

Sharing Our Marianist Stories, Ep. 27 Transcript
Looking Back in Gratitude (with Patti Gehred and Gabby Bibeau)

00:01 - Gabby Bibeau

Hi everyone. This is Gabby. Today, we have a different kind of podcast for you. For those of you who don't know, Patti Gehred retired this past March from her position at NACMS. And I will also be transitioning out of my position at NACMS in July to pursue a PhD in Theology. So, we had this idea to interview each other as a final podcast featuring the two of us together. So, this interview was recorded back in March, just before Patti's retirement date, and it's a really nice conversation. You'll hear a bit more about our experience doing the podcast and some of our reflections on our time at NACMS. So, I hope you enjoy it. Just so you know, the podcast will continue, we have hired somebody to be working at NACMS as a Media Administrator who will continue doing podcasts as well as some other audio-visual materials. So, stay tuned. Please continue to subscribe. Tell your friends about us. We'll be releasing another episode in the upcoming months with the Marianist Social Justice Collaborative. But we wanted a chance to say thank you and farewell. So, I will lead you into our podcast conversation. Thanks, everyone.

01:46 - Patti Gehred

Welcome to *Sharing Our Marianist Stories*. I'm Patti Gehred.

01:50 - Gabby Bibeau

And I'm Gabby Bibeau. So, for our podcast today, it's a little bit different because this is going to basically be just sort of a conversation between Patti and I. For those of you who don't know, Patti will be retiring tomorrow.

02:10 - Patti Gehred

March 1st.

02:11 - Gabby Bibeau

Yeah. So, we're recording this on February 28th, and Patti will be retiring tomorrow from her position at NACMS. And Patti, How long have you been at NACMS?

02:21 - Patti Gehred

18 1/2 years. It will be 19 years in September so...

02:25 - Gabby Bibeau

Yes.

02:28 - Patti Gehred

A lot of my life.

02:28 - Gabby Bibeau

Yeah. So, we at NACMS are obviously sad to see Patti go, but also very happy for her in this next endeavor in her life. And we can talk a little bit about what are some things coming up that you're interested [in], you're looking forward to in retirement. And then, for those of you who don't know, for me as well, I will be going to grad school starting in the Fall. So, I will also be ending my time at NACMS over the summer so...

03:03 - Patti Gehred

How long have you been here, Gabby?

03:05 - Gabby Bibeau

Well, I started volunteering here. I volunteered here for a year in 2016 and then was a grad assistant and then full time. So, in some capacity, I've been at NACMS for almost seven years... which kind of flew by, kind of crazy.

03:24 - Patti Gehred

And I can say that we are going to miss Gabby at NACMS very, very much with her, the way she has done a lot of research and created courses and introduced us to new technology. And boy, I've loved doing this podcast with Gabby. It is a highlight. So, you are going to be missed as well.

03:48 - Gabby Bibeau

Thank you. Yes, and I'll definitely miss it here, too. But it seemed like a good time to move on to my PhD studies, which I kind of had seen in my future for a while, and I hope to keep studying some of the things that I've been studying at NACMS, too. So, there will be lots of opportunities in the future to get back in touch with NACMS and still keep working with them. So, we have a lot of fun transitions coming up at NACMS, a lot of exciting opportunities. So, we thought it would be good to just kind of have a conversation about our time at NACMS and our time with the Marianist family and how that will continue, and the Marianist charism - just sort of reflect back on that as we bring our time at NACMS towards the close. So, we are...

04:49 - Patti Gehred

Our professional time at NACMS.

04:51 - Gabby Bibeau

Yes.

04:52 - Patti Gehred

It is in our very soul at this point, all that we've learned and read and shared.

04:59 - Gabby Bibeau

Yeah, that's right. It's been an important part of both of our lives. And so, we wanted to share some of that with you on this podcast, so...

05:10 - Patti Gehred

And I've been wanting to interview Gabby for a long time. So, I'm really looking forward to this.

05:17 - Gabby Bibeau

Yeah. All right. So, Patti would you want to talk about - so you were at NACMS before me. So, could you just talk about how did you come to NACMS? How did you get a job here? How did that all happen?

