frink
Thomas O'Hearn	Charles Teschner

Cover Photo: Louis J. Wolken, M.M.
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Members of the Class of 1963
In Celebration of our 50th Anniversary
May 3-5, 2013

To the fine men who
formed us and nurtured us.
Who taught us the value of hard work,
self-reliance, respect for each other
and the world of ideas.
Whose quiet strength and solid
spirituality inspired us.
Who opened our eyes to the beauty
all around us. Who instilled in us
values we yet hold dear.
And to Maryknoll for all it means to us
and all it has given us.





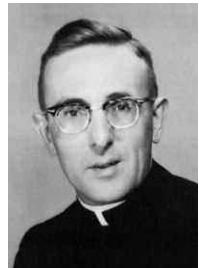
Rev. Richard J. Allen



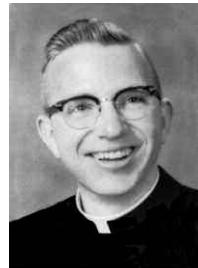
Rev. Louis J. Wolken, M.M.



Rev. Edward J. Casler, M.M.



Rev. George H. Rehman, M.M.



Rev. Paul Mullemans



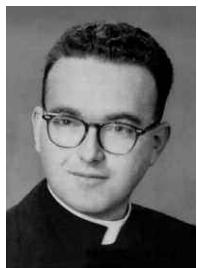
Rev. Thomas J. Burke, M.M.



Rev. Walter Dolan



Rev. William North, M.M.



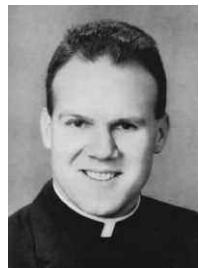
Fr. John J. Casey, M.M.



Fr. Robert S. O'Connor, M.M.



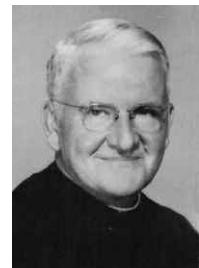
Fr. Ralph S. Christman, M.M.



Fr. Thomas P. Ryan, M.M.



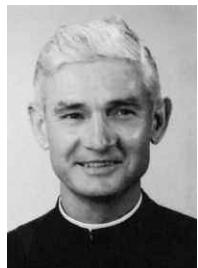
Rev. Robert Julien, M.M.



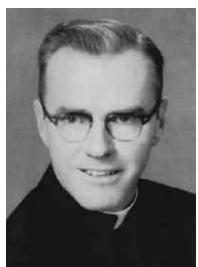
Brother Ignatius



Brother Eugene



Brother Fred



Fr. John Brady, M.M.



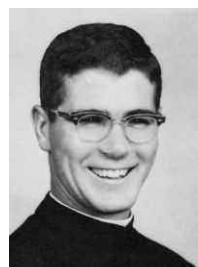
Fr. Father Louis Knipe, M.M.



Fr. Francis P. Milroy, M.M.



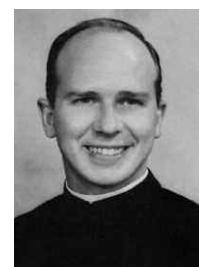
Rev. Brendan Branley, M.M.



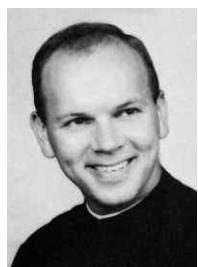
Brother Xavier



Brother Flavian



Brother Emil



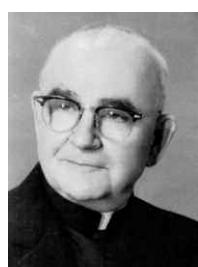
Brother Mark



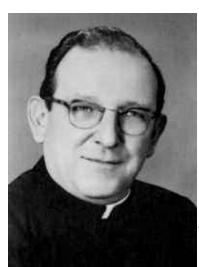
Fr. James G. O'Donnell, M.M.



Rev. Jerome Trettel, M.M.



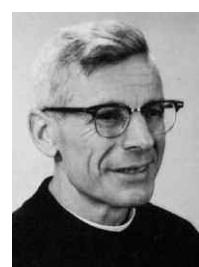
Fr. Joseph Klemm, M.M.



Fr. R. Felix White, M.M.



Brother Miguel



Brother Paul



Brother Regis



Brother Sergio

Venard Memories

The Class of 1963

During February and March of 2013, while corresponding online in preparation for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of our graduation from the Maryknoll Junior Seminary at Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, more commonly (and affectionately) known as the Venard, we began trading memories of our Venard experiences and sharing the impact our Maryknoll years has had on our lives. Somewhere along the way, the idea emerged of capturing these reminiscences in some sort of enduring form that could be shared — hence this little document.

Since each memory that emerged tended to trigger others, it seemed logical to present the material pretty much as it occurred, as a dialogue between friends. So many memories were churned up we've had to do some editing to prevent this document from turning into a full scale epistolary novel (and the fact that we all know what that means is a credit to Father Ratermann). Hopefully, we've captured enough to get a sense of the flavor of our Venard years.

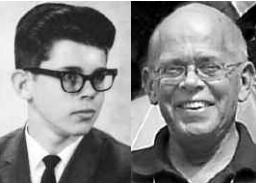
The participants are listed below, with the “nicknames” in **bold** by which they will be identified in the Text:

Kevin “Spazz” Bearese
Don “Biz” Bisdorf
Jim Cassidy
Mike Dubrouillet
Jerry DeLuca
Harry Ferguson
Tim Ilg
Joe Kantorski
John Malawey

Mike Mc Comiskey
Charles “Charlie” Nolan
Colin Pettorsson
Father Frank Rose (“Rosie”)
Jack “Jake” Ryan
Julian “Jay” Sollohub
Ron Stewart
Dennis Sweeney
Tom Wunderle

What comes across with the clarity of a Bull Allen refectory announcement is that even though only one of our members actually made it to ordination, the impact on each of our lives has been undeniable, and undeniably positive. If we've learned anything in the fifty years since we left the Pennsylvania hills behind, it's that you can take the boy out of the Venard, but you can't take the Venard out of the man he becomes — fortunately for us.

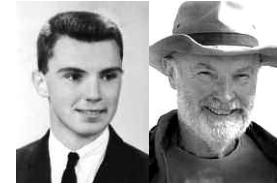
Special thanks to old *Courier* hands, editor Charlie Nolan, and designer Joe Kantorski, for bringing these words to life.



Kevin Bearese **Kevin**



Don Bisdorf **Don**



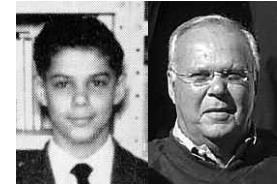
Jim Cassidy **Jim**



Mike Dubrouillet **Mike**



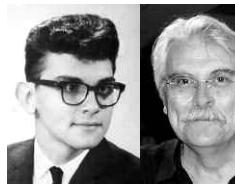
Jerry DeLuca **Jerry**



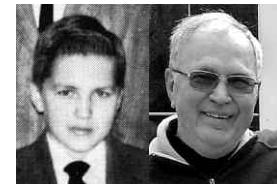
Harry Ferguson **Harry**



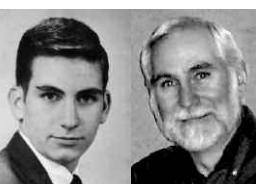
Tim Ilg **Tim**



Joe Kantorski **Joe**



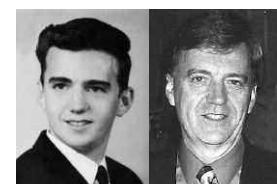
John Malawey **John**



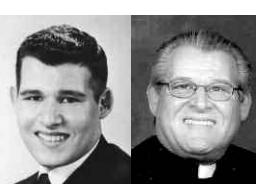
Mike McComiskey **Mike McC**



Charles Nolan **Charlie**



Colin Pettorsson **Colin**



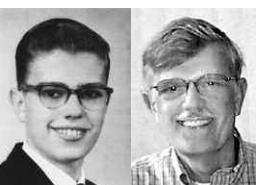
Father Frank Rose **Frank**



Jack Ryan **Jack**



Julian Sollohub **Jay**



Ron Stewart **Ron**



Dennis Sweeney **Dennis**



Tom Wunderle **Tom**

Colin: Is anyone interested in starting a nostalgic exchange on our Venard days? If you're game, I'd love to hear all your reminiscences, which can go on for as long as there is interest. I'll start with a classic Father White distortion of our names: "brother BearEEEese" ...Brother PayTTORsson; and of course I can't resist adding "Brother Richards", who had been long gone from the Venard. Please add to what could become a long, fun list.

John: Well here goes my first attempt at writing down some neat memories of our time together at the Venard. This happened during our freshman year and I'm a little fuzzy about who all was with me when this occurred. If any of you can help out that would be great.

