

## Advent Evening Prayer

Including Remembrance of Brother Bernard Anthony Foster, SM

August 11, 1919 – December 14, 2007

First Profession: August 15, 1939

Because Advent is the season of hope, I thought it appropriate that we celebrate Brother Barney's memory in the context of the Advent Liturgy as we began the final preparation for the great feast of Christmas.

After the opening hymn prepared by Brother Howard Hughes I introduced our evening prayer by mentioning how meaningful it was to live with our senior Marianists after having known them well in their prime. I recalled that when I was first assigned to Honolulu in 1947, Brother Barney took a personal interest in me and was always encouraging. Living together here in Cupertino, Brother Barney continued to be a great support to me by his interest, prayerful support and encouragement. Brother Stanley Murakami then gave us a clear and concise overview of Brother Barney's life. After a brief period of teaching at Cathedral Latin in Cleveland, since 1945 he served in Hawaii and in California – including his final teaching assignment at Walla Walla.

Comments made by various members of the community included the following:

Brother John Haster shared the note that in his first years at Villa Saint Joseph Brother Barney asked to return to Honolulu where he had served for so many years – and where the climate was more agreeable. But once we moved to the Marianist Center he was delighted with the home and gardens and never raised the question again. Brother Barney loved to make his meditation outdoors and found the Center ideal for his prayerful reflection. He explored the property and was a great guide in pointing out shrubbery and flowers that were especially attractive. He had a great sense of wonder. He saw things that most of us would not have noticed had he not drawn our attention to them. He delighted in nature and was so happy that he could get out of the house and walk around.

And he ventured beyond the property, taking a special interest in counting the number of trucks that rumbled by to and from the stone quarries up the canyon. It was also noted that in his walks, his faithful companion was a rosary. He obviously prayed for us and for so many other special intentions, some of which he would invite us to pray for as well at the community Mass.

Barney's greatest suffering in recent years may well have been because he was seriously hearing impaired. He managed, however, to try to know everything that was going on! Although distressed when unable to hear, he was admirably patient.

Father John Bolin added the note that when Brother Barney thanked him for a homily it was probably because he heard every word! In the dining room Brother Barney was always eager to help others who needed assistance, and he was always solicitous about those who were absent until reassured they were hale and hearty.

Brother Barney developed and maintained a remarkable connection with his students. He was well remembered by his former students, who commented on his strictness in the classroom and enduring friendship. When he was no longer able to teach in the classroom he trained himself to teach English as a Second Language and was a faithful tutor to many who were most grateful for his attentiveness and skill.

Over the years he collected stamps and with Brother John Samaha's assistance used his stamps to help others. (For many years I gave my stamps to him and he was always excited about special foreign stamps that had come my way.)

At the Marianist Center Brother Barney was solicitous about the mail, delivering mail to those who could not easily come to the mailboxes to pick up their own mail. He read cards and letters to Brother Joe Wasy and answered in his name. Brother Stanley took the opportunity to invite someone to pick up this specific service to the community. (Brother Barney's niece, Candice Foster, who came from Pittsburgh to be with us for the funeral, told us how her father had asked her to write to Brother Barney, which she did faithfully, heartened by Brother Barney's immediate response.)

He was known as "the abiding presence" for he seemed to be everywhere, and in touch with everything – he was "always around." I also noted the comment that Brother Barney was kind, gentle and an attractive personality. Perhaps the most inspiring comment came from Brother Charles Ehrenfeld who wanted us to know how much he misses Brother Barney who, especially in recent months, was his "eyes" as he described his search for lemons and cherry tomatoes! He brought a persimmon to chapel to illustrate these collaborative adventures. They were both faithful fans of the Pittsburgh Steelers and Pirates.

Brother Barney was an inspiring example of faithfulness to "little things" which reflected his faithfulness to the big things in his life as well. His gift was the power of the "widow's mite."

At the close of our prayer service which featured Brother Howard's version of the Antiphons and Canticle, I concluded with this prayer:

Almighty and gracious God, we thank you for this time during which we have recalled some of the features of Brother Barney's life. We ask you to grant him the grace of eternal rest and bless all those whose lives you have touched through him. We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

We then sang the *Alma Redemptoris Mater* and enjoyed a social and dinner in Brother Barney's memory.