05:36 - Patti Gehred

Well, in my life, most things happen because I'm a hiker and a walker. So, I've gotten several jobs because of hiking and walking. And I had just moved across the street from the Mount St. John property and had been taking a lot of opportunities to hike this property, not having any idea where I was. So, there are several people I met that started telling me stories about what this campus means. Bro. John Lemker's one of them. I tell the story all the time, where I would walk at 8:00 in the morning, I'd meet Bro. John Lemker. We'd go opposite ways, and I'd see him on the other side. I would walk at 3:00 in the afternoon, and I would meet Bro. John Lemker. It was pretty funny, and he slowly told me in his gentle way what this was.

06:24 - Patti Gehred

I eventually got a job at Queen of Apostles Chapel, and one night, we had a wonderful presenter named Carol Ramey. And at that point, she was doing a program where she would pretend she was Chaminade's mother and would be calling him with a banana to her ear. And I'm like, "I like her." And we really clicked. And on one of my walks, she was putting things in the back of her car and said, "There's an opening at NACMS and would you be interested?" And the timing for me was perfect. Again, though, I really didn't know what the Marianists were. I had to laugh when I heard at one point that the internship was to find the next Marianist Scholar, because Carol Ramey must have ignored that part of the position. But I came on as an intern, just fell in love with everything, was like a sponge soaking up what the Marianists are, grateful to be a part of this. And then, when my internship was up was just when online learning was beginning. We were working in collaboration with UD [University of Dayton] with the virtual learning. And so, that connected with my background, and things have just sort of grown from there.

07:39 - Gabby Bibeau

And when you started as an intern, you took the novice course, right? With the Marianist novices, including Bro. Dennis Bautista - who's now the novice director for the Brothers - and Bro. Andrew [Kosmowski], right, who's on the NACMS staff. So, wow, that's really cool.

08:01 - Patti Gehred

Yeah, and I loved - I mean that was so fun. And again, that was a whole brand-new experience for me. And Bro. Larry Cada was one of the teachers or moderators, Bro. Hugh Bihl was one of the moderators, and then Carol Ramey. So, I mean, come on, the stories I would hear on top of the depth of scholarship. That's the thing about NACMS is you get exposed to things that you

can't even dream of, and sometimes you have to really look and think, "So what is happening here?" It took me a while to understand the relationship between Bro. Hugh and Bro. Larry and to the beginning of the rebirth of the Lay communities with Carol... And then, you're just sort of sitting in holiness. You truly are. So, I hope I appreciated as much of that as I've been exposed to, because it's pretty amazing. Did you have experiences like that where you just looked around and you're like, "How did I get here?"

09:07 - Gabby Bibeau

Yeah, I think, the - "How did I get here?" I think I definitely had some moments where I was like, "This is such a unique place." And some of what immediately stands out to me is in my early days at NACMS when... things were really new. I remember having lunch with - one day it was Bro. Larry, Fr. Dave Fleming when he was here, Teresa [Trimboli], maybe Bro. Tim Phillips, too - having lunch and we talked about Slavic languages and trying to remember all of them. And I was like, "These are my people." This is so random and niche, and it was very funny. But it was a serious conversation, and it was after doing it for 1/2 hour, I sort of took a step back and was like, "This is so funny."

10:16 - Gabby Bibeau

So, I've had moments like that of just the deep appreciation of all the different personalities on the staff and all the different gifts that people bring. It's been so fun. For example, talking to Teresa and Bro. Andy about what they do as librarians, and me being appreciative of them as librarians, but also being like "I don't have those gifts of being a librarian because they're very detail-oriented and all about organizing, and I am not like that." So, I've definitely have had some of those moments... Yeah, I was going to ask you too, and I can talk about this for me as well, what have been some of the highlights of your career at NACMS?

11:12 - Patti Gehred

Yeah, that's a really good question. One of the things that I really have enjoyed is this constant opportunity to learn. Online learning was new. It really was new when, well, Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski's was the one that was really creating this program, and then we collaborated. And so then, I wanted to learn more. So, I took an eight-week course on online learning because it's not the same as face-to-face, and then could use what I learned. I was always given the opportunity to use what I learned and so use what I learned, and we created our courses. We learned how to make a podcast. I had never made a podcast. Gabby and I went and got training at a local radio station and went for it. The travel - for a while there, we were traveling a lot which I enjoyed. [In] That initial intern program, Carol Ramey just made sure the intern attended [everything]. I went to Cape May, San Antonio, never made it to Hawaii, but did make it to California.

12:14 - Gabby Bibeau

Me neither. It's okay.

12:16 - Patti Gehred

Not for lack of trying - And then, California and Philadelphia, St. Louis. I mean, just the travel and then the different people and organizations that you meet. But I would really say the thing - when I talk to people about this job - is that... because it's a small staff, and we're always trying to remain relevant, and we're always trying to share the Marianist charism, we're willing to learn and have been given the opportunity to learn. So that really is, I mean, other than specific highlights, [such as] the programming. We did *Food for the Soul* at the University of Dayton, which I really liked. I was a bit, basically, Carol's sidekick for a lot of programming. But boy, that was a great role. And *Marianist Manna* was done at local communities in Dayton. So, I'm kind of a face-to-face person. That time has come and gone in a way, but I really enjoyed those. We did the program, *Marianist Studies* - We had a *Marianist Studies 2.0* program, where we worked with a group of people on a particular topic, and then they would come to Dayton and then we would host a week of writing and learning. Those kinds of things I really, really enjoyed. When we did things as a staff together, those were my favorite things. So, I have a lot of highlights. How about you? What are your highlights here?

13:47 - Gabby Bibeau

Yeah. Well, there's so many things. There's so many things that I think about that I never thought I would be doing. So, when I first started working at NACMS, I was volunteering, and I had been commissioned by Bro. Ray Fitz to write a short biography of Fr. [William] Ferree. And so, all the resources are in NACMS. So, I just sort of set up shop here... And I was tasked with writing the short biography, and I had a little office here that I could use so that I could do the research. But then it was like, "I'm here," so, then I just started showing up to different staff meetings and some programming meetings, publication meetings, things like that. And it's just, I really sort of inserted myself into NACMS and learned more about what it did.

14:53 - Gabby Bibeau

And Dan Jordan at that time, he was teaching the novice class as it was kind of going through some transitions after Carol Ramey retired, and he was like, "Do you want to, I guess, teach a couple classes?" And I was like, "Okay." I mean, I had never taught before. So that was a new thing. And I found that I really liked that. And so, when I became part of the staff officially, helping to sort of revamp the novice class and be one of the teachers for that, that's been something I've really enjoyed, and I think teaching will be in my future because that's something that I've liked so much. I'm just a naturally curious person and I do like reading about things and researching things, but it's not so fun to just do that and then it's like "Oh, that was cool, onto the next thing." The fun part is also sharing that with other people. So, I think the novice course has been a highlight.

16:01 - Gabby Bibeau

And then during COVID, as we were looking at, "How can we do some more online things for people?" because I really enjoyed doing the novice course, I was like, "It's too bad that this is only offered to Marianist Brothers and Sisters during their novitiate because the material is so good and it's really important stuff." So, I was wondering how can we offer the same material to

a larger group of people, and that was where the Online Marianist History Course started. So, I adapted that into an online course and that's been really enjoyable, too. I hope that will continue, and I think the plan is that will continue. So, yeah, I just think it's so important. So that's been a highlight.

16:52 – Gabby Bibeau

This podcast has been a highlight. Like you said, I never thought I would do a podcast. But we had this idea like right when I started. And we knew nothing about podcast[ing]. We both were podcast listeners, but we knew nothing about how do you do a podcast? And it really was just providential that the WYSO, the local Dayton radio station, was doing a weekend podcast workshop. And it was like right after we had talked about, “Wouldn't that be cool if NACMS started a podcast?” So, we went... and I mean, we were just like, “Yeah, we can do a podcast. Why not? We can learn how to do it.” And we did and we started a great relationship with WYSO, and they really mentored us in the beginning. And we've gotten so much great feedback from listeners of the podcast. So that's been a real gift and a highlight and a new skill, you know, audio editing and all audio equipment, that kind of thing.

