

## RENÉ'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

At the suggestion of Richard, my brother, I am writing a short summary of my life for his professional web site.

I am René, his younger brother of 2 years, who followed in his footsteps towards the Roman Catholic priesthood up to a certain point. I was raised by the same archconservative Catholic parents as Richard in a middle class neighborhood in Lowell, Massachusetts. My parents only spoke to me in French Québécois, since they immigrated from Québec, Canada. I attended the same schools as Richard, i.e., elementary school, and, at the age of 14, Oblate College Seminary high school in Bucksport, Maine for 4 years. I attended the Minor Seminary in Bar Harbor, Maine, for 2 years, the Oblate Novitiate for 1 year in Colebrook, NH, and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate Major Seminary in Natick, MA, for 4 years, majoring in theology. I was also following in the footsteps of my older half-brother, Normand, who was already an Oblate priest, a professor of dogmatic theology at the Major Seminary.

In my 4 years of theology, I continued to have doubts about becoming an Oblate priest, even though I had been ordained to the minor orders. With the help of Normand and Father Savard, I decided at the age of 25 to leave the seminary. Father Roy, the rector, told me, "Rome has voted and spoken." According to him I had been chosen by God to be an Oblate priest. In addition, the rector told me, "Do not discuss with anyone that you are leaving in 2 days." In the meantime, Richard had been ordained a priest and was assigned to an Oblate House in Washington, DC.

My mother in Lowell, MA, opened her house to me, but was very sad that I was not becoming a priest. This decision was the hardest one of my

life. Richard was very supportive. Also my half-brother, Robert, who was raised by his maternal grandparents, was supportive.

In a nutshell, I didn't have the faith to be ordained a priest, and I felt the priests who were my professors and other priests were not modeling the kind of life I wanted to have as a priest.

After working in a grocery store and living at my mother's house for 8 months, I attended Fordham University in NYC, thanks to a \$4,000 scholarship and a state grant. I graduated *magna cum laude* with a Masters degree in Social Work, specializing in psychotherapy. From 1964 to the year 2000, when I retired, I was a psychotherapist for adults and play therapist for children psychiatric clinics. In addition, my positions included Director of Social Service of a residential treatment home for 150 adolescent boys, Director of a drug program, supervisor in different psychiatric clinics. I enjoyed my work of helping others, while at the same time finding my own identity.

In 1963 I married Marilyn and we raised 2 wonderful children. Jean-Paul, 39 years old (2009), is married to Jeannie and has 2 children, Tayla 8 and Dylan 4. He is the owner of a pool service company in Santa Barbara, CA, where most residents are not aware of our current recession. Michelle, 38 years old, is married to Eric and is the mother also of 2 children, Connor 6 and Emma 4. Michelle is a professional cellist, graduated from Harrod Conservatory of Music. She has performed in several orchestras, duos and trios and teaches cello. She is currently a cellist with a singer/guitarist of a rock duo performing in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles. In 1988, when our teenagers graduated from high school, Marilyn and I divorced.

In 1993 I met Christine, who has been my soul mate and life partner for 16 years. Chris has 4 adult children, and 2 grandchildren, with one more

on the way. Chris and I have “adopted” each other’s adult children and grandchildren. We have together 6 adult children and 6 (soon to be 7) grandchildren. Most of them live nearby and we see them regularly.

If anyone would be interested in reading my life story, written at age 73, you can request it by using the CONTACT ME page of this web site. Also, enclosed are a photo of our 6 grandchildren and a page from my life story regarding Richard.

Chris and I enjoy spending time together, volunteering, reading, traveling, walking at the beach, where we live, and especially spending time with our grandchildren, watching them grow, and talking about them.

Chris volunteers with Food Share, our local food bank, on a weekly basis, and also is a volunteer with the Democratic Party and with the local Homeless Coalition. I volunteer as a “Cuddler”, cuddling and feeding infants in the intensive care unit at Community Memorial Hospital. I am also Chair of this volunteer committee.

With the help of Chris, I have found what I have been searching for all my life, the meaning of my life.