One of my favorite characters at school was Brother Fred who took care of the farm. He spoke very little and had a very dry sense of humor. On this particular occasion a bunch of the class was assigned to "Help" Brother Fred with butchering some pigs. I remember that he explained to us that the farm helped to supply meat for the school. There were two young pigs in the pen that we were going to help "process". They probably weighed in at 70 lb. apiece. Brother Fred asked for volunteers to catch these two porkers and put them in this chute next to the sty.

My folks were raised on a farm so I knew better than to get involved in this adventure. My memory tells me that two guys from New York volunteered. I don't remember who they were, but I bet if they are still alive, they do. The Keystone Cops couldn't have put on a better show. One of them grabbed a pig by the tail and was dragged through the muck of the sty until his hands became so slick he lost his grip. The other kept trying to tackle his target as if it were a running back in a football game. The rest of us were laughing so hard our sides ached.

Through all of this, Brother Fred kept a very stoic and calm demeanor. When our two wranglers finally gave up, he told them what a good effort they had given and maybe they needed a shower. This isn't the only memory I carry of the good Brother, but it was my first and will stay as one of the best I carry with me.

Tom: John, I can relate but not with Brother Fred, rather with Brother Eric. You know, the Viking looking guy. My two experiences butchering 250 lb. hogs, was an eye opener. Let's just say that I couldn't eat ham in the refectory for a while.

Colin: Hey John....Thanks; what a great story! It seems to me that certain themes would resurrect a whole lot of stories: e.g., going with Charlie up Bell or Bald mountains; winter at the Venard; kitchen squad; dormitory life; jakes & washrooms; faculty meetings; chapel experiences; Milroy, O'Connor; White, Condon, Allen, Casey, O'Donnell, Julian et al. encounters; Gaudeami; sports, etc., etc.....come on guys, let's hear 'em!!

Mike D: I may as well tell you the story of "Pecks Bad Boy". It had a deep impression on me. Chrissie (Fr. Christman) was moderator for the play and somehow I got the starring role. Well, on the night of the play, I blew a line and brought Joe Kantorski onto the stage too soon. Joe and I ad libbed to try to make the play make sense and the upshot was that was that. Fr. Christman never spoke to me after that.

P.S. I LOVED driving Brother Fred's tractor and I'd do almost any work to get to drive it. Once, we "worked" on the fence and got to drive that thing.

Don: I really envy you guys who were able to work on the farm. I seemed to always get stuck with "Jake" duty, although it probably prepared me for my lot in life. Ever since I was able to work in any "crappy" job without complaining. We obviously did not have the proper cleaning supplies and so we would just take a rag in our hands and "dive" right in. Didn't bother me much, but it was more than Arthur Lemieux could handle.

As you may recall, each of the priests had their rooms cleaned daily by seniors — all except Fr. Casey. He probably felt vulnerable due to his position as Dean of Discipline. I had the dubious honor of cleaning his bathroom once. It was obvious it was not done on a regular basis. I must have done a good job because I was assigned to do it one other time.

Speaking of morning duties, who was it that had the job of cleaning the faculty lounge in the morning? Colin? Ron? The Sisters would bake a cake each day for the priests, and they were not always consumed in their entirety in the evening. So the cake would sometimes make its way into the hands of the caretaker who would share with us - sometimes in the stairwell away from prying eyes.

I, too remember the great "Peck's Bad Boy" debacle. One rehearsal in particular, Fr. Christman was not having much luck with Tom Murphy on one line. He was supposed to enter stage left, pause, look around, and then say something on the order of "this is quite a place." But no matter how hard he tried, and how hard Father Christman would try to get him to do it right, he kept blowing it. Father's temper was growing and growing. Someone (Tom Sims?) even wanted to show how it should be done but Father said "No!" Eventually Father Christman gave up, through his arms up in disgust and stormed out of the room.

I also remember the infamous blown line. One of my duties was to sit atop a ladder on the other side of the wall and prompt the actors in the event they forgot a line. When the error was made, I kept looking at the script wondering what the heck happened. That's when I saw Father Christman, who up to this point was very animated behind the scenes, just sit down on the steps and bury his face in his hands. He never said a word.

Tom W: I have fond memories of the first days of class as a freshman. Does anybody remember the first music class with Father Knipe, when he assigned a composer to each of us and we had to do research on that composer? Of course, I got Rimsky-Korsakov, the only hyphenated name. And Father O'Connor introducing the fact that he had no hair, and going on to say the doctor said he needed to buy a wig but that was "too much to pay." Then Father Kiernan teaching (of all things) hygiene and warning us that underarm deodorant was unhealthy and we should just use soap and water. Do you remember the story he told about being a World War I soldier in New York on burial detail because of the 1918 flu epidemic? One of his crew with a pick ax struck an adjacent coffin and the pretty gruesome body of an old woman tumbled out. I think he implied that had something to do with his vocation.

Colin: Farm squad (again!)...so, Brother Miguel is driving a few of us on an empty flat bed when he makes a sharp (90+ degree) turn...I'm at the corner of the bed and all of a sudden find myself being jackknifed up out of the seating position rhythmically moving up and down to the pattern of the tire treads until he stops, recognizing I'm

wedged between the tire and trailer. He didn't know whether to go forward or backward to release me from the vise; thank God he moved in the right direction as I pogosticked around with serious knee pain!

Winter: I want some corroboration of this! It's one of those stories you tell, not sure if it really happened or you're exaggerating some yarn that has some (remote?) basis in fact??!! I guess the ice was solid because the "V" was playing a game vs. Scranton U. as I recall it. We embarrassed them 11 - 0 (is that really possible?) because of the coaching (maybe he played too?) of Brother Simeon (crazy Canuck!) Wally Freel (another one), Felter, O'Donnell, Burke, Lynch, etc., etc...if any of you remember this, I'm dying to know if I've been repeating a fantasy game or if it really happened??!! PS: a pic in our Frosh yearbook shows Felter playing hockey wearing this nerdy looking fedora (check it out!!)

Charlie: Colin, I don't remember the specific game, but it's all true till somebody says it isn't, especially since we won. My clearest "ice" memory is of a Sunday when a lot of local people were on the ice with us, everybody skating their little hearts out, when there was a sudden loud "crack" and everybody scattered to the shore like frightened rabbits. Can anyone corroborate this one?

Colin: Charlie...I do vaguely remember the crack heard round Clarks Summit! — another need for corroboration tho: wasn't it the case that the ice was not deemed safe until Brother Simeon shot a 22 into the surface; I think it got so thick in those days they would even drive tractors on the surface!...was it colder then?.. because I distinctly recall walking on the surface of the snow back to the building w/o having to change out of my skates; just walked on the snow with my skate guards on!!! "those were the days my friend"!...

Charlie: I remember the "rifle test", and, as it's no longer even controversial to say, the weather was definitely colder. As I recall, the ice froze all the way to the bottom.

Tom: I recall being told that the ice had to be 2 feet thick to be safe. I thought they simply cut a hole to see how thick the ice was. I remember how they use to pump water up on the surface every once in a while to make a smooth surface after being hacked up by our skates.

Don: I, too, remember skating on top of the snow. I put my skates on just outside the building and skated across the soccer field on past the handball courts. From there I entered the woods and approached a hill. With no trepidation at all, I let myself slalom down the hill, and coasted for what I thought was an eternity. Once I came to a stop I turned around and headed back. I got to the foot of the hill and then it hit me, physics dictates one cannot skate "up" a hill. Thus my dilemma. No one in sight or hearing distance, I thought for sure come spring they would find my remains still sporting those ice skates. I believe I was able to inch my way back up the hill by clinging to one tree and flinging myself across to another.

It never occurred to me to merely sit down and dig the back of my blades into the crust. But then I was always in Freshmen II and Sophomore II... unlike you smart guys.

Colin: Not to worry Don...didn't we all fall for the St. Michael's relics scam??

Jay: It seems I do remember taking freshman on a procession with the relic of St. Michael the Archangel. Also, I have a memory of Father White's (or was it Father Knipe's?) Beetle on the front porch. Or are those just hallucinations induced by emanations from the grease pit or garbage cans during manual labor?

Jim: I do remember skating on Sunday afternoon when there were a lot of young ladies from the neighborhood on the pond — including some well chaperoned girls from Lourdesmount. This interested me more than hockey. It should have been an indication to me that perhaps I didn't have a vocation to a celibate life.

Colin: Since Jim introduced the subject of forbidden young ladies, I'll leave this one out there before I leave to play golf today!..so I'm minding my own business in study hall (maybe even studying!), when I notice the baleful, beady-eyed glare of none other than "Hard John" boring through me. He holds up (for all to see) a letter, clearly slit open, asks "Master Pettorsson" if it belongs to me! (I had written a purple prose letter to a girlfriend...or is that: friend who was a girl?...back home. Scared out of my wits, he motions for me to follow him out into the hall whereupon he advises me to seek counsel; thought for sure I might be thrown out. But the "counselor" was the patient, mild mannered Father Grady who left me off the hook pretty easily!! I recall even kissing said girlfriend once on summer vacation; guess I didn't have a vocation either Jim!!

Tom: Great story Colin. The nicknames — Spazz, Hard John (at first I thought you were referring to John Hurst), etc. — are coming back.

Ok, a Joe Kantorski memory. I recall in the dorm just before lights out seeing Joe sitting on his bed holding his blanket on the side of his head and sucking his thumb like Linus in Peanuts trying to get Father Condon's attention, and the latter just walking by trying to act like he didn't see anything but surely cracking up inside. Did I get that right, or did Father Condon approach you Joe? We were all laughing hysterically inside ourselves.

Joe: You're right, Tom. Father Condon and I played a kind of cat and mouse game just before lights out. I remember the Linus episode. Can't remember if he "saw" me or not, but, either way, I think he enjoyed joining in the fun. I think he got a kick out of catching us doing things that were not quite OK.

Colin: Tom, you've opened another can of worms by introducing dorm life..was it "Benedicamus Domino" at lights out or another Latin phrase?...the story that first comes to mind was from Sacred Heart dorm: Ivey had a habit of being the first to the washroom and someone (I know not whom!) stacked chairs up behind the door when he barreled into them in full flight!

In the same dorm, someone (I know not whom!), coiled up a dead snake underneath Mike Ware's pj's; my bed was next to Mike's; his reaction surprised me! He turned even paler than he was naturally, immediately grabbed the snake and threw it out the window to the howls of all around!

Kevin: Yow! It was the snake in Tom “Gossip” O’Grady’s bed that I remember more (Hey Rosie!). Everyone in Sacred Heart except for poor Tom knew that the lifeless serpent was waiting for him under the sheets, and the silence was deafening before his piercing scream of abject terror split the night like a banshee’s wail.

Jack: You guys all seem to have much better memories of the Venard than I do. I do remember the lake and I remember playing hockey on it while wearing figure skates. I remember that I fell down so often that my knees swelled up and filled up with fluid (which eventually went away by itself) so that kneeling in chapel was definitely painful. I remember working on the farm at the Venard, but since I had always lived on a farm, it was nothing new to me.

It was also at the Venard that I learned how to clean a toilet while on the jakes squad. I don’t know who it was that started calling me “Jake,” but it stuck and some of you guys still call me that. Jake squad duty did serve as great training for my time in the Navy when I was occasionally called upon to clean up our ship’s living compartment and heads. One of my boot camp friends told me many years after the fact that he always remembered me telling him that it was no big deal to stick your hands in a toilet to clean it because a person’s hands were, after all, very washable.

Kevin: I think by far my most embarrassing moment was, when during morning duties, I was sweeping the stairs by Father Branley’s room one fine day. I was working with Bill Ahl, as I recall, and we got into a conversation about spitting for distance. Bill bet me that I couldn’t propel a wad all the way across the road from the balcony there by Branley’s room. I was up for the challenge and I remember that I took a few steps back to add to the projectile’s momentum with a running start. With a three step sprint I let it fly! A perfect arch, high and far. Splat! Not on the road, not on the far side grass, but rather on the center of the forehead and the eyeglasses of Rev. Edward L. Condon, MM, making his brisk rounds on what otherwise would have been a fine day for all of us. I could not have aimed better or worse, had I tried.

The surprised target looked up and saw the perpetrator through splattered lenses with that burning gaze so well remembered. Never tall in stature, I easily could have fit in a thimble at that moment. Even if I had not been seen, I knew that I would have been easily found out. I quickly ran down the stairs and stammered an abject and profuse apology. The response — a silent burning glare that a laser would have trouble matching. Wow. I have never been chastened in such a way before or since. I still cringe at this memory.

I think that ‘Spazz’ originally came from Cass, commenting on my frequent fumbles running up the stairs as if I was channeling spastic behavior patterns, but this is a bit vague, and maybe someone can add to this for us. Also, I’d love to hear a recollected story or two from the Judge, eh Dennis? Your turn to spin one for us.

Colin: Great story Kevin...it vividly recalled that great stare of Father Condon’s...come to think of it, a lot of the priests back then seemed to have those withering looks although I think I’d put Condon and Hard John at the top of the list!

Mike McC: Other memories:

- Those hard kneelers in the chapel: I got calluses on both of my knees from the damn things.

- The smell of candle wax and incense in the chapel.
- The smell of Spring and the sound of birdsong coming in through the open chapel windows
- High Mass every Sunday morning (deacons, sub-deacons, acolytes, incense, Gregorian Chant — ‘Asperges Me’, ...the whole nine yards!)
- Having to take turns intoning the chant at night prayers as Seniors.
- That god-awful bell that woke us up every morning
- Fresh warm bread
- The time during Lent when the sisters served us tuna fish hot dogs — what a disappointment!
- Sneaking into the refectory during Lent to steal bread with sugar on it
- Waiting on the faculty table: “Simon Legree and Teddy Roosevelt”: serve from the left, take from the right
- Short-sheeting other people’s beds
- The Music Room (where I learned to love Broadway show tunes)
- The Rec Room with that long wooden slide-y game
- The outside smoking place where we talked about the faculty members...right underneath the faculty room windows!

But guys, when I think of my years at the Venard one of the things that most impresses me is the realization that...we were taught by heroes!

What a privilege! I may have some of this wrong, so correct me as needed.

Father White was a survivor of the Korean Death March; Father North had been interred by the Japanese; Father Kiernan had lost part of his finger to frostbite in Manchuria (remember how he had to press down on your tongue to give you communion?); Father O’Donnell had also been imprisoned by either the Japanese or the Chinese Communists (remember the funny ‘tick’ he had with his shoulders?). No one ever said that you come out of those kinds of situations being the same as you went in. Those were guys who had paid their dues. And most of the others had served overseas.

What extraordinary company to grow up in. I am grateful.

Tom W: I think Mike got most of this right. I thought Father O’Donnell was imprisoned by the Japanese. Do you remember the special shoes he had to wear? I was told the reason he wore those shoes was because he picked up some kind of foot disease while imprisoned. If you recall, he was really soft spoken and may have had a speech impediment caused by his imprisonment or some other kind of trauma. My inability to understand him in class one day got me into trouble I really didn’t deserve. I think he thought I was ridiculing him for some reason. He lived to be 84 (died in 1990). Via Google I found some reference to him being in the Kaying Vicariate, Meixian, China, in the archdiocese of what we used to call Canton (Guangzhou), not far from Hong Kong. That Vicariate was overrun by the Japanese early in the (American-Japanese) war.

Don: Here’s my recollection on this matter. Father O’Donnell was in a death march and his feet were badly frostbitten, thus the special shoes. His speech mannerism earned him the nickname “Mumbles”. Father Kiernan lost the tip of his finger as a result of an infection and had to endure a day long canoe trip while in excruciating pain to get to proper medical care. Father North was imprisoned by the Chinese

Communists, but was able to escape. When pressed to elaborate on his escape and hoping for some ingenious plot, he said he just walked away.

Kevin: I recall hearing that Father O'Donnell had part of his tongue horribly taken out during torture. There was a "V-shaped" indentation where the tip of the tongue should have been impairing his pronunciation.

Jerry: Mike, You nailed it. I knew that sooner or later someone would come out and say the things that I felt but didn't or wasn't able to put into words about my years at the Venard. Thanks Mike for speaking not only for you but for me as well.

If I could add some things to your list that I will most certainly take to my grave: The experiences with Brothers Fred, Eugene, Brother (the little Canadian) who taught me how to skate, Brother Neal (the one who took the time to teach us Judo and the martial arts) Brother Miguel for taking Frank Rose and I on a trip one Saturday to get a load of hay for the farm. This trip took all day and we got to know Brother Miguel very well that day. It ended with the three of us raiding the kitchen because we returned very late. Lastly the friendships made so many years ago that still are alive.

The other day I called Joe K and we spent that time laughing like two young kids, visiting with Jim Cassidy in Maine and enjoying his family and at the time new grandchild, the laughs and late night fires and adult beverages on the Cape at Ron Stewart's home and the reality of visiting Maryknoll to sit with Fathers Wolken and Grady who do not remember much but their eyes light up when you mention the Venard. Memories I will treasure the rest of my life. And I will end with this, I thank God for the faith that was instilled in me at the Venard and the friends and mentors who have kept that faith alive and cherished in my life.

John: Mike, Jerry, My thanks to both of you for reminding us that there are not only very good folks who have helped us throughout our lives. They are still out there even now. The people who do their jobs and never open their mouths about what they are doing.

I got to thinking about my very first week as a freshman. I was really homesick and being put into a dorm at night with the rest of you guys didn't help at all. I still recall laying on an upper bunk (can't remember who had the lower) late at night marveling that 14 and 15 year olds could snore so loudly. Some fellows even talked in their sleep. If I had known everybody, I could have had some real fun with that.

That long sliding board was a shuffle board. I know this because I became very familiar with it later in life at a few pubs. I also remember with fondness our time spent in the rec room. Since I wasn't much of an athlete, Pool and ping pong became my favorite "sports". Since I wasn't much of a scholar I still am in awe of how many of our classmates ended up in education as a profession.

God bless us all and keep up the good work of exercising our memories.

Don: How about the oft-dreamed-of but rarely received "faculty breakfast"? This was so coveted it was sometimes awarded as a prize for some great(?) feat. The one time I was to partake of this culinary feast was on the morning I did the reading at breakfast. Perhaps in part due to my apprehension in standing on the lectern in front of the whole school and faculty, I felt so ill I couldn't eat.

Jack: Wow, the faculty breakfast. You got to partake of that if you had to serve Mass late in the morning (late being about 7:30). You also got it if you were forced to read all the way through breakfast.

Since I wrote my last bit, I've been thinking more about the Venard. Colin mentioned Father White calling on Brother Richards who had "left the building". I remember Al Richards vividly. We were standing in line waiting to get our books when he turned to me, burst into tears and proceeded to tell me how homesick he was. He was a tall kid, maybe 6'0 or so, which was tall for a freshman back then. I befriended him even though I was really homesick myself, but he went back home after about two weeks and that was the last we saw of him. I guess we were all pretty homesick at that time. By the way Jerry, the Brother from Canada was, I believe, Brother Simeon, although I'm not completely sure of that. Brother Flavian was the little Italian guy from Brooklyn who ran the kitchen.

I remember being completely terrified of Father Casey. One spring day I and three or four other guys went to a nearby town (Waverly?) to bowl. We got back a bit late and were met by John Casey himself, who grabbed my tie and lifted me right off the ground. Not a great feat because I probably weighed only around 110, but it certainly put the fear of God in me.

Colin: Don...one thing just leads to another!...refectory!...do you remember trying to get a buzz on by drinking as many glasses of the fermented apple cider as we could? Mike brought up the aroma of the baking bread; I can almost smell the aroma of the unique, delicious breakfast buns the good French nuns (you know, the short nuns with glasses!) seemed to bake every Sunday... rec room...I had forgotten about the "long, wooden slidey thing" until Mike brought it up! How about the billows of smoke just after meals...the jukebox: for some reason I most recall two tunes: "Rubber Ball" and "Corina, Corina"...oh yea, and maybe "Lonely Teenager", which might have described a lot of us!

Charlie: I recall an extremely well fermented jug of cider (I think Kantorski added seltzer to it to get it going) that got a bunch of us seriously buzzed after hours in the Music Room one night during Senior Year, while the underclassmen were in study hall. We got pretty loud, and I still remember Father Wolken's withering stare—he was slow to wither, which made it all the more fearsome when he did.

Jim: And then there was the night that Father Nolan walked in and heard us talking. He turned the lights on and had us all kneel for a half hour or so. As I recall when the regulator turned the lights off in the dorm at night he said "Laudator Jesus Christus" The response was supposed to be "In aeternum, amen." However what we said instead was "Turn them on again".

Mike McC: Remember how, for Nun's Day, Father Wolken would have us drape sheets over the urinals on the second floor? Like the nuns didn't know about that stuff!

And once, during either our 40 Hours, or maybe a Holy Hour that was now verging on 40 hours, somebody passed out — and two entire pews of guys got up to carry the guy out! Some of them were touching the carried body with only one finger, but they were getting out!

And during Holy Week at a night service all the lights had been extinguished and when the reader read “and there was a great clap of thunder..” we were all to slam our Liber Usualis’ closed. Except, half the guys made their noise by slamming their Libers onto the head of the guy in front of them. One year, the guy responsible for turning off all the lights in the Rotunda so they wouldn’t shine into the chapel had missed a light. All the priests were keeling in the last two pews at the back of the chapel and saw the whole thing. I think we got a lecture the next day.

And Father Wolken used to put his hand over the film projector on movie nights if he thought the scene was too sexual. Except it was usually too late, and besides it left the rest of the scene wholly to our imagination. Mistake!

And the Rector’s Conference on Sunday night the week before Mother’s Day when Father ‘Bull’ Allen went on a rant about all the sentimentality of Mother’s Day ...and then ended by telling us to wish our mothers a Happy Mother’s Day for him.

Harry: I guess it’s my turn, but before I attempt to pen some memories, I want to take the time to thank God for bringing my Maryknoll brothers back into my life. It has been special and wonderful experience.

Almost four years ago, about this time of year, I came home from visiting my wife in the hospital to find a voicemail from Don Bisdorf regarding the 2009 reunion at the Venard. It was a pleasant surprise and Don and I had a great discussion. Yes, I was the Harry Ferguson who attended the Venard for two years from 1959-1961, and, yes, I would be thrilled to attend the reunion at the school that summer.

My wife Linda and I did attend and had a great time. In addition to seeing many of you, one of the highlights was seeing Father Ratermann (the Rat) and getting to experience him in a different light.

From there I was invited to visit the Knoll several times with Ron, Joe, Jim, Charlie, and Jerry. Though I did not know all the priests from Glen Ellyn, I did get to see Fathers Grady, Wolken, Ratermann, and Casey, to name a few.

These visits brought back many memories and a much better understanding of the men who as, Jerry and Mike said, were influential in setting a life foundation for us. My wife passed away two years ago next month and reuniting with Maryknoll has filled some of that void. Thank you and enough of that.

Now...memories. Surprised no one mentioned Father Condon’s beautiful 1960(?) blue and white Oldsmobile that he won. It was very fashionable, but not in the Maryknoll spirit of a black Chevy, Ford or Plymouth. Father Ratermann shared some great stories of the two of them riding around to various events and taking precautions not to be too pretentious. And I also remember Father Knipe’s VW bug being lifted to the side walk. Never knew who the perpetrators were. Maybe you guys know. There must have been a run on the snake joke. Someone, I forget who at this moment, placed a black belt in my rack. With the lights out and my keen sense of sight I mistook it for a snake and caught the ire of Father Christman for making a fuss. My favorite meal was the lamb with green jelly.

How about Joe K. the barber? I’m sure he was eminently certified to have scissors so close to our heads. He did look good, though.

I always aspired to be an altar boy at the main altar but that was reserved for the upper classmen and I never moved past serving on the side altars. Father White always got my attention with “Brother Ferg..uuu..son!” He had great maps. I relished

playing on the Venard JV basketball team with our coach Father Grady. Not sure if we won any games, but we did get to go to Scranton. Hockey, on the other hand, resulted in me tripping Mike Ware, breaking his arm along the way. Father Knipe’s “Peter and the Wolf” comes to mind as well as the Interpretive Reading contest performed by the seminarians from the Knoll. Great theater. I can still see and smell the smoke in the Rec Room and see Colin enthusiastically attacking the ping pong table. I agree with Jake Ryan, these little life lessons, though I never thought about them, helped me through my four years in the Navy.

Just a quick note: On one of our return trips to the Knoll, what would turn out to be our last visit with Father Ratermann, Ron and I had the pleasure of attending Mass with all the priests at St. Teresa’s. It was hard to describe this moment seeing these humbled men in their wheel chairs commemorating what they had devoted their life work to, the love of the Lord.

Joe: Actually, Harry, I did spend some time in the barber shop for Manual Labor. I think I nipped Sweeney’s ear once.

Here’s a few more memories, in no particular order: turnips for dinner...Sister B...our Senior class project at the entrance to the Venard...33 cents for a pack of cigarettes...spit-shining shoes...corralling a wayward cow in the upper pasture ...Topper’s...barreling down the road to Scranton in Father Ratermann’s ’53 Plymouth for the Debate Club...Father Allen’s mandatory essays...the *Courier*...name tags on all our clothes...Father Trettel’s “Don’t forget the unforgettable words of Our Lord”...Parent’s Day...“Adaptability is the watchword of the Missioner” ... the men who taught us...their character...their integrity...their deep-rooted spirituality.

But I also remember our retreats. What genuinely profound experiences they were! Being a teenager in the seminary was unique in and of itself. Saying no to a “normal” teen’s life separated us from that in many ways. Ways we freely chose and welcomed and took a certain pride in. Even today, when I say I spent my high school years studying to be a priest, there’s still a certain pride in my voice. People read that and respond in kind.

But when we were on retreat, we then separated ourselves from each other. Yes, from the outside world, but also then from our *inside* world. From our daily routines, from our comfortably familiar everything that defined our seminary lives.