18:01 – Gabby Bibeau

When we did the *General Chapter of 1981* documentary – Which, those of you listening, if you don't know about that documentary, go on our website and watch it. It's really interesting - That was a whole new thing. I knew nothing about how you do high level video editing to make a documentary... and I learned how to do it. During COVID, again, we got a Skillshare subscription, and I learned how to use Adobe Premiere Pro. And so... there's been so many moments at NACMS that it's been like, “Yeah, maybe I can do that. I can learn how to do it,” and do it and then we did it. So, I have gained a lot of skills on top of just the head learning that I've done as well, the reading I've done about the French Revolution and Marianist history and all of that kind of stuff. So yeah, a lot of highlights, a lot of things I'm taking with me for moving forward.

19:06 - Patti Gehred

I think NACMS has a culture of “Yes,” of “Mary's ‘Yes.’” It's like, “Let's have an idea. How do we do it? We'll work around it if we can or...” We were very fortunate our Director, George Lisjak, was like, “Okay, well, we'll get you the necessary tools,” when we would hit dead ends... It's a wonderful culture to be a part of. “Let's figure out a new way to do this,” and we put our heads together and do it. So, podcasting is going to be in my future. That is something I want to do after retirement. I created a podcast of my own when we first did this, as we worked together, and I found I love it. I love interviewing people. I love hearing stories, sharing our Marianist stories. I'll find what other stories to share. So, that I really hope is in my future is continue podcasting. Well, I'm going to go back. This is just some basic stuff, but like, who is the most influential Founder for you, Gabby, and why?

20:11 - Gabby Bibeau

Yeah, I mean, I would say Adèle, just because so much of my time at NACMS has really been studying her life and her context. So, a lot of the research areas, places that I researched has been about women at the turn of the 19th century. So late 18th, end of the 19th century aristocratic women. I was really interested in learning what would her life have been like? What was it supposed to be like if the [French] Revolution had never happened? And so, delving into what was the life of an aristocratic woman right before the Revolution, and all of the courtly rituals. And a lot of them spent a lot of time in Paris. Adèle never visited Paris. You know, being presented to the King and Queen, that certainly never happened to her. That happened to her parents, but not to her. So, her life was just so different because of that.

21:22 – Gabby Bibeau

I also did a lot of research into women's spirituality in that time period, and that helped give me a window into Adèle and her spirituality. I feel like she's the most misunderstood founder just because Father Chaminade, he started it all, this was his vision, the Marianist Family - the whole Marianist family was his vision. So, people get that, and we hear a lot about Father Chaminade. And then, Marie-Thérèse, a lot of people really are attracted to her because her story, I think people can really grasp onto that because some of what she did was so amazing with working with the women at the Miséricorde and then her bravery during the French Revolution. So, I feel like a lot of people don't really get Adèle. And if you read her writing, it's hard to get into because of the language, the way that people talked then. So, when you really read her closely and read her a lot, you start to see elements of her personality. So, I just feel I've been able to connect with her because she was so loving and so positive and so joyful and had so much generosity in her heart. And I feel she really balanced humility with confidence in herself, that, "Yes, I can do this. I can start this religious community. I can start this Association of friends, even though I'm really young," while also acknowledging her littleness and how limited she was. I think that was especially true when she was sick, and I think that's something that I really admire about her, is the way that she kept going, and her faith, how strong her faith was, even at the end of her life, when she was so ill.

23:37 – Gabby Bibeau

So, I think just the amount of time that I've spent with her, studying her, trying to get in her head is very meaningful. And I think where I really understood that, how much that was true, was when I went to France this past summer or last summer, and I went to Trenquelléon, which was her family home. And that was just driving up and getting out of the car and seeing it, and this was something I'd seen pictures of so much. I knew the layout of the house, like all of the stuff. And then seeing it in person was just like, "Oh my gosh!" just the feeling, the emotion. I felt like I was coming into contact with her. And so, yeah... I felt a connection in a way that I didn't necessarily feel at some of the other places. For some reason, that really hit me. So, yeah, that's who it is for me. What about you, Patti?

