

OPENING DOORS AND SETTING TABLES

*Brothers in the Chicago Province set
example of service in Jesuit Schools*

by George Kearney

“**W**hen I was at St. Ignatius High School in Chicago, I was responsible for preparing three meals a day six days a week for the Jesuit community. Back then we had about 35 guys living in the community,” says Br. George Prickril, SJ, who has been a brother in the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus for over fifty years. Looking back on all those years he says, “I’ve had a very happy life. We all have our good days and our bad days, but mine’s been pretty steady on the happy side.”

Br. Prickril and fourteen other Jesuit brothers who are currently serving in the Chicago Province are part of a tradition of service that includes Saint Alphonsus Rodriguez, who spent the bulk of his life in the late 16th and

early 17th century serving as a porter at a Jesuit house in Majorca, Spain. Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins penned the poem in honor of Br. Alphonsus.

*In Honour of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez
Brother of the Society of Jesus*

*Honour is flashed off exploit, so we say;
And those strokes once that gashed flesh or galled shield
Should tongue that time now, trumpet now that field,
And, on the fighter, forge his glorious day.
On Christ they do and on the martyr may;
But be the war within, the brand we wield
Unseen, the heroic breast not outward-steeled,
Earth hears no hurtle then from fiercest fray.*

*Yet God (that hews mountain and continent,
Earth, all, out; who, with trickling increment,
Veins violets and tall trees makes more and more)
Could crowd career with conquest while there went
Those years and years by of world without event
That in Majorca Alfonso watched the door.*

—Gerard Manley Hopkins, SJ



“I’ll never forget the day, it was my birthday,” says Frank Raispis, a teacher at St. Ignatius, of Bob Cardosi, SJ, shown reading to Torrens Hecht, SJ. “Br. Cardosi said, ‘for my present to you today, I’m offering up my day of work.’ He saw his work as something sacred, and that attitude affected everything he did.”

Br. Bob Cardosi, SJ
Pastoral ministry in health care
Colombiere Center

Before studying clinical pastoral education and becoming a pastoral counselor, Br. Cardosi spent his years as a Jesuit running cafeterias at St. Ignatius, St. Xavier, and University of Detroit High School. “We were then, and even are now, kind of hidden,” Br. Cardosi says. “The brothers have generally just done what needed to be done.” He adds that “being a brother has given me an opportunity to serve God with my hands,” and that having been a Jesuit for 57 years he “wouldn’t change a thing.”

The God Hopkins presents has the power to “hew mountains and continents,” but also “with trickling increment, Veins violets.” Hopkins asserts in these few lines that Alphonsus Rodriguez may not have crowded his career with conquest or steeled his breast with honor, but in his supreme devotion to his job, albeit a simple job, he lived an honorable and quietly heroic life.

There are many similarities between St. Alphonsus Rodriguez and today’s brothers, especially the older generation, those who entered the Church before the Second Vatican Council and spent many years working in explicitly vocational jobs. Br. Bob Cardosi, SJ, who spent much of his career manning the cafeterias at Jesuit schools in Cincinnati, Chicago, and Detroit, says, “My life has been the tale of two brothers. Pre Vatican II, they needed a cook, I became a cook. After Vatican II, I had an opportunity to earn a degree in clinical pastoral education and I spent the second half of my career in pastoral counseling.”

While the role of the brothers in the Society has evolved, the character of the brothers has changed very little. The brothers remain today both ceaselessly and selflessly devoted to their work. Provincial Richard Baumann, says, “To me, the brothers, among others, add a tone of mildness, simplicity, and down-to-earth apostolic work to our Society.” The brothers’ manner of proceed-

ing has long been an integral, though sometimes nearly imperceptible, component of Jesuit schools.

According to Fr. Baumann the brothers constantly share their Ignatian character and Jesuit heritage with the faculty and students of Jesuit schools through “their persevering work, self-giving, and approachability.”

“Ignatius said ‘Let love show itself in deeds more than words.’” Fr. Baumann says. “And people can see in the brothers an example of loving service that speaks very clearly to them.” Many of the brothers in this feature spent years of their careers working in Jesuit schools. Few of them have taught a class. Some rarely interacted with students. “We were, for the most part, hidden,” Br. Cardosi says, “the servants of the servants.”

