

Cupertino Marianist Community
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GREETINGS FROM CUPERTINO – JANUARY 2008

Sunday, Dec. 16, was a sunny day in Saint Louis that quickly melted Saturday's heavy snowfall so I was able to leave on schedule – actually arriving in San Jose a day ahead of my luggage! Our Advent evening prayer on Monday, Dec. 17, included a time to share reflections on the significance of Brother Bernard Foster's life. (I wrote about this in a special report.) The next day the community celebrated my birthday at morning Mass and an afternoon social and dinner followed by the Mass of Christian Burial for Brother Barney.

Ms. Candice Foster, Brother Barney's niece, came from Pittsburgh to represent the family. It was a celebration of life and eternal life. The next day we gathered at Gate of Heaven cemetery under a cloudless blue sky for the final farewell. When we returned to the Center we learned that Brother Pat McMahon had been hospitalized to relieve his back pain. As I write he is still in the hospital, waiting patiently and hopefully to return to the Center early in the New Year. He is a cheerful patient and quickly learned the names of the nurses who cared for him.

In late December Brother Bob Wade was also taken to El Camino Hospital. After receiving blood (allegedly from Hillary Clinton) he returned promptly and energetically before Christmas Eve. Brother Urban Naal was also hospitalized briefly and is recuperating well. His sister, Mrs. Dorothy Klitzing, came to support him and was able to stay with us until Christmas Day. Mrs. Medsura Raguindin (from the first coed class of Chaminade University) was our guest for a few days on her way East for family visits in Ohio and Virginia.

Our last celebration before Christmas was in honor of Brother Charles Boglitz on the occasion of his 91st birthday. At Mass we prayed for his peace and in thanksgiving for his lifetime of service. Despite his protests we had an evening social and dinner – which he boycotted. In fact, he hasn't left his room in weeks. Father Tim Kenney made a special visit to see him after Christmas.

Day by day through December there was a progressive preparation for Christmas. In front of me in chapel is a large plant holder. During Advent this held a magnificent fern; this was replaced by a floral display from Brother Barney's funeral and then followed by a glorious poinsettia plant. On the other side of the sanctuary our artists, principally Brother Joe Nu'uanu and Mrs. Nancy Romano, had set up the crèche. At Christmas the altar was surrounded by wonderful scarlet poinsettia plants. Throughout the house there were trees and wreaths and colorful reminders of Christmas. We had a little rain one day before Christmas but otherwise the days were mild with cold nights. Winter arrived quietly and then came a glorious full moon just before Christmas Eve.

For Christmas we had the traditional altar and table celebration beginning with Mass on the morning of December 24 followed that evening by an anticipated "midnight" Mass. On Christmas Day some of us celebrated the Mass of Dawn and later everyone gathered for the Mass of the Day. After that we gathered in the fireplace room and opened the gifts that Mrs. Grace Pancipanci and her tireless elf (Brother Bob) had placed there a few hours earlier. Then we moved to the community room for a social before going to the dining room for a magnificent dinner. After that all was quiet. I tried to walk in the Rancho San Antonio park nearby but finally gave up as there were too many people ahead of me trying to find parking places. The park has proved to be a popular spot for hikers, joggers and family groups of many different languages.

Brother John Haster hosted a pre-Christmas Benefactor Dinner at Alcalde House. Guests included Mr. and Mrs. Lou Zabala, Mrs. Mary Betini, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Martin and Father Jack Russi. He also thoughtfully brought gifts to the fire department nearby in gratitude for their prompt and caring response to 911 calls. On the feast of Saint John we had our third and last discussion on mixed composition (lay and priest religious – brothers and priests – in community). I also completed a year long project of writing to each of the jubilarians (there were 99 in 2007). We welcomed several visitors in the closing days of the year: Father Tim Eden and his mother, Father Tim Kenney, Father John Thompson and Mr. Chris Boudreaux.

Invariably, at Mass, when the celebrant invites us to add intentions to pray for, Brother Charles Ehrenfeld begins. He has one for each day. His Sunday and Feast Day petition is one of gratitude for all the gifts God has given us, concluding with an acknowledgement of the gift of vocation to the Society of Mary. Brother Elmer Dunsky follows immediately inviting us to pray for our families and friends – so you know you are remembered daily!

For our evening prayer on New Year's Eve we had exposition and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and shared reflections of thanksgiving for the past year and hopes for 2008. Many comments revolved around the gift of the new home and the help we give one another to help make this a life-giving community. We are especially grateful for all that Brother Howard Hughes has done to enrich our prayer life by introducing new hymns and gently guiding our singing.

Brother Joe Wasy is generally alert and peaceful when I visit him after breakfast. Most frequently he will tell me that he is "just like yesterday" but one day he had an explicit request that I give his greetings to the Brothers. I did that at Mass. His comment reflected the fact that we are grateful to be remembered and in turn we are inspired to remember others, and so I am happy to offer greetings for the New Year, hoping that you will discover more signs of God's love day by day in 2008!

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