I remember the silence of the retreats — the Silence. And that oh-so-special place that silence brought my mind and my heart. To this day, the memories of those retreats bring me right back to those years at the Venard. They, above all, define my time there, because on retreat I felt closest to what I thought I was there for in the first place. I felt the power of that deep spirituality I was trying to achieve every day. I felt as if I had made the right decision to come to the Venard.

Don: This is from an earlier exchange I had with Ron a while back. I thought it might go well with our “memories”.

A little background: The day before I left for Freshman year at the Venard, my parents dropped me off at the home of John Skinner. He was entering the Venard that year for the first time as a senior. I spent the night and his parents drove us to the seminary the next day, coming all the way from Michigan and, without the use of MapQuest, Mr. Skinner was a bit off on his arrival time. Knowing we would arrive

later than we should, he called ahead and let them know we were on our way, but would be late.

When we arrived we sat down with Father Wolken. Then Father Allen walked in and we were introduced. Father Allen had a mean look about him and stated that he knew about John arriving late, but knew nothing about me reporting with him. Apparently when Mr. Skinner called ahead he forgot to mention I was with them. At first I thought Father Allen was just fooling around, but soon realized he wasn't. From that moment on, I believe I was more afraid of Father Allen than any other priest at the Venard, including Fathers Casey and White.

Ron: Don, that's a great story now, but I can only imagine how you must have felt at 13 to arrive late on your first day and not with your parents! Yes, how intimidating it must have been to meet the "headmaster" on your own...

You and I were among the short guys. Everyone seemed bigger than me. I still remember my first morning waking up in the Blessed Virgin Dorm. If I was just barely keeping it together after my family left, and I was totally shocked with all the noise a full dorm made and even more shocked to share was bathroom sinks with so many strangers I had not yet really met. Little did I realize what was in store for me when the dorm bell woke us on that first morning.

Students shuffled off to get a sink and cover it with bottles and containers of stuff. What was it all for, I wondered? I had everything I needed: soap, towel, toothbrush and toothpaste. Very quickly I saw what was different as a number of students were getting ready to shave! I was barely into puberty and completed unaware of students my age were shaving. And further more I seemed to be one of the very few not shaving.

I remember a much bigger freshman, Dennis Sweeney, standing beside me lathering up to shave what seemed to be a heavy beard. I didn't have a single sighting of any hairs on my chin, let alone own a shaver. That intimidated me greatly for days. I had only seen my father shave and had no idea boys my age were shaving too. How terribly young I was. And even more in shock when we had to line up by height. I found myself third from the front and Dennis stood at the end of the line. I had to wait until my senior year before I owned a shaver. What a very long and intimidating wait it seemed.

Don: Ron, you are right on the size. I was always one of the smallest, even in grade school. But then there was Tom Thompson, two years ahead of us, who I thought was probably a midget.

Tim: I remember...

- Sitting on a bench looking at Bell Mountain in the fall (nothing more beautiful)
- Looking at the forbidden fruit across the road (Marymount, of course) — oh so close and yet so far
- Standing on the steps and watching my parent's car drive away (I was just a baby! Ha!)
- Having my picture taken as if I was a prisoner
- Listening to Father Allen's Sunday chats (I had fireside chats when I was a H.S. principal)

- Swimming in the biggest pool that I had ever seen
- Walking through the pine trees by the lake with the wind blowing
- Waiting and hoping for some food as a freshman (sometimes it barely reached me)
- Sitting in the bathroom late at night studying for a test
- And, of course, waiting for the grades to be posted

Although I never became a priest, I have used my training at the Venard throughout my 46 years in education. I feel very privileged to have shared my high school years with all of you.

Dennis: I have enjoyed reading everyone contributions and hesitated joining in because my recollections are not as specific nor as funny as some have been, but here goes some items.

Homesick: I do remember being at the Venard for about 48 hours and, like Mike, not fully realizing that this was in essence forever or at least until Thanksgiving. I remember going down to the lake one evening after dinner and sitting by myself and crying. I probably would have left then except for the fact that my parents weren't thrilled by my going to the seminary—especially so far away—and I had fought them to go. There was no way that I was going to admit to them that they were right. After about a week, things settled down and I loved being there for all four years.

Academics: It was actually amazing that we got as good an education as we did. All of the priests had joined Maryknoll to be missionaries, go to foreign countries and be action-oriented people bringing the faith to the heathens of the world. Their education and training was not to be teachers or academics like the Jesuits (who taught me in college). I imagine that the faculty was chosen from those too old or ill (Father White or McDonnell) or those who didn't seem ready to be left alone in a foreign mission for whatever reason (fill in your own nominee), or those who needed a sabbatical for a year or two.

While there were certainly some better and worse teachers, I thought that overall I received a good education and especially from those who taught English. Much has already been said about Father Ratermann and I still appreciate some of his old school methods for teaching us an appreciation of the English language.

I particularly remember him getting ecstatic over poems by Emily Dickinson which would seem a strange choice for teaching a bunch of teenage boys, but which I recall as making me think in a new way about the choice of language and its effect. I similarly remember his great love for Gerard Manley Hopkins and A. E. Housman and making us memorize their poems, e.g. "Gods Grandeur" and "To An Athlete Dying Young". At the last reunion in 2009, a bunch of us were around Father Ratermann and someone began reciting one of these poems and others joined in to finish it off. He was beaming—the best reward for a teacher some 40 plus years from the time your students leave you.

I also must give a special shout-out to Father Peyton who taught me English during the one year I was at Glen Ellyn. Whatever skill I have in writing, he was responsible for. I recall him making me rewrite an essay ten or fifteen times and each time patiently getting me to see how to rearrange my thoughts, choose words or phrases, and how cutting out unnecessary language could improve the work. Such laborious teaching is almost nonexistent today as I can attest to from reviewing the writing of law graduates who have graduated from some of the best schools.

I also remember Father Peyton as introducing me to works such as James Baldwin's "Notes of a Native Son" that got me to thinking in new ways and ironically lead to rethinking my vocation.

Basketball. I was on the JV and varsity basketball teams and, for a while, Venard basketball was fairly good, especially in playing against the small Catholic high schools that dotted the coal country around Scranton. There were some good players on the varsity when I was on the JV, Dan O'Brien and Pat Lawlor come to mind. I believe they went on to play college ball for Niagara and Loyola (Chicago) [this is all a little misty]. When the seminary split up with the opening of Chesterfield, the talent pool was divided and drained and by the time I go to the varsity we were fairly pathetic.

The nadir of my career was when we played a team (I think it was Scranton Prep, the Jesuit school). Father Grady was the coach. Scranton Prep had a well known player, Steve Vacendak who later played for Duke and in the ABA. Father Grady assigned me to cover Vacendak and he proceeded to score at will going around me like I was standing still and when we were on offense either stealing the ball from me or blocking every shot I tried. I remember how frustrated Father Grady was and my realizing this was not a question of effort or resolve on my part. It was a question of basic innate talent which he had and I didn't.

Other Sports. The Venard was a paradise for those who liked sports. Not only was there basketball, but also football, baseball, soccer, hockey (which several people have written about), and swimming (for a few brief weeks). Where else could you have more than enough guys for a team at any time without any planning or scheduling? I think this kept me coming back year after year even as doubts began to form.

Culture shock. Being from suburban (actually more rural) Maryland I was fairly sheltered and had culture shock meeting all of these guys from New York City and New Jersey with their strange accents and ways. Years later I recall going to NYC for the first time and meeting Jerry DeLuca who was showing me around the city. Jerry got mad at me for looking up at all the sky scrapers and telling me to be "cool" or else people would think we were the most hated group — "tourists".

Don: In response to His Honor's post:

Homesick: Fortunately, I went through my "homesick" phase a few weeks before leaving home, but kept it to myself. I soon got over it and a short while after, my mother said she really didn't want me to leave and that I could go to the local seminary in Detroit. Had she just said that a couple weeks before, I probably would not have left home.

Academics: I always struggled through my classes. Our grades were posted in the hallway after each quarter in grade order, highest grades on top. I learned early on it was quicker to find my grades if I started from the bottom.

As a testament to those teaching us, although I always seemed to be in the bottom of the class in the seminary, when I entered St. Anthony High in Detroit, I was in the top 10 percent. That being said, I struggled with my two years of Latin at the Venard, barely with a "D" average, and then being dropped from French Class which I was failing in our Sophomore year. However, in my Junior year, I took Spanish and carried a "B" average. I always figured struggling with the other two romance languages helped me with the third. Actually, to this day, I remember some of the sweet Latin phrases we learned, although they may be somewhat corrupted over all these years.

Speaking of Father Peyton, he was assigned to Detroit for a short time and we touched based for a while. He is still with us serving in Hong Kong.

Sports: I was introduced to soccer at the Venard and thoroughly enjoyed it. So much so, that when I found out the community I eventually moved to offered a soccer program, I grabbed my son and took him down to sign up. I wound up coaching his team. In time I became a referee and president of the club. Yes, we had a well-rounded sports program. Although I was never great at any sport, I learned to enjoy them all. And of course there is nothing more invigorating than playing handball outside in the middle of winter.

Mike McC: Speaking of being homesick — I never got really homesick, but I distinctly remember on my first morning there, as we all trudged in groggy silence down to the chapel, I thought "Oh well, this is only for the weekend...I can get through it". It wasn't until after morning prayers, Mass, and making our beds, when I was again on the stairs in silence heading down to the refectory that it suddenly dawned on me: "Idiot! You're here til Christmas!" I guess I was just too dimwitted to be homesick.

I think it was our Junior play. I had a small role and during the cast party afterwards I took one of the props, a hunk of Limburger cheese, and went up to the dorm and rubbed it on Jim Cassidy's pillow and stuck a piece inside the pillow case for good measure. Then I forgot all about it. Next day in math class I asked him how he slept since he looked really tired. He said he had a very bad sleep. Remembering the cheese, I said "Hey, did you smell a funny smell in the dorm last night?". He wasn't real happy about the joke. Sorry about that Jim (well, not too sorry!).

Then there was the fight, after lights-out, in the dorm with guys throwing cherries at each other. When Father Condon came out walking with a flashlight you could hear the cherries squishing under his feet.

And I remember jumping out the windows of the second floor study hall in the snow drifts after a particularly deep snowstorm.

Ah, those were the days!

Jack: Remembering the Venard brings to mind the big handball courts where I strove to learn the game, but never really picked up on it. I did learn to play tennis there though, practicing on those same handball courts until I was able to play on the actual tennis courts. I didn't have my own tennis racquet, but Dennis usually let me borrow his. And that monstrous pool at the Venard was fantastic! When it opened in the spring time it was so damn cold I couldn't believe it. Now I can't believe we actually swam in water that couldn't have been over 70 degrees.

Don: Okay, here is one that has been bothering me. I had posed this question to some upper classmates a couple years ago, but no one remembers this. I'm sure I am not losing my mind or creating things.

Do you remember — I believe it was in our Sophomore year — a mother and two or three children taking up residence in a tent or shack out in the woods beyond the soccer field? In fact, for our class project, we decided to take up a collection to help them out. Shortly thereafter, Father Allen in his evening address to the school was regretful for not having addressed the situation sooner. He emphatically stated

that we were to do absolutely nothing in regards to the family. We were to have no contact with them and where they were residing was declared off limits to us.

To this day I have no idea who they were, where they came from, or where they went. I was sure some of the seniors would have been privileged to this information, but as I stated above, they disavow any knowledge.

Can anyone back me up on this?

Ron: Yes, I remember there was a squatter family deep in the woods at the end of the athletic field as you looked out from the large study hall at the end of the hall where grades were posted. (I used to pee every time I had to look at that board for my grades.)

I remember hearing that a family lived there and we were helping them out but we were not to visit. I tried to see why not one day and did walk down into the woods as close as I would dare. Don't remember seeing anyone but it felt odd knowing someone lived in the woods in what looked like a small house shack.

Today the Baptist College has their athletic facility in that spot.

Dennis: More reflections:

Brother Eugene: For a while I was on the crew that worked in the boiler room under the direction of Brother Eugene. I remember that he had an obsession with cleanliness and order. We had to scrub the concrete floor of the boiler room, even crawling under the boilers while they were on to clean the floors of any oil stains or dirt. It had to be the cleanest boiler room in the country. You could have done surgery on that floor.

He also had boxes of screws and bolts, nuts and washers that had to be sorted for reuse and often the differentials between them were hard for a teenager to understand since they all looked the same to my eye. He would come by behind me and quietly reach into the piles I sorted to pick out my mistakes, shake his head and sigh. Many decades later, when my kids were complaining about things I made them do, I would tell them that they should be glad that they were not working for Brother Eugene — which of course was met with vacant stares.

The Brothers: I have often thought of the Maryknoll brothers I met and worked with. While I have respect for the priests, the brothers represent to me the true humility and dedication that was as close to the model that Jesus represented as I have ever seen.

The Library: I recall that you had to submit every book that you brought in to the Rector, and that after an appropriate period of time it would either be confiscated or given back to you with a stamp that indicated approval by the Rector. Did it actually read "Imprimatur"?

Despite the censorship, there was quite a broad spectrum of sources that existed in the library, especially among the periodicals. I spent many hours there, especially in the winter months when there was not much to do. It was where I first read *The New Yorker*, which I still get to this day. There were also copies of *Cahiers du Cinema*, the cutting edge French magazine about movies and *Architectural Digest*, as well as many other sophisticated periodicals. I suspect that various members of the faculty wanted to get these and utilized the library budget to support their choices. Whatever, it was an amazingly rich environment, at least as I remember it.

Jim: Brother Eugene eventually left Maryknoll, moved to the Boston area, married and had children. Ron and I and our families socialized with him and his family for a few years. He died several years ago. Like Dennis I also spent many an hour reading mags in the library. If I remember correctly, you could go to the library during the "free study period" and magazines were fair game. My favorites were *Popular Mechanics* and *Arizona Highways*.

Joe: I remember Father O'Donnell telling us the best way to learn about current events was to read *The New York Times* every day. I've been a *Times* reader ever since.

Ron: One of the reasons I so enjoy meeting our old professors is to have the opportunity to thank them for all they have given to me and how they have helped shape me to who I am today. I recall speaking to Father Wilcox that a number of us had at Glen Ellyn. I had always felt he did not look favorably on me, but in the end at St. Teresa's we prayed the Our Father together. I asked for his blessing and in 2 weeks he died.

When I meet these men again to thank them after so many years, their tears of happiness flow freely and often. I can't contain my own and I always ask for their blessing. And I might also add that several of us had a chance to thank Father Knipe, Father Christman, Father Ratermann and Father Halbert from Glen Ellyn over several years of visiting them. In the end, one by one we were actually saying goodbye because these men died a few weeks after we had visited them. And we had always left them having received their blessing. I am deeply moved even telling you this now.

Charlie: I was grateful to be with Ron for that visit to Father Wilcox. It was a relief for me to say to him "You always said I was trouble. I'm here to tell you that you were right." His response was "Aw, you weren't so bad." As it was for Ron, his blessing counted for a lot, a whole lot. And I was a lot of trouble, especially at Glen Ellyn. In a way, I suspect many of us worked out our adolescent rebellion battles with the Maryknoll Fathers instead of our own parents, who were spared what the faculty endured.

Tom: Yes, I always regretted not staying in touch with some of those guys. I'm surprised nobody has mentioned "the Dew" yet. We all probably recall Father Milroy spinning on his butt around the lab table to demonstrate centrifugal force in physics class. He was a great guy with a great disposition as I recall.

Other "categories" that come to mind: long walks in the country to that small store to buy candy; listening to early 60s music on our Japanese transistor radios; the nuns, especially "Smiley" and "Sister B"; picking apples in the orchard; jumping into the ice cold pool first day of opening; Dave Brown, organ aficionado, thundering away in the choir loft; beautiful chant and ritual in the Chapel — I especially recall the time we had the Armenian (or Syrian?) rite priest do Mass; homemade chocolate éclairs once in a while; the seersucker aprons we wore; etc., etc. The images just keep on coming...

Colin: Speaking of "the Dew", I recall one hilarious moment in class when I believe he was attempting to demo the principle of a vacuum. I seem to recall some kind of

tug of war with the Dew on one side and Frank Rose directly opposite; both trying unsuccessfully to break the vacuum that held some gizmo together (you can tell I loved "Pissics"!) Either Frank or Milroy was stretched out over the table holding on with a death grip!

Father O'Connor as well...seems to me he had a habit of always clicking his fingers as he walked along the hallways...

I've never forgotten a comment Father Wilcox made in class when he was lamenting the "modern" phenomenon of "identity crises" as shown in how many of us wondered "if we had a vocation" ... He said "when we were in the seminary, we were more worried about getting kicked out than questioning our vocation, and nine out of ten of us were ordained"!...different world!

Tom: Great memory Colin. Yes, Father O'Connor did snap his fingers as he walked. At least as I recall. I don't remember the vacuum fight, but it does conjure up a hilarious image.

Don: Going back to what Ron said, it seems we have hit a serious note here, so I am going to share something. None of you know Father John King. He was assigned to Detroit at the time I decided to join Maryknoll. We were in touch off and on via email for a while and then I lost touch with him when his computer broke down.