But, like Br. Alphonsus, they went to work day after day, and did their jobs quietly, and did their jobs well. And in doing so they became teachers and leaders who, as Fr. Baumann suggests, by their loving example spoke very clearly to the students in the Jesuit schools. In schools that seek to educate “men and women for others,” and “leaders in service,” it seems these Jesuit brothers have been, and continue to be, some of the best teachers. The remainder of this piece presents those Jesuit brothers who have, through their work, contributed to the Ignatian Character of the Province Schools. ■

Br. John Buchman, SJ

Administrative assistant, cook, house manager

Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory

As a senior at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, Br. Buchman was approached by the pastor of his parish who had received a vocations pamphlet in the mail from the Jesuit brothers at the Milford Novitiate. “The two of us drove down to Milford,” Br. Buchman recalls, “and I just kind of fell in love with what I saw.” The rest, as they say, is history. He entered the Jesuits in 1951 and has spent the last 50 years working as a cook at the Jesuit novitiate in Milford, OH, the theologate in Aurora, IL, and for the last 32 years at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory in Indianapolis. “I haven’t given my influence on the kids much thought,” Br. Buchman says. He can recall, though, an encounter with one student at a reception following a baccalaureate mass. “Brother, don’t you ever quit?” the student asked. “That made me think a little bit. Some of the students notice what we’re doing. But like I said, I don’t give it much thought. I don’t try to make a splash or a show. I just do my work and hope some good comes of it.”



“I’ve been teaching at Brebeuf for 28 years, and in that time I can’t tell you how many people have said Bucky exemplifies what a Jesuit should be,” says Pat McCarthy, of John Buchman, SJ, shown here at work in Brebeuf’s cafeteria. Pat, who meets Br. Buchman every morning for coffee before school, adds that “He’s humble; he goes about doing his work quietly. I’ve never seen him say a harsh word to anyone, and he never complains. He’s just a wonderful man.”

Br. George Prickril, SJ

Community service, Colombiere Center

Br. Prickril spent twenty-two years working as a cook in community kitchens at St. Ignatius College Prep and St. Xavier High School. He spent nearly twenty years maintaining the rooms at Milford Spiritual Center and then at Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House. Looking back, he says he's happy his work as a cook helped make Jesuit education possible. Br. Prickril never attended a Jesuit school and says readily that "there's nothing wrong with public schools. Some of them are great, but I think Jesuit schools can help to instill morals and values a bit more than some public schools." Br. Prickril, now retired from his work in the retreat centers and the high schools, resides at Colombiere Center. "I love it here. I've been happy the whole way through. It's quiet, peaceful, and I'm with old friends."



George Prickril, SJ, distributing the mail at Colombiere. In addition to the mail he sometimes helps with the preparation of meals. Pat Boyle, SJ, who spent many years working with him says, "He's always been an extremely hardworking brother, very much in the spirit of St. Ignatius. Colombiere hasn't changed that for Br. Prickril."



Herman Elsaesser, SJ (left), shows Lester Linz, SJ, a new golf grip designed to make it easier to hold the club with arthritic fingers. Br. Elsaesser, an accomplished golfer, was runner-up in the Cincinnati city championship before he entered the Society.

Br. Herman Elsaesser, SJ

*Special attention to Colombiere's Mission
Colombiere Center*

Iadmired the Jesuit scholastics and priests when I was a student at St. Xavier," Br. Herman Elsaesser says, "and I hoped I might engage in similar apostolates." For the last 64 years of his life, he's done just that. After joining the Jesuits in 1938, and being trained in carpentry, Br. Elsaesser was assigned to St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland, and then to St. Ignatius College Prep in Chicago, where he taught Latin, and was, as Frank Raispis recalls, "a quiet unassuming character in the school, one who was always looking around for something he could do for somebody else." He spent the remainder of his career serving the students of Jesuit schools as both a teacher and cafeteria manager. He also taught Latin at the Catholic high school in Covington, KY, for ten years, and spent a great deal of his time visiting nursing homes while living at St. Xavier High School. "I can hardly believe that so many years have passed," Br. Elsaesser says. "I'm reminded of the advice that St. Alphonsus Rodriguez gave, 'life is short,' so we should seek the eternal."

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Br. Jim Small, SJ
Carpenter and artist
Loyola Academy

Br. Small has been assigned to Loyola Academy for 33 years. “It’s been like 33 weeks, not 33 years,” he says. “It’s been the happiest time of life.” Br. Small, who works full-time as a carpenter, but also ardently pursues his full-time hobby of painting, has sold his artwork at Loyola’s “Ramble,” an annual fundraiser, to raise an estimated \$500,000 for the school. In addition to his financial contributions, Br. Small says, “I hope my presence here contributes to the school’s Jesuit character. I try to greet the students in the corridors so they know there is such a thing as a Jesuit brother, and that living this kind of life isn’t all bad.”



“A few years back, when Br. Small was hanging his paintings for yet another Loyola Ramble, I asked how he manages to do so many,” says Ingrid LoGiudice, Loyola Academy parent and friend of the Jesuits, of Jim Small, SJ, shown in his studio at Loyola. “He told me he does it for ‘the boys’ —today it’s the girls and boys. I’m not sure how many of the students realize his silent devotion to them but all of them certainly enjoy the benefit.”



Dave Henderson, SJ, explains the finer points of the construction of Cristo Rey’s new building to senior Gerardo Botello. “Dave is responsible for maintenance of the facilities,” says Preston Kendall, executive vice president of Cristo Rey, “But, he’s told me that his work is not about the building, it’s about the students. ‘They deserve it,’ he says, and he hopes it will help them take pride in the building. He’s very much a part of the mission of this school, and he’s very aware of those connections between his work and the larger mission of the school.”

Br. Dave Henderson, SJ
Facilities Manager

Cristo Rey Jesuit High School

Br. Dave Henderson, a graduate of Loyola Academy, now manages the physical plant at Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, where he says he’s “filled with wonder. Being here and having the privilege to serve at this place is, in a word, wonderful.” Br. Dave, who previously served as a counselor and admissions officer at Loyola Academy, says his experience as a student at Loyola Academy impacted him. “There were probably 40 or 50 Jesuits on the faculty when I was a student,” he says. “Those guys: Steenken, Beall, Reinke, English, Mulhern, O’Shaughnessey, Clifford, Boyle, they modeled openness, happiness, and generosity for all of us. It was impressive. They were remarkable people, and great teachers.” Br. Dave said highlights at Cristo Rey have been numerous. “Any time I have an opportunity to help somebody out, even if it’s just loaning them a pen, I’m happy.” And in his desire and willingness to help, he too is serving as a great teacher.



Mike O'Grady, SJ, (right) with Mike Houser, a senior at St. Xavier, discussing community outreach opportunities for the fall semester. "Br. Mike O'Grady is a really principled man, and his own commitment to social justice and his desire to invest himself in the cause of greater racial harmony here in the city has been a true witness to our students," says Fran Daly, SJ, director of Spiritual Development at St. Xavier High School. "He gives wonderful witness to our whole mission of faith and justice. There's a real intensity in his work that's driven by his desire for gospel values to be embraced, and our students see that."

Br. Michael O'Grady, SJ
Community Outreach
 St. Xavier High School

"When I was at Loyola Academy I didn't get involved in much; no kairos, no community service, none of that. I got my diploma and went to college. That was it," says Br. Mike O'Grady, SJ. "It wasn't until I was an adult that I thought about religious life." Br. O'Grady says it was the vision of former Fr. General Pedro Arrupe, SJ, and the words of the 32nd General Congregation that caught his attention and attracted him to the Jesuit Volunteer Corps as a 31-year-old, after years of work as a businessman. He spent a year working as a community organizer in Des Moines, IA, and in that time decided he would be able to best put his faith into action if he was part of a community of fellows dedicated to the same goals of justice and service. "We're asked to do the magis, and right now I think we've got our work cut out for us in the schools. Riches, honor, and pride define success. It's up to us in the schools to combat those beliefs." Right now Br. O'Grady is running a community outreach program at St. X which tries to bridge the race, class, and social divide between the predominantly white, middle and upper-middle class St. X students and the lower income, black, urban residents in Cincinnati. "In bridging that divide," Br. O'Grady says, "we become more human. We learn what we need. This helps our students to mature to a level of deeper Christian consciousness."

Br. Brutus Clay, SJ
House Sacristan
 Loyola University

After attending a Jesuit High School (Georgetown Prep) and a Jesuit University (Holy Cross), and serving in the Army Air Corps in World War II, Br. Brutus Clay says he was ready to return to his family's expansive farm in Kentucky to "become a successful horse breeder, make a lot of money, and give to charity and all that. But," he says, "I just didn't have peace of soul." So he entered the Society of Jesus and became a brother. His career in the Jesuits has taken him to Rome and Zambia as secretary and bursar. But for the last ten years Br. Clay, who is 84 years old, has worked as a sacristan at Loyola University. Br. Clay says that his Jesuit education helped him "learn how to live and not just how to make a livelihood." He adds that the highlight of his time at Loyola has been organizing small masses for students in chapels around campus but, "I focus on just doing my little job and helping the Jesuit community have an Ignatian influence on the lives of young people."



"You can count on Brutus to be at student events any time Jesuit presence is intended. As sacristan in the Jesuit Residence you can find him setting up and tidying up after 10:00 P.M. student mass in the residence chapel four nights a week, when most 84-year-olds are long in bed," says Jack O'Callaghan, SJ, rector of Loyola University's Jesuit Community. "Brutus is always available and always cheerful. It's been said that youth is not a matter of years; it's the climate of the heart. Brutus bears that out."