

## Servant among us: Savoring the gift of Brother

From picking apples in the orchard to giving talks at the local chemical prevention center, Br. George Maufort is considered a Christ-like “jack of all trades” when it comes to religious brothers.



*One of Brother George's many "jobs" is the resident beekeeper.*

**"It is really simple,"** he said. "You name it and I do it or have done it! I do carpentry, maintenance projects, repairs, plant trees and all kinds of other things. I'm trying to make the parish grounds look like a park! In the past, I ran a soup kitchen as well."

For the past 23 years, our diocese has been bountifully blessed by the service of Br. George, a deacon and a member of the international Salvatorians Society of the Divine Savior, at the Catholic Indian Mission and the Church of St. Peter in Fort Yates.

**"Brothers aren't easy to come by these days,"** said Fr. John Paul Gardner, Pastor of the Church of St. Peter. **"To find a good one like Br. George is something really special.** Everyone knows him. It doesn't matter whether you are Catholic or not, you know Br. George and what he stands for. He is very faithful to his prayer time, although he is discreet about it. That is the heart of his day. He loves to pray for people, and **he has a great love for Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Juan Diego."**

Br. George has a creative edge to him, a real servant's heart, and a simple way of shining rays of joy on all those around him.

**"He has a trailer with pigeons that he keeps as a hobby, and everyone is fascinated by them!"** Fr. Gardner said. **"He reminds me of St. Joseph. He also keeps bees, in a time when bees are dying and being neglected around the world.** He is making a lot of honey right in Fort Yates. This fact resounds with the story of his life—that he has devoted his life to helping those who are struggling. He is very close to nature and the environment as well. He knows every tree by name, and he knows their needs."

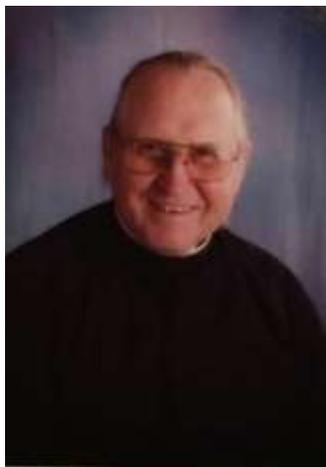
Faithful to his call to the diaconate, Br. George also visits shut-ins and brings them Christ's presence in Holy Communion.

**"What is so important is that we are offering a Catholic presence here at the mission in Fort Yates; we are connecting with real people and real people are connecting with Our Lord,"** Fr. Gardner commented. **"A good notion in the mission field is to appreciate the beauty and goodness that are inherent in the people you are working with, which is exactly what Brother George is so good at doing.** What we do for them in return is bring them Our Lord Jesus Christ."

Since Br. George first befriended the Native Americans, he has reaped a harvest of blessings and found great peace in walking alongside of them.

"I like journeying with my first nation relatives," Br. George said. "I have been involved with the Indian culture since 1986. Indian grandmas have taught me bead work, traditional men's dancing, and sewing. They have also helped me understand the meaning of their Indian ceremonies."

Over the years, he has also learned some commendable life lessons from his Indian friends. "When I first came here, a Dakota friend told me to remember these things: to walk humbly with the people; to remember that no one is any worse or any better than the person next to them; to know that it starts when it starts and it ends when it ends; and to not do for the people what they can do for themselves."



*Br. George Maufort SDS*

Looking back, Br. George continues to be profoundly grateful that he opened his heart to the divine call of God many years ago, and would never take back the leap of faith he made. Through experience, he has found that his vocation is built on the foundation of God's love, and that through this love, it can flourish beautifully.

"God chose me to be a brother," he says. "All I had to do was to say, 'yes.' I was 21 when I entered religious life, and I walked away from my family and what my father wanted me to do. My life as a brother has been wonderful. If you read the Song of Songs in the Old Testament, you will see what my vocation is all about!"

The faithful are invited to lift in prayer Brother George as he continues his tireless work at the Indian Mission and the wonderful people he reaches out to.

By Amanda Evinger

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