Through the intercession of Ron, I was able to get his phone number at the Knoll. As luck would have it, he had just walked into his room when I called. It was a great conversation. As if no time at all had passed through all those years. He always sent a hug to my mother, so when she passed away last November, I knew I had to let Father King know.

But as usual I procrastinated. Then I received the Interchange Address List where it lists those who have passed away over the past year. I was shocked to find Father King's name on the list. I was able to find he actually passed away about two weeks before my mother. I was so happy that we had that chat that one day, and he seemed as excited as I was.

Bottom line, brothers, cherish those who mentored us and keep them close in mind and heart. We cannot always be there with them, but we must let them know they will always be a significant part of our lives.

And how about those Prefects? Looking back, I picture them as so much older and having the wisdom of Solomon. It is hard to believe they were merely teenagers like us. Apparently the powers that were had the wisdom to choose the right people for the job. As I recall, they took their positions seriously and with passion.

As I'm sure you recall, each priest had a Senior assigned to clean their rooms every morning. However, on graduation day some of the faculty locked them out of their rooms knowing full well that surprises would be left behind with no fear of repercussions in so far as the Seniors would be gone for good that day.

Although some priests had a sense of humor, others did not display it. Father Condon was hard to figure. I always thought his job as procurator was sometimes very stressful. One day he would be in a good mood, and the next it was wise to be on one's best behavior. As I recall we found out he had a nickname in college. "Rippy". We wrote it on the blackboard just before he arrived for class. He was a bit embarrassed, but took it well. Of course some people (obviously not me) would push him to his

limits. Once his chair was replaced with a defective one and he nearly fell over. Another time his chair was covered with chalk dust. Can't remember who would do such a thing. Think it was the New Yorkers.

Colin: Leave it to the Midwesterner to blame it on the New Yorkers!....your point about the prefects is very well taken; in fact I felt like most of the senior class was so mature! I couldn't imagine we were looked upon the same way by the Frosh when we were seniors.

But then a couple of years ago, one of those frosh, John Schloerb, caught up to us on the "Venard 63" website and commented that for him, our class would always be the definitive senior (i.e. mature?) class for him. So, I guess we might have been right up there with the Don Howards, Frank Felters, Tony Medwids, Tom Hughes, Frank Burns, Tom Fentons, etc., etc., of the world...still find that hard to fathom...ha!

Jack: On another tack, someone mentioned the food at the Venard. I came from a meat and potatoes farm family and had no concept of the variety of food we got for our meals. I distinctly remember sea food that I had never previously encountered such as shrimp, swordfish steaks, and scallops. I got sick eating the scallops and to this day, I still usually avoid them.

I also particularly remember coffee ice cream which wasn't very popular but which I loved and was always able to get double or triple my share when it was served. I remember being assigned to dish squad on at least two or three occasions. That prepared me for my stretch of mess duty in the Navy and running a dishwasher in college to pay for my meals. And I remember with great pleasure some of the table groups I was part of, particularly Tom Fenton's table when I was a freshman and Jim Kirby's when I was a sophomore.

Charlie: I, for one, love scallops to this day, and will suggest a seafood restaurant for our weekend outing – and I was also a big fan of the coffee ice cream. Speaking of which, it was at the Venard that my lifelong relationship with coffee began. I came from a household of tea drinkers, but when the first warm thing you touch on a cold winter morning is the coffee pot, you learn to love the bean.

Don: I also loved the scallops, although I had no idea what they were at the time. Still eat them to this day when I can find them. And I too liked the coffee ice cream. Back at home ice cream was a treat enjoyed perhaps once a week. Since most of the guys at the table were sticking their noses up at it, I could to partake to my heart's content. However, there were those maggots. Not sure if it was rice pudding or tapioca, but it sure looked like what they called it and so I never got into it. Who can forget the little surprises sometimes showing up in our vegetables? At least they were dead.

Jack: A few more memories of the good old days:

The Venard had some of the most beautiful trees and groves. The fall was just wonderful there. And the apple orchards with their sweet winesap apples that we picked and helped to turn into cider.

Another great thing about the place was getting to know guys from all over the

eastern US. I had never been farther than 70 miles from my home in rural Minnesota when I went to the Venard in September of 1958. I had been to a city, but only once and that was Minneapolis-St. Paul which was not a particularly huge metropolitan area at the time. So meeting guys from New York and Maine, North Carolina and Pennsylvania, etc., was really something to me.

Having to wear a suit and tie was also new to me. I got my first suit when I went to the Venard and I had to get my dad to teach me how to tie a tie. What a change of life the whole experience was to me. All in all, it was a pretty wonderful experience, with a few tough times tossed in for good measure.

Looking back from this perspective, I know I probably went there because I was influenced by the Maryknoll magazines I read at my grandparents' house. If I had to do it all over again, knowing what I know now, I'd still do it. It had a great influence on my entire life in one way or another.

Kevin: A couple of more memories, if I may...

I remember being thrown in the swimming pool by Dick Barrett and Father Allen commenting on people throwing "stuff" in the pool, which became a temporary nickname for me. Also Barrett, a left hand batter, hitting a towering home run over the top of the handball courts, quite a shot that was! Dick was well-muscled to say the least...

Or Tom Sims — we often sat together to listen to Father Allen and his weekly talks. Tom would whisper to me, "Watch this!", and then proceed to calmly and innocently ask the Rector about the latest news of Cuba and Fidel Castro. That was normally good for at least five minutes of verbal fireworks to liven up the talk and the evening. Sims was a master of the "innocent question" baited with verbal dynamite. Yow. He was such a fun guy with his sly and knowing smile.

I remember Tony Gardner riding roughshod with the garbage truck up and down the road to the dump and crashing it one time and getting in a pickle.

I do remember really missing the Chesterfield and Mountain View guys the last two years. Even though it was crowded, I liked it better with the larger group that we had those first two years.

I can remember being on Sacristy duty and polishing Father Wolken's chalice with a toothbrush and moderately marring it with scratches. He came up to me and asked me what happened and I had to admit what I inadvertently did was to try and improve it. He didn't say much, but I shriveled at my foolishness. This was almost as bad as the Father Condon incident.

I remember the great camaraderie we had with Brother Neal and the judo that he taught us. "Remember to hit the mat!"

But I must say I am deeply moved and eternally grateful for the wonderful, loving, stimulating set of formative experiences I had. It was a perfect setting in the beautiful Poconos, a great academic and work/labor environment, and a set of priests, brothers, and fellow students that really were so special. It really was the best, and I thank all of you and those who were part of this great process.

Charlie: What I remember about Brother Neal's judo training was that he left the order about halfway through the course. He had taught us how to fall, but not how to make anybody else fall. That being said, learning how to fall has been invaluable

to me on innumerable occasions over the past fifty years. I can get knocked down with the best of them.

Oddly enough, one of my clearest memories of the Venard is the sound of the bat hitting that famous Dick Barrett home run. The Phillies could have used him last year. And speaking of athletic powers, the closest thing I ever got to scoring a goal in soccer came when I kicked one sideways into the near occasion of the goal where it was slammed in by none other than my teammate Harry Ferguson. As ever, glad you're there, Harry.

Don: I remember the many strolls into Clarks Summit. The people there were very friendly to us. When we went to pay for our purchases they would ask if we were from the school up on the hill. They would then give us a discount.

I'm sure this was also somewhere in the Summit. There was an old house with what I can only recall as a screened-in porch turned into a soda fountain. It was owned by two sweet little old ladies. They may not actually have been old, but to a 14 year old, every one over 30 is ancient. They made a great ice cream soda. Now to all your Northeastern gents, a soda is **not** a beverage such as coke. That is **pop**. A soda to a Midwesterner is made out of ice cream and some type of carbonated beverage.

We have been talking about the friendly residents of the Summit, but as I recall, we were told to stay away from Clarks Green. For some reason those people didn't care too much for us. Baptists perhaps?

One last note. I will always fondly remember the scenic country all around us. The mountains, streams, pastures. It was truly God's country and very befitting a school such as ours. Gentlemen, yea Brothers, have a great time at the gathering. You will all be in my thoughts, just as you have been these past fifty years. Who knows when our paths will once again cross, but I feel confident we will always be together in our hearts and in our prayers.

Jay: There was a time when I expected to be going to "The Knoll" in 1968. I'm only 45 years late! I know I came to this discussion late in the game, but here's one more I'd like to slip in.

Let loose in the booming metropolis (Scranton), some of us went to see the movie Lawrence of Arabia on the wide screen. Someone (could even have been me) genuflected in the aisle before going in to his seat. Me or not, real or not, it is a statement of the power of routine — dare I say, indoctrination. I do know that I was flying home from Glen Ellyn after investiture, and I reached down to "gather my skirts" before I sat down, and I hadn't been in a cassock that long. Guy in the seat next to me looked at me a bit oddly for a while.

Charlie: Jay, I was there for the Lawrence of Arabia genuflection and I have the sneaking suspicion the phantom kneeler was me. My wife tells me I still go into "seminarian mode" from time to time, especially when I'm trying to think about something "deep".

Ron: Remember the Hobby Room under the sacristy, left side of the refectory? Father White was the moderator. We quickly learned that you could get an extra

grade point or two if you made something that corresponded to his history class. I remember spending hours in there as a freshman. Mike painted his tiny lead soldiers — British and American soldiers of the Revolution, I believe. Delicate and detailed figures. I liked building plastic planes and cars. Tom Sims did too. I kept a model u-control gas plane there and fixed it after any rough landings on the ball field. Made skis for winter flying too. The graduating Seniors seemed to have nothing better to write in my yearbook other than "Keep flying...see you at Glen Ellyn".

Don: I spent some time in the Hobby Room too, although illegally. You had to belong to the Hobby Club, but couldn't do so unless your grades were up to snuff. I went in there anyway and remember once I had just completed building a plane and Father White showed up. Idiot me was so proud of my accomplishment I showed it to him. He sternly asked if I was allowed to be there. I honestly told him "no", to which he replied I was to remove myself and my plane from the room or he would smash it.

Dennis: Random subjects:

Smoking: I never smoked the entire time at the Venard (or even after that) but I think about the massive exposure that even non-smokers had to second hand smoke especially in places like the Music Room where it was a constant haze if I recall correctly. Luckily the exposure, at least in my case, has not caused any apparent problems.

The Music Room: I recall many hours spent in the Music Room and that there was considerable jockeying about what records would be played. I believe there may have been some upper class boy in charge of deciding what got played and perhaps even times when certain music would be played. I associate the song "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" with that room because it seemed to be played over and over again for months.

Transistor Radios: Someone in this string mentioned having a transistor radio and that brought back the memory of bringing one from home, even though I believe they were not allowed when we were freshmen. I kept it hidden in my clothes and would get it out at night before lights out, put it under my pillow and listen to radio programs until I fell asleep. Late at night you could bring in stations from all over the East Coast and even as far west as Chicago. I still like listening to the radio late at night or early in the morning — surely a remnant of the Venard years.

Jim: My only smoking experience was the night before graduation when we were allowed to stay up all night. I smoked a cigar with everyone else. I had the taste of that miserable thing in my mouth all day graduation day. I have never smoked anything since.

Colin: Speaking of smoking...as Dennis pointed out, we would wade through billows of smoke in the Rec Room after meals. I was jealous of all you guys who smoked. I didn't, and not for health reasons. At 12 yrs old, a friend and I decided to split a pack of Pall Mall in order to start smoking...fuhgddaboutit! It cured me, sick as a dog. So, trying to be cool like many other seminarians, I tried the pipe route! (who smokes pipes anymore btw?). For some reason, I have a particular image of McComiskey smoking one: did you Mike? Anyway, home on vacation trying to impress my friend, I got through the tobacco and was actually smoking the wood!..sick

as a dog; smoking days forever over! If there's any truth to the sidestream smoke stuff though, I'm in trouble. Dad smoked three packs of Luckies a day; Mom a pack of Kools a day. I remember some of you guys actually tearing off the filters when the seminary store ran out of Camels, Luckies, Winstons or Marlboros!

Mike McC: Hi Colin, yep, I smoked a pipe. Have pretty much given it up now but continued smoking a pipe for years and years — and always enjoying it! I do have a story about chewing tobacco: I had noticed that there was a line in the Student Manual expressly forbidding chewing tobacco. Soooooo, naturally I decided to try it. Well I was outside the gym door during 'smoking break' with the rest of the guys one morning when Fr O'Connor came by and stopped to talk. When the bell rang for us to return to class, I couldn't spit it out because he was right there, so I went up to class with the wad still in my mouth. When I got called on, I had to swallow the damn thing. You think smoking a cigarette can make you sick? Never, ever, ever again, will I try chewing tobacco!

Tom: I have no recollection of the Hobby Room, but I do have fond memories of the Music Room. I was the Music Room "chair" (or whatever we called it) at one time. I recall we had set hours for certain types of music: classical, rock, folk, musicals, etc. Do you remember the Limelighters, Vikki Dougan song? We all loved the refrain:

*Vikki Turn your back on me, Come on darlin', don't you see
For there is something so appealing that your eyes are not revealing
Oh, Miss Dougan you're for me!*

I think the Chapel was above the Music Room and occasionally we would get a complaint to hold the noise down. Dennis is right, the Music Room was a smoke trap and I was one of the perpetrators. Oh yes, Duke of Earl, etc., but I favored classical music and especially liked the Carmina Burana by Carl Orff. I think that's where my reputation for authoring Latin and German drinking songs came from.

Ron: You're right Tom, the Lady Chapel was above the Music Room. I think I remember seeing my first dead person laid out in the Lady Chapel. We all took turns spending time at the vigil for Br. Ignatius who was the brother who died in his room. Wasn't it located somewhere near the bell tower between St Joseph's and Sacred Heart dorms? I know most of the brothers lived at the Brothers House, but somehow I recall Br. Ignatius' room was near the bell tower. Maybe I am dreaming — I was so petrified when my turn came at the vigil — but I swear I saw his chest move. I thought the body would rise up and say hello. I think that was one of the most uncomfortable experiences I ever had. No one explained and I felt too stupid to ask.

Jack: I have memories of the Music Room also, but I remember the Chesterfield one better than the one at the Venard. I also remember the juke box at the Venard. The only song I can remember though is "Rockin' Robin." But man, did I love the Gaudeamus (or is it Gaudeamii?) that we had. They were a great break.

Charlie: One of my proudest moments was when Ron and I won a faculty breakfast for our Gaudeamus skit. And I still remember some the clever songs people did mocking various fellow students and faculty members (especially the time I was the target).

Colin: Maryknoll...what can account for such different experiences/reactions to a common experience now so long ago? It's a mystery to me, but I guess a testament to individual differences for one thing and the dynamic interplay of a variety of personalities.

Even though I find myself "far afield" from Maryknoll in much if its current philosophy/theology, I retain an admiration for the heroic example of those early missionaries, for many of the priests who taught us and (obviously) a continuing friendship with the great guys with whom I shared five very formative years...

Frank: Greetings gents! The conversation has been amazing and has afforded me more smiles than one deserves.

I could go on and on forever, I think, about individual memories but the thread that holds them together for me is all good. Without doubt, there must have been instances that were annoying, displeasing, sad, and filled with every emotion, but I reflect on a positive time in my life. After all, we were high school kids; somewhat naive, immature and as ridiculous as any other kids that age at that time. There was nothing terribly weighty going on at the Venard; it was more an incubator than a life experience, and I mean that in a positive way.

Unlike most I guess, I went there because I did not want to be at home any longer, I was not happy there. Somehow I was slick enough to convince my parents to let me go. For me, it was an ideal situation — freedom, and I recall I took advantage of it to the fullest. I became aware, early on, that I did not want to go to the missions and that the life of a missionary was not for me, but the life I was living was great. Pretty shallow, but it worked for me. It wasn't until years and years later that I actually felt that service to others through sacramental ministry was what I felt called to.

The thing that surfaces in my mind is the 'quality' of the kids we were with. We were as different as different could be, but we managed to be a rather supportive, cohesive group with few exceptions, as I recall. The experiences were good — even when we weren't! The foundation of understanding right from wrong, good from bad, and living in the light as opposed to the darkness, was built at the Venard, as I look back.

The men who looked after us came with a storehouse of worldly experiences from some of the most depressed parts of the world and looked to form and shape us and to move us into a place we had not yet gotten to. The Brothers were truly committed to teaching us things other than academics with the insistence of parents. The nuns lived their lives of service with us as the focus — high school kids, and unappreciative at times. God provided us with a setting unmatched (with the help of benefactors, of course). In short, which I have already passed, gents, I ask you, "Who had it better than us?"

Oh, and by the way, all this chatter has brought pictures into mind of each of all of you that I know, and, to that end, you will be part of and remembered at each of the liturgies of this Triduum and Easter as I preside at them, as unworthy as I am. God certainly does have a sense of humor wherever he or she might be!

Gaudeamus igitur
Iuvenes dum sumus.
Post iucundam iuventutem
Post molestam senectutem
Nos habebit humus.

Ubi sunt qui ante nos
In mundo fuere?
Vadite ad superos
Transite in inferos
Hos si vis videre.

Vita nostra brevis est
Brevi finietur.
Venit mors velociter
Rapit nos atrociter
Nemini parcetur.

Vivat academia!
Vivant professores!
Vivat membrum quodlibet;
Vivant membra quaelibet;
Semper sint in flore.



Venard Memories

Members of the Class of 1963
In Celebration of our 50th Anniversary
May 3-5, 2013

