

## **TESTIMONIALS FOR BROTHER BRENDAN KNEALE, FSC**

Brother Brendan and myself were the last survivors of the 1936 Novitiate Group. On the day we two and another postulant Charles Carver were to meet Bro. Arator Justin, the Vocation Director, at the Ferry Building to take the ferry to Vallejo, my father drove me down amidst a lot of traffic. Since we were a bit late, we rushed to the ferry. However, the ferry was just pulling out and there at the stern stood Bro. Arator, Brendan, and Charles. We waved to each other and then my father drove me home. I went out and played 36 holes of golf at Lincoln Park. When I arrived home for supper, my mother told me I was to be at Sacred Heart College at 10 the next morning. I came one day late for the postulancy. Brendan never let me forget that "I had missed the boat!"

Bro. Brendan was in away a "Calvinistic" Catholic and a Brother of the Old Rule, always of man of principles (as he saw them) and very direct in speech. At times he could stubbornly maintain his position even to his own detriment. The story (perhaps just a rumor) is that, after spending some years at the University of Notre Dame studying graduate mathematics, it came time to write his dissertation. He did; his major professor disagreed with some of his conclusions and suggested he change them. Brendan refused and hence never received his doctorate.

He was always pleasant, witty, and willing to discuss important issues in conversation. I always enjoyed living with him at Saint Mary's College and at Mont La Salle.

### **Bro. S. Dominic Ruegg, FSC**

At Mont La Salle High School, Brother Brendan admitted that when he wanted to get examination copies of various new books in many subjects, he'd use - name "BT Brendan", not sure why but probably because he entered the Brothers during rather frugal years, the 30's and 40's. So thereafter we called him BT Brendan.

Mont La Salle was a small, small school with perhaps 5 to 10 students in every class. On the first day of class, no matter what class he was teaching, his introduction would be like this: "Gentlemen, you know that history is the most important subject you will be studying in high school." In the next class his introduction was to say the same thing but this time it was English, "Gentlemen, of course, English is the most important subject because it involves your essential skills of reading and writing and understanding." And finally, in religion class it was "Gentlemen, there is no more important subject that religion because it deals with our relationship with God." Though our class was the same seven students, he'd repeat that introduction probably because it worked at CBS or Sacred Heart where the classes were 35 to 40 students in each class, and rarely would it be the same students in the next class as happened at Mont La Salle.

Brother Brendan used to be a writer/historian for what happened at St Joseph's camp during the Brothers encampment. When our Les Amis group made use of the camp for a week during the summer, we would invite the Brothers who we honored each year to join us at the River. Sometime around 2000, Brendan was our honoree and was with us for the dinner. In my introduction, I referred to an article which Brendan had written during the 1960's; it was recorded in a booklet published by former Visitor Brother Alfred. The story was that a few Brothers were at the ocean and were walking on the beach when two young ladies exited the ocean nude. Of course, the Brothers tried to practice modesty of the eyes. When the Brothers got back from the beach, they couldn't resist telling the story to the others. Remarkably, next day a number of Brothers went to the beach but were disappointed that no nymphs appeared. When I told this story at our banquet, Brendan pretended to handle it casually. However the next morning the Brother Alfred's booklet where I had seen this story completely disappeared...and I'm sure that this was the work of our good friend, Brother Brendan. We laughed at that, too.

On my visits to the Mont, I would make it a point always to visit Brother Brendan when he was in the Holy Family Community. He would be happy to see me and asked about other former Brothers, their health, their well-being. He was always friendly even though he was suffering. And even when we were philosophically coming from different viewpoints, he'd not get defensive or pushy about his point of view. This is what I liked about him, his concern for others, Brothers and former Brothers and their families.

**Patrick O'Brien**

**E-mails circulating on the Faculty list at Saint Mary's College following the announcement of Brother Brendan's death:**

A sad day for the College. Among his many contributions to the College - he was the first Director of the January Term, the first Dean of Liberal Arts, and a member of the first oversight committee for the new Composition program (then called Better Writing). His faith in God was (almost) matched by his faith in the power of trees to enhance life on campus - many of the different species of trees we enjoy were planted at his behest, and they can serve as reminders of his fine and generous spirit.

**Ed Biglin**  
**Professor - Department of English**

Thanks for the bio on Br. Brendan Kneale. He was a wonderful, supportive colleague and a quiet but highly competent leader. The College was fortunate to count him among its faculty for so many years.

**Jerry Brunetti**  
**Professor Emeritus of Education & Liberal Arts**

As Br. Raphael notes, among Br. Brendan's contributions to Saint Mary's is the fact that he planted many of the trees that we enjoy on the campus today. In 2010, some students interviewed him about his work planting trees at SMC:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP-Jh3cKAe0>

There was also a piece on him in a recent Saint Mary's Magazine:

<https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/saint-marys-magazine/natural/a-brother-of-trees>

**Shawny Anderson**  
**Associate Dean**

I want to thank you again for posting the wonderful tree videos about Brother Brendan's plantings on the campus. As I said to you in the earlier email, Brother Brendan made many contributions to the College, but the trees will endure the longest.

**Kathy Roper**  
**Professor Emeritus - Department of History**

My deeply felt condolences go to his Brothers, his family and all those who knew him. He emanated goodness.

**Lidia Luquet**  
**Professor Emeritus - Department of Mathematics**

I'm sorry to hear about your community's loss of Br. Brendan. It is very hard to lose a community member, and my thoughts are with you all.

**Marie Pagliarini**  
**Professor - Department of Theology & Religious Studies**

I remember Br. Brenden from my early days at SMC. As Dean he did a tremendous, long-term service to the performing arts at SMC, back then a tiny program.

**Marty Rokeach**  
**Professor - Department of Performing Arts**

I second Marty's point. As a short-term acting dean of SOLA, Brother Brendan was willing to make some important and necessary, but delicate, decisions--about making way for new department and program chairs, for example--that prior administrators had avoided. And the College has benefited from this practice ever since. To me, Brother Brendan seemed an unusual combination of a decisive, even opinionated person who was at the same time

widely curious and a friendly and welcoming presence to all. A wonderful representative of the Christian Brothers and a man of faith and integrity.

**Carl Guarneri**  
**Professor - Department of History**

Brother Raphael once commented that Brother Brendan was “a soldier.” By that he meant (perhaps) that Brother Brendan’s spirituality was one of obedience to duty. He seemed to have a profound desire to be faithful to the will of God in all matters, big and small. Right now he is surely hearing, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

**Paul Giurlanda**  
**Professor - Department of Theology & Religious Studies**

Brother Brendan was great to talk to and very kind. I liked and respected him so much.

**Joan Peterson**  
**Professor - School of Education**