

TESTIMONIALS FOR BROTHER DOMINIC RUEGG, FSC

I received the memo of Brother Dominic's death just a few moments ago; it is very sad news and certainly signals the passing of an era in the Brothers.

However, I can't help think how fortunate we have been to have had him among us for so many years possessed with such a zest for life, such great stories, and such marvelous humor!

I also feel singularly blessed that his was the first voice heard on my video profile. It is an honor to have "shared the screen" with him, to have lived in Community with him, and to have served as his Director.

Now, he will be able to pray for all us left behind and who hope for lives as full and as rich as his own.

May he truly rest in peace.

Brother V. Kenneth, FSC

Bro. Dominic and Bro. Brendan Kneale were in the same robing group, but Brendan arrived a day earlier. Brendan accompanied the recruiter on the ferry from Vallejo to San Francisco to meet Dominic. Dominic arrived a little late as the ferry was already leaving the dock for Vallejo. From the ferry, Brendan said that they could see Dominic running down the plank to the ferry but was too late. Brendan said, "I guess Dominic learned his lesson as he was never late again for any of his cruises."

As told to Br. Richard Orona, FSC by Br. Brendan Kneale, FSC

In the late 1950's the Catholic Church required that all religious orders begin a more thorough academic preparation of their young religious in formation in the study of the Bible...an updating in the background and interpretation of both the Old and New Testaments. Brother Dominic was asked to teach these classes to our Scholastics at St. Mary's College, which would include the Marianists who also had Scholastics studying at St. Mary's. The Marianist Brothers occupied Benilde Hall and the Christian Brothers occupied Assumption Hall.

Brother Dominic, I believe, had recently completed a doctorate in Scripture Studies from Catholic University in Washington D.C. It was a very large class as both orders of Brothers had their entire communities enrolled in the class. Brother Dominic was not only well-informed but an excellent teacher. I Remember it as one of the best classes (two semesters) while at St. Mary's.

Br. Richard Moratto, FSC

Brother Sabas Dominic Ruegg were the names that replaced his birth names, John Anthony Ruegg, when he became a Christian Brother on August 14, 1936. The practice of changing names when a person assumed a dedicated life as a member of a Catholic religious congregation was symbolic of the Biblical account of Jacob whose name became Israel after wrestling with an angel and he declared himself for God. Jacob's followers still call themselves Israelites. Following Vatican II the pious name-changing of those entering religious life was somewhat abandoned because of inconvenience with governmental and civil uses of one's official birth names. Enticed by Vatican II change, Brother Dominic adjusted quickly, announcing that he was Brother John Anthony Ruegg. Try as he might, few reverted to calling him by his birth name, and he remained "Brother Dominic" to most.

His family name, Ruegg, was a Swiss/German name that had stature, and his choice of "Dominic" in 1936 was symbolic of family and religious self-dignity. A bright, determined and religious young man, he was deeply interested in the intellectual life, and chose the study of Latin and Greek at Catholic University in the Nation's capital for the pursuit of his impressive doctorate. Revered philosophical, theological, historical, scientific, and literary works abounded in the ancient languages, and, at the time, that's where action was in academic research. He also later completed a master's degree at Notre Dame in theology. As a professor at a liberal arts institution, a special kind of society gives rise to a group of individuals who ideally cultivate their intellectual freedom well – who seek wisdom "by nature." It was something that Brother Dominic (or John) relished.

Though he was an authentic student of ancient linguistics which undoubtedly perked his aspirations to pursue religious insights he had an exceptional spirit of human curiosity that measured with care the height, depth, and breadth of what lay before him. There were abundant wonders both above the earth and many beneath the seas. Summer-time beckoned him to explore the artifacts and vestiges of cultures that rested in wily Neptune's chambers. Becoming an underwater archeologist he uncovered the art, artifices and a multitude of mysteries of the past, that also encouraged him to personally visit the cultures of *every continent*. He became known by his community members as a "tightwad" since travel, equipment, lodging and cataloging insights were onerous cash and time consumers. His travel avoided "Princess Cruises," resorting to "tramp" cargo vessels, the common reality of which he enjoyed, and where captains enjoyed him.

His personality bubbled over with stories and encounters, both human and unusual. Fortunately his demeanor was almost unperturbable and his personality, gracious and congenial with a modicum of wit and gracious laughter that accompanied the rational enjoyment of the numