

## Reflections on Brother Patrick Power, F.S.C., 1912-2018

*“But now it is only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found.” (Luke 15:32)*

On behalf of the Christian Brothers I would like to extend to the Power family our sincere sympathy on the passing of uncle Brother Pat. We offer a special sympathy to Rich and Chuck, to whom Pat was especially close, and to Pat’s many other kindred and friends.

Very few of us can recall having known well anyone who was over 100 years of age. When you think of all that transpired during that lifetime it is truly remarkable ... since he outlived:

- 9 Popes
- 17 American Presidents
- 10 Superiors General
- Countless Provincials, innumerable Principals, Directors, and even most of his students.

An alumnus from the first graduating class of Central Catholic High School, Pittsburgh, he alone survived always to retain a remarkable affection and loyalty to his alma mater. A Brother for 85 years, Pat loved his community, never missing a chance to chat or visit.

To know Pat was to know his family, especially his parents, James and Mary Quilter, who left an indelible impression on him of Faith, hard work, love for (but not unquestioning) Church and, of course, affection for their homeland, County Kerry, Ireland. Then there were his brothers and sister to whom he remained close, even caring for them in their final illnesses and passing.

As a Christian Brother, Patrick was educated to teach Religion and Latin. And he did this with great enthusiasm. Even now, former students loved to call upon him to attend their reunions in order to hear again his well-known charge: “John, now speed to the board and give us the fourth declension.” And such which they remembered far better than the declension itself!

To one and all there was a “Thanks a million” after a call or visit. I’ll miss that.

Once past his teaching years, Brother Patrick was free to exercise his concern for others, especially the poor and downtrodden, when he served as Eucharistic minister at the jail, volunteered at the County Home where he sat with the dying who had no one to extend a human touch to them before leaving this world.

As a trained Pastoral Minister, Patrick served for many years as the lone “minister on call” at the Allegheny General Hospital, Pittsburgh, during those long night hours where he comforted not just the patients but their distraught families as well.

We also remember Pat for his great interest in birds and the endless wonder he found in nature outside his window. He could never get enough of the sight of the birds coming to feed and to sing.

A sports enthusiast (golfer and tennis player, as well as coach), he never missed a televised Master’s tournament— especially if there was an Irishman on the course!

Did you ever wonder what the source was of this endless wellspring of enthusiasm and joyful outreach? I’ll tell you — it was the Gospel story of the *Prodigal Son*. Pat’s favorite book was Henri Nouwen’s *“The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming,”* where he found the secret to life in God’s mercy and forgiveness — this impelled him to do likewise no matter the blame or fault he saw in another. To them he showed mercy, compassion, forgiveness – his outreach was boundless.

As we continue our liturgy today let us give thanks to God for allowing Brother Patrick to be such an important part of our lives these many years, to witness his call to spread God’s love to others. And let us be consoled to hear in his regard the Father’s words and warm embrace when He says: “... we will celebrate by having a feast, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found.”

Enjoy the party Pat, and, “Thanks a million”!

by Brother Colman Coogan, FSC