24:41 - Patti Gehred

Well, for me it is Marie-Thérèse. Part of it is, you know, when I started at NACMS as an intern, I was 45. And believe me, I got teased a lot about being an intern at age 45, which is fine. That's fine with me. But I would read about Marie-Thérèse, and she made all these changes and decisions as she aged. And now that I'm making this transition from NACMS to the next phase, I look to her again. At the French Revolution, she could have just sort of stayed Le Pian and stayed with her family, but she took on this big project up at the Miséricorde, and just her loving of the women of the Miséricorde and understanding their story, I don't know. And her leadership skills, how she was very important for Father Chaminade in what he was accomplishing and their friendship... And I love the stories of the cigars. I mean, just how she would find a problem, see a problem, and try to fix it. And so, I think I identify with that a little bit... It was just nice that at being an older age, being new to the Marianists and then reading a story about someone who was older and doing good work and listening, listening to God. And we kind of say that the Founders are like "Head, Heart and Hands," and she's "Hands." I'm kind of like that, too. So, I like to get things done, do something more. I'm not so much of a "Head" person, maybe "Heart and Hands" is me.

26:26 – Patti Gehred

But so, I just really, really admire her and look to her a lot. But the teachings of Father Chaminade is something else that has changed my life, and I'm sure it's the same for you as well, Gabby. And the fact that he worked and listened to these women... I feel he saw Marie-Thérèse as an equal. I think he saw Adèle as an equal, too. And I sort of see you and I, together, as [if we] are generations apart. I could be your mother. I don't think I can be your grandmother, but we work really well together. And we listen to each other and click in a lot of ways. We've worked very well together in coming with ideas. And I think that's a really neat part of the Marianist charism - a neat part of NACMS.

27:18 – Patti Gehred

From Father Chaminade's teachings, the System of Virtues, and the Silences are something that changed my life, that I try to introduce as many people as I can to. Not always. They are not always as receptive as I would hope. But that, I will always take it with me. And so, how many jobs can you have that you're taking something that altered your life and will change your life forever. And so, when I was reading [about] the System of Virtues and the Silences - And Father Chaminade is so positive. He sees us all as holy. That's rare. If all of us are holy... I sort of see us as lamplighters. We're here to light each other's, shine each other's lights. And if you don't know where your gift is at the moment, someone else will help you. If you see it in someone else, then it's your job to highlight somebody else's gifts, and that comes from Father Chaminade. I think of the French Revolution and that he came out [with the mission that] he's going to re-Christianize the world after what he'd experienced. So, I'm very moved and changed by the Marianist charism. Is there a part of the Marianist charism that really... Gabby, your life *is* the Marianist charism, but is there something that you could sort of highlight?

28:43 - Gabby Bibeau

I think... Oh gosh, I mean, there's a lot of things I think that I could highlight. I think one - I mean, this is true for a lot of people, and I think you can see this and how we operate as a staff - is that discipleship of equals and how that's just a wonderful model of being Church. Like, we have different vocations, but we work collaboratively. Our boss is a Layperson. We have Brothers on staff, and we do things together. We set a circle as a staff... We work together. And even George as the Director, it is collaborative [in that] somebody might have an idea that we'll talk about as a staff and like, "Okay, how can we make that happen?" So, I think that's how it happens on a professional level that discipleship of equals. But then in a larger sense, in the Marianist family, the way that we relate to each other and work together on things, I find that wide-reaching.

29:59 – Gabby Bibeau

And the intergenerational aspect, I think, has been a great gift, and we see that on the NACMS staff. We see that in the Marianist family. We see it in the Founders - Adèle was 30-something years younger than Father Chaminade. Marie-Thérèse, when you talked about her being an older woman, she was older than Father Chaminade. I think one of the things for me [in] learning about Marianist history, what's really cool about that is it helped make sense of the way things are now. It's like, "Oh, that's why we do things the way we do them," or "That's why this looks like the way it does." It's because of the way they did things in the Bordeaux Sodality, the way that they started the Brothers and the Sisters, the way the Founders worked together. So that's just very cool to see how that thread has remained.

