

## Edwin Gros, SJ

### 50 Years as a Jesuit

When I left my home in New Orleans in 1968, I was a mere 17 years old. I had no idea whatsoever about the journey I was beginning. I am the oldest of eight children, and God gave me the most loving parents and siblings in the world. So this departure was not easy.



I quickly fell in love with the Jesuits the moment I walked in the door of the novitiate. This journey began at Grand Coteau for (2 years), after which time I went off to Spring Hill in Mobile (3 years) for collegiate studies. Then I finished my undergraduate work at Loyola New Orleans (1 year). For regency, I was assigned to Jesuit College Preparatory in Dallas (2 years), and then to the Gesù Church in Miami (1 year). After regency, I was off to theology studies in Chicago (4 years). After that, I returned to New Orleans as a priest to be chaplain at Jesuit High, my alma mater (4 years).

In 1986, I took a bold leap and accepted a mission to work for five years in Paraguay – to work in the formation of young Jesuits, to do high school teaching and chaplaincy, and to spend my weekends doing pastoral work in the local parish. After Paraguay, in 1991, I returned to New Orleans to do formation work and campus ministry at Loyola University (14 years). Then in 2007, I headed out west to El Paso to be pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, a church located two blocks from the Mexican border (6 years). After working in this all-immigrant parish, I returned to New Orleans to become pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, a post I have held for the past five years. Interspersed among all these assignments were: four months in France, four months in the Dominican Republic, six months in Nicaragua, three months in Spain, and one year studying at the Jesuit University in Mexico City.

I have come to love so many people, and I have learned to respect and love so many different cultures and lifestyles. The people in these places have made me the person I am by opening their hearts to me. More importantly, these people have brought out the priesthood that God deeply embedded in my heart for as long as I can remember.

During this time, through all these changes, through all the joys of arrival at a new place and all the tears of saying goodbye to people I came to love, *my best friend and companion, my Lord, Jesus has walked with me every step of the way.* He is the only one who knows the whole story. And in each place I have lived, I found Jesus present in the people I served, or, better yet, the people who served me, taught me and most of all, loved me.

In the words of Edith Piaf: “*Non, je ne regrette rien.*” And in words of Thérèse de Lisieux: “*Toute est grâce.*”