

Proposed questions for interview of Bro. Paul Joslin, June 26, 2009

Introduction

1. Ask permission to record.
2. Please begin by giving your name and where you live. What is your current job title?
3. You have been a Christian Brother since 1964. What is the origin of the Christian Brothers? How are Catholic brothers different from priests?

Early life (birth – early adolescence)

1. Bro Paul, please share where and when you were born, the names of your parents and siblings. If your extended family was important in your early life, please include those you had regular contact with as a child.
2. I would like to ask you questions about your daily life in your early childhood.
 - a. Where did you live?
 - b. How would you describe your home? (physically, socially, etc.)
 - c. What do you remember about your neighborhood?
 - d. Did you neighbors help each other? If yes, how?
 - e. What do you remember about family activities including holidays, family events, family vacations or outings?
 - f. Who were some family friends and what was the basis of the friendship?
 - g. What did you play with your siblings, cousins and/or friends?
 - h. Did you have chores? If yes, what type of chores?
3. Next I would like to ask you additional questions about your family and their influences on your early life and your early schooling.
 - a. What were your parents' occupations?
 - b. Did you have any sense of social class? If yes, how would you describe your social class?
 - c. What was your parents' attitude toward your schooling?
 - d. Where did you go to elementary school? Junior high?
 - e. What are your fondest memories about elementary school and junior high?
 - f. What did you enjoy studying?
 - g. Did you family discuss politics or social issues? If yes, which issues do you remember?
 - h. Was you family politically active or involved in your community? If yes, how?
 - i. Did you family take you to church?
 - j. What were your early memories of church?
 - k. How important was church to you as a child?
 - l. Were any of your family members active in the Church? If so, how?
 - m. What was your understanding of God and/or spirituality?
4. Teen years
 - a. What were the most important influences on your teen years? (about age 13 – 18)
 - b. Please state where you went to high school and describe your high school experience.

- c. What type of activities were you involved with in high school?
- d. What classes did you enjoy in high school? Why?
- e. Which teachers influenced you in high school? How? Why?
- f. What were highlights of your high school year? (events, friendships, classes, etc.)
- g. How do you think your teachers influenced you as a teacher?
- h. What was your understanding of God and/or spirituality as a teen?
- i. What was your understanding of the role of the Church in your life?
- j. What was your understanding of the role of the Church in the world?
- k. When you finished high school in 1964, how would you describe Philadelphia?
- l. In 1964 there were racially based riots in Philadelphia. Did these events have any impact on you, your family or friends?
- m. Your high school years were also a period of expanding civil rights movements throughout the United States. Were you aware of civil rights related events outside of Philadelphia?
- n. Were social and/or political events discussed at your high school?
- o. Were there other local or global events which had an impact on your late teen years?
- p. Did any of the events in Philadelphia or in the United States influence your decision to become a Christian Brother? (If yes, how?)

5. Young adult life (late teens - 20s)

- a. Bro. Paul, I know that you joined the Christian Brothers in 1964 when you graduated from high school. Please share your understanding of the mission of the Christian Brothers and what influenced your calling.
- b. Did you ever consider doing something different with your life?
- c. Please share your memories of your early years with the Christian Brothers – your scholasticate in 1965 in Elkins Park, PA and your vows.
- d. How did your years at LaSalle College (University) influence your calling / vocation?
- e. Your second appointment was in Adamstown (PA?) in 1969. What did you do in Adamstown? Please share your memories from this time period.
- f. In 1973 you moved to Calvert Hall. What is Calvert Hall? Please share your memories from Calvert Hall.
- g. In 1974 you held a position at West Catholic High School. What did you do at West Catholic High School?
- h. What stands out from your early experiences as a teacher?
- i. What stands out from your early experiences as a Christian Brother? How was being a Brother in your early years different from being a Brother now?

6. Guatemala – 1972, 1976 – 1988

- a. In an article in *The Christian Brothers Today* (February 1973), there was a “call” for Brothers to go to Huehuetenango to teach at the Colegio de la Salle. Did this influence your move to Guatemala?
- b. You moved to Guatemala shortly after Vatican II and the Medellin Conference. How do you think these changes influenced your work? Were you aware of liberation theology and was it discussed amongst the Brothers?
- c. In a 1976 newsletter you wrote about the 1976 earthquake in Guatemala. You wrote how it will be a day all Guatemalan’s who experienced it will remember. How did the earthquake influence your understanding of your calling to Guatemala? Your work in general?

c. The school where you taught was in Huehuetenango. I was in Huehuetenango for two weeks in 1991 at a language school. It is a beautiful region of Guatemala. I especially appreciated the highlands and cool evenings before returning to Nicaragua where it is much hotter. Please describe the region/town and the school.

d. Please share your memories of your first year in Huehuetenango including your life with your other Brothers, your students and their families and your teaching experience.

e. You lived in Guatemala during a very turbulent time. How did the political and social tension and military conflict in Guatemala impact your work and the school?

f. In 1982, Rios Montt, a right wing dictator and general, became president of Guatemala. Montt, from Huehuetenango, led one of the most brutal and deadly reigns during Guatemala's 36 years of civil war. You witnessed the terror, torture and murder of many dissidents and indigenous people.

How did this affect your community, school and ministry? How did this affect your calling?

g. 1982 brought great tragedy to your community. I have read your tribute to Brother James Miller, a Christian Brother who was murdered in Guatemala in 1982, in your Christmas Newsletter of 2006. Brother James and I have something in common. I was born in Bluefields, Nicaragua and Brother James' first assignment, I believe, was in Bluefields. Brother James left Bluefields following the Nicaraguan Revolution in 1979.

1. Do you remember any of Bro. James' memories about the work of the Christian Brothers in Bluefields?

2. Do you know why he left Bluefields?

3. Did the triumph of the Nicaraguan Revolution have any impact on your work in Guatemala?

Then, in 1982, your community was threatened by the Guatemalan right wing "G-2 death squad." You wrote Brother James Miller found "something which gave his life a deep meaning – something worth living for an even worth dying for..."

1. How did the martyrdom of Brother James affect your calling?

2. How did the martyrdom of Brother James affect your world view?

3. How did the martyrdom of Brother James affect the Christian Brother community in Guatemala?

4. How did the martyrdom of Brother James affect the Christian Brother community outside of Guatemala?

h. In the fall 2006 edition of *Lasallian Visions*, you were named the Baltimore Province Distinguished Lasallian Educator of the year. In the article, it stated your years in Guatemala have led to your current commitments to justice and advocacy. Please share how these years influenced your current work as a Brother and with students.

1. How did the years in Guatemala influence your social commitment?

2. How did the years in Guatemala influence you spiritually?

i. Please share any other stories, insights or memories from your years in Guatemala.

7. West Catholic High School and Hudson Catholic

a. According to your employment record, you were at West Catholic High School, Philadelphia, PA in 1983, returned to Guatemala, and in 1989 were assigned to Hudson Catholic High School in (Hudson, NJ). What led you to West Catholic High School in 1983?

b. Since you were born in Philadelphia, how had the city changed since your teen years?

c. What were your most memorable experiences at West Catholic High School?

d. What led you back to Guatemala?

- e. Please share your transition experience from Guatemala to the U.S. How did your community help in your transition to the U.S.?
- f. Please describe Hudson High School in the early 1990s. What was your first year like at Hudson High School?
What did you teach?
What memorable experiences did you have with students?
How did your years in Guatemala impact your teaching at Hudson High School?
- g. In 1992 you went to Kenya. What did you do in Kenya?
- h. How did your time in West Philadelphia, in Hudson, New Jersey and in Kenya influence your social commitments?
- k. How did your time in West Philadelphia, Hudson, New Jersey and Kenya influence you spiritually?

8. 1990s – 2000s

- a. Since 1992, I believe you have been at Hudson High School. How has your role as a Christian Brother evolved during your years at Hudson High School?
- b. How has the school evolved?
- c. How has your ministry evolved?
- d. How has teaching changed during your years at Hudson?

9. Brother Paul. At a young age you made a commitment to the Christian Brothers and Catholic Church.

- a. What would you tell a young person today who feels called to be a Christian Brother or to another form of Christian ministry?
- b. How do you foresee the Christian Brothers changing in coming decades?

10. Brother Paul, I have read that you run marathons. Do you see a relationship between running marathons and your calling?

11. Please share any closing thoughts, insights, stories or hopes.