30:54 – Gabby Bibeau

The other big thing is Mary and just how my understanding of her has deepened over the years. And I think that's been one of my biggest takeaways from Father Chaminade is how he talked about Mary and how he viewed Mary. Father Chaminade did talk a lot about Mary as mother, for sure, hugely important. But unlike, I think, some of his contemporaries and people later in the 19th century who talk about her as mother in a very sort of sentimental way, a very sort of soft way, he also talked about Mary's power. And I know we talked about [that] when we did that podcast about the Letter of 1839, I think that's where it comes out really strongly is Mary's power and her role as the woman who crushes the head of the serpent and the way that she was present in all of the most important parts of Jesus' life. I find that really unique and really important, and I think that's another gift that we can offer to the Church in how the Church sees Mary.

32:14 - Patti Gehred

Can I interject a story because when you say highlights?

32:15 - Gabby Bibeau

Yeah, please.

32:19 - Patti Gehred

A huge highlight for me was at a *Food for the Soul* program we did at the University of Dayton. Carol Ramey was giving a talk, and she talked about Mary standing at the Cross. And I had never thought about that very deeply, but... watching her son being crucified, *standing*. I would be on my knees. You don't hear that she's howling with grief like something else I imagine myself doing but *standing* at the cross. And I've seen artwork by Marianist Brothers where they're eye to eye, that he's looking at his mother standing there, and that just was one of those moments that change everything for me in my relationship with Mary... Again, I'm older. I think there was more talk of just her kind of perfection and blue gown and all of that, which is fine. For a lot of people, that's really important, too. But having been shown and talked about her *standing* at the cross, I think that's the Marianist perspective that's very unique and just a guiding force for me. So, I'm always grateful for that. But that's one of those moments I can see myself sitting there, I can see Carol Ramey talking and it was just like, "Boom!" So, thank you. I agree with that.

33:43 - Gabby Bibeau

Yeah, something clicked.

33:45 - Patti Gehred

It clicked.

33:47 - Gabby Bibeau

Yeah. And that's so important in the Marianist charism. I mean, the Three O'Clock Prayer is that. So, what are you looking forward to? You mentioned podcasting.

33:55 - Patti Gehred

Yeah, I'm going to be, I don't know. I think what NACMS has helped me see, I'm going to really be kind of on a journey for holiness, just seeing where it is. I like photography. I would like to perhaps make that [a thing]. I have done this thing called "Moment of beauty" where I try to take a picture every day of something that I find beautiful, which really gives you a neat outlook on life. I did that for Lent one year and kind of continued it. When you spend your day looking for a moment of beauty, your day turns out pretty good. And I think Father Chaminade and the Founders, and my work here just helped me realize that there's holiness everywhere and we need that now. We need that recognized. So that's very general. But that's kind of the path that I hope to be on. Walking, I'll continue walking and see where that brings me. It brought me here. I'll do some photography. And [the] search for holiness is really, I think, what I'll be doing in this last chapter. But again, I guess I'd like to say I'm so grateful for all of you that I've met. All of you that we've supported in any way, and I will continue on this journey because and for everything I've experienced here.

35:16 - Gabby Bibeau

Wow, that sounds great. Yeah. Good things to do in retirement, for sure. I'm just excited and grateful to you, Patti, too. It's just been such a great experience working with you. So, yeah, it's been an adventure, a great one.

35:30 - Patti Gehred

It has. So, for everybody, we're going to say thank you for listening to *Sharing Our Marianist Stories*. Please keep checking the NACMS website for future programming. Listen to our podcast.

35:44 - Gabby Bibeau

Yeah. And stay tuned because there will be a lot more things to come, new exciting endeavors for NACMS. So, thanks for listening and keep listening because we have more episodes coming to you soon.