

Brother John Kelly, FSC

Eulogy: 7/29/17

Psalm 131 reminds me of the Brother John that I knew for 55+ years.

“Lord you know that my heart is not proud and my eyes are not lifted from the earth. Lofty thoughts have never filled my mind, far beyond my sight all ambitious deeds. In your peace I have maintained my soul, I have kept my soul in your quiet peace. As a child rests on his mother’s knee, so I place my soul in your loving care.”

Brother John Kelly was a man of God. He was a humble man. My observation of him through the years was that he was thrilled with the small things in life; simple things. He held no greedy plan. He knew that wealth has no true worth. His plan of life was a gentle one.

He did not seek out notoriety. He did everything smoothly and quietly without drawing attention to himself. He never lived beyond his means. He lived on the bare necessities, never had a credit card or had a computer.

He never held any important position in our Province. He never wanted to because he knew that he should not seek things beyond his abilities.

I believe that Brother discovered that humility is the truth about one’s self and using the gifts that one has been given for the glory of God and the good of others. What he lacked in skills in the classroom he made up for by his service to others. At Christmas he would play Santa Clause at a local Mall and Easter would see him playing the Easter Bunny. He

was a man who marked the seasons of the year by having his bedroom door decorated. Brother Peter Dudenheffer decorated his door and I provided the decorations for his room.

He was a happy man with a wonderful sense of humor. His laugh was infectious. He loved listening to the old time preachers on his transistor radio and if you passed by his room you could often hear him yell: "Amen, Alleluia." When we were stationed in Galveston, Texas we would go for a long walk after the evening meal. When it was time to leave I would go to the community patio and yell up at his window: "Mrs. Kelly, Mrs. Kelly, can Benny (He was called Brother Benedict back in the day) come out and play? He would open his window and yell: "You go away Welker trash. I don't want my boy playing with you." Every evening we would repeat this ritual and laugh. It never got old!

During the last year of his mother's life he took a job as a bagger in a grocery store to help pay for the care she needed. If there was a collection made in the community for a worthy cause he always made his contribution.

If he enjoyed a good meal he would give a thumbs up and say slowly: "Delicious."

He enjoyed a glass of Sangria with his evening meal. Once when the CNA forgot to give him his drink he asked: "Is there any booze in the house. "

He lived with the hope that the one Power Ball ticket he purchased every week would pay off!

If someone came to visit him he never forgot their name and would inquire as to their well being.

He had a great love of the Eucharist. Being at Mass was very important to him. He had a great love of the Blessed Mother whom he referred to as Mom. Often he could be found saying the rosary. He wore the brown scapular which I took off of him after his death. In a letter he wrote to Mary he asked her to be with him at the end of his life. “ When my life shall come to an end offer my soul to Jesus as a homage. When I appear before Jesus be with me Mom that I may be received into the bosom of His divine mercy and sing his praises throughout all eternity. I will always love you Mom.”

We called him the candy man because he made sure that the Brothers of the community had a piece of candy after the noon and evening meals.

We called him the echo because he was always one sentence behind reciting community prayers.

I believe that all many old people really want is good people to take care of them and love them. Brother was very blessed with care givers, cooks and his Brothers who truly loved him.

I think he would say to us:

Stay humble my friends.

For you won't be here one day.

And although you may have thought you left a legacy,

In due time that too will fade with you.

You want to be as someone who was

Kind

Loving

Respectful

Helpful

Friendly

And above all humble.

Take compliments nicely.

Try always to be kind.

Try always to be forgiving; although I know at times it can be hard.

Help others

Stand up for one another.

Because those are the legacies that impact lives.

Not just some material thing that will fade faster than you think.

Stay humble my friends!

Given by Brother Louis Welker, FSC