

# OPENING DOORS AND SERVING THE SICK

*Brothers in the Chicago Province continue  
the long tradition of service*

by George Kearney

**T**he six Jesuit brothers from the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus featured here come from a long tradition of service. Their Jesuit forebears include, among others, St. Alphonsus Rodriguez and Blessed Francis Garate.

Br. Garate, like Br. Alphonsus, has been recognized for leading an apparently mundane but truly holy and devoted life. Born in Spain, Br. Garate entered the Jesuits

in 1874 in the south of France. He spent ten years as infirmarian at the College of La Guardia in Spain where he won the hearts of all with his care for the sick. Many times he would spend the night with those in the infirmary only to go about his work again the next day without any rest. In 1888 he was assigned to the Jesuit College in Duesto, Spain, where he spent the rest of his life working as doorkeeper. He opted for the poorest room



“He’s an amazing man in his work,” says Jack Heim, SJ, former superior of Faber Jesuit Community, of Don Bengert, SJ, shown here ministering to a resident of Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. “He’s completely dedicated to the people he serves. By driving them to the doctor, giving them medicines and shots, and helping them shop, he’s doing in a loving way what might not otherwise get done. He tries to live life with the people he serves.”

*Br. Donald H. Bengert, SJ  
Social Minister  
Mercy Franciscan St. John*

“**W**hen I go to the doctor, I usually get right in without much waiting,” says Don Bengert, SJ. Many of us, like Br. Bengert, take for granted our access to quality health care. But Br. Don works with residents of Cincinnati’s Over the Rhine and West End neighborhoods who don’t have it quite so good. “Some people get a raw deal,” he says of his clients. “They may have to wait in line for hours just to see a doctor.” As a social minister at Mercy Franciscan St. John, a Cincinnati-based social service center, Br. Bengert works as an advocate for those who need better health care—or even just some care. A longtime Jesuit infirmarian and registered nurse, Br. Bengert has plenty of experience, but it is his gentle manner and willingness to listen that make him a good minister as he helps his clients take their medicines, get to the doctor, navigate Medicare red tape, and buy their groceries. “I really hope I’m helping them,” he says. “Sometimes they say that. Some days you get thanked a lot. Sometimes you don’t. But that’s not why you do it.”

*Br. William R. Haas, SJ*  
*Superintendent of Building and Grounds*  
*Bellarmino Jesuit Retreat House*

“I decided to be a brother,” says Br. Bill Haas, SJ, superintendent of buildings and grounds at Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House in Barrington, IL, “because the brothers at the high school I attended impressed me as being happy dedicated men, contributing much to the community, leading lives of prayer and work.” Though the brothers Br. Haas first encountered were Benedictines, he opted to enter the Society of Jesus. Since then, he too has been leading a life of prayer and work, the last eighteen years of which have been devoted to Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House in Barrington, IL, where he maintains the buildings and cares for the grounds, which include acres of rolling grassland and dozens of flowerbeds. Br. Bill also serves as the community treasurer. “It doesn’t take much of my time,” he says, “but it’s just another way I can contribute to our community life here. We all chip in and help out wherever we can.” Of his work, Br. Haas says, “I feel very much a part of the apostolate.” Br. Bill’s hard, behind-the-scenes work not only helps keep the doors open, it keeps the entire place beautiful—which in turn helps create a peaceful environment for the thousands of retreatants who annually come to Barrington. Br. Haas is, indeed, central to Bellarmine’s ministry, which is central to the province’s goal to evangelize contemporary culture.



“Just this morning Bill got up early and plowed the driveway. Last night he was out there plowing the parking lot for the folks who come to the AA meetings here. He’s always on call,” said John Dillon, SJ, director of Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House, of Bill Haas, SJ, shown here with some of the equipment he uses to keep Bellarmine looking beautiful. “He’s reliable and he’s an extremely generous and hardworking guy who is always willing to serve through his many different competencies.”

at the back of the house. He manned the door daily, but never lost an opportunity to advise the students, clothe the needy or feed the hungry.

On September 8, 1929, severe pain seized his stomach but he managed to finish work and complete his usual duties before he died that night. Br. Garate was beatified in 1985. His life and his unyielding commitment to serving others remain an inspiration to laypeople and Jesuits alike.

The work of Jesuit brothers in the Chicago Province today is much like that of Francis Garate and Alphonsus Rodriguez. Fr. Richard J. Baumann, SJ, Chicago Provincial,

says, “The brothers in our province are generally quiet and unassuming. They’re not showy, but they are effective apostles.” Fr. Baumann echoes the words of St. Ignatius when he says, “love shows itself in deeds more than words and people can see in the brothers an example of service that speaks to them.”

The six Jesuit brothers highlighted here have through years and years of quiet deeds, furthered the efforts of the Chicago Province both with respect to evangelization and the province’s desire to achieve solidarity with the poor. ■

*Br. Anthony R. Kreutzjans, SJ*  
Case Manager at CORE: HIV Primary Care Center  
Minister at St. Ignatius Jesuit Community

“My life was pretty good. I was dating a lot, and on the weekends I was always out celebrating,” says Br. Tony Kreutzjans, SJ, of his two years at the Ohio College of Applied Science preparing to join his father’s construction business. One of his classmates was Charlie Welsh, a Jesuit brother from Milford Novitiate who was also studying at the college. “This guy was so positive and happy,” Br. Tony recalls. “I was out having fun all the time and he was living this strict Jesuit life and yet he was so happy. That’s when I began thinking about life as a brother.” 43 years later, Br. Tony spends half his time working as minister of the St. Ignatius Jesuit Community, and half his time as a case manager at the CORE Center at Cook County Hospital, an outpatient clinic for HIV/AIDS patients. For 12 years he’s served CORE’s patients, many of whom are homeless and addicted, and says, “I feel honored to be working with the poor.” Today he’s responsible for creating social service profiles for all new patients. In many cases these are patients who have just learned they’re infected. “They’re suffering and looking for help,” he says. “I just try to listen with a sympathetic ear so they know we understand, so they know we know their fear is real, and so they know we’ll do anything we can to help. That’s really the best I can do.”



“Br. Tony is a marvelous minister,” says Jim Arimond, SJ, rector of St. Ignatius Jesuit Community, of Tony Kreutzjans, SJ, who serves as minister in the community. “He thinks of others first and he takes great pride in his work,” Fr. Arimond says. These qualities also help him in his work at CORE Center, where he is shown above with Peter McLoyd, a patient and colleague at the clinic.



*Br. Robert W. Schneider, SJ*  
Assistant in Health Care Facility  
Colombiere Center

“Br. Schneider gives total care to the Jesuits here,” says Elaine Hines, health care manager at Colombiere Center, of Bob Schneider, SJ (right), shown here with Bob Humbert, SJ. “He tries to meet the needs of the men however he can. He knows what being a Jesuit is all about, and as a result patients feel comfortable with him,” she says. “He contributes so much to our community. All the brothers here do.”

As a student at Xavier University in the late 1950’s, Br. Bob Schneider says, he knew he wanted to work within the Church. When he was introduced to the Jesuit brothers, he found himself extremely interested in who they were and what they did. After graduation he entered the Society. Since then Br. Bob has worked in campus ministry at Xavier University, as community minister in several Jesuit institutions, and as a social minister at Misericordia North, a Chicago-based center for mentally and physically disabled children and adults. Misericordia’s mission, according to Br. Bob, “involved showing the residents a better way of living and maybe more importantly showing the residents that people love and care for them.” This work prepared Br. Schneider for his current healthcare duties at Colombiere Center, the bi-province healthcare facility for Jesuits in the Chicago and Detroit Provinces. “The people dimension—working with and for others—sums up my experience of being a Jesuit brother. I think it may be easier for a priest to meet and engage people, because of his involvement in people’s lives through the sacraments, but the desire to serve others and be part of their lives is what motivates me as a brother.”



*Br. Paul F. Mattingly, SJ*  
*Community Maintenance*  
*Milford Spiritual Center*

**D**uring World War II, Br. Paul Mattingly served in the United States Coast Guard. “It was while patrolling the New Jersey beach at night,” he says, “that I first gave serious thought to the brothers’ life. The vastness and depth of the Atlantic Ocean helps one think of eternity.” Now retired, Br. Mattingly resides at Milford Spiritual Center where he has spent most of his life serving in what he describes as “house maintenance.” The bulk of his work, like that of Br. Haas, has been behind the scenes. He’s maintained Milford’s grounds, which, like Bellarmine’s, help create a serene setting perfectly suited for contemplation and prayer. He also holds a license from the state of Ohio that’s allowed him to fire the boilers at Milford for more than forty years. But in recent years Paul has also turned his energy toward social ministry at Mary Magdalen House in Cincinnati, where he works with Br. Jack Martin. Though he spends much more time laboring at Milford, Br. Mattingly says the experience at Magdalen House has been valuable because “you see people come in and you realize their situations. It’s cold and people are sleeping in the park because they can’t get into a shelter. It helps you realize what some other people have to live with.”

“Br. Mattingly has served most of his 50 years in the Society here at Milford,” says Dan Roche, executive director of the Milford Spiritual Center, of Paul Mattingly, SJ, shown here in Milford’s boiler room. “Since his retirement, Paul has been a gracious presence and valuable resource in everything from boiler maintenance to tree care.”

*Br. John P. Martin, SJ*  
*Social Minister*  
*Mary Magdalen House*

**I**’ve been a jack-of-all-trades and a master of none,” quips Br. Jack Martin, SJ, the upbeat, self-effacing St. Xavier High School alum who now works as a social minister at Mary Magdalen House in Cincinnati. As a student at St. X, Jack says he admired Jesuits like John Beall and Jim Creighton. “That’s what first got me thinking about a religious life.” After graduation he decided to become a brother, and since then he has worked in the kitchens of a number of Jesuit communities and institutions, in the principal’s office at his alma mater, and at St. John’s Social Service Center. In 1987 he was missioned to Mary Magdalen House where for 15 years he has helped provide laundry and shower services to homeless residents of Cincinnati, doing everything from manning the front desk to assisting with the laundry equipment to cleaning the showers. “We’ve gotta see God in all things,” Br. Martin says. “Like it or not, that means God is in the poor, too. We’re just trying to put some dignity and respect back into the lives of the people here.”



“It’d be hard to do what we’re doing here without Jack’s gifts,” says Br. Giancarlo Bonutti, SM, director of Mary Magdalen House, of Jack Martin, SJ, shown here speaking with one of the center’s clients. “He brings a faith-filled presence to our ministry and tremendous generosity and care for the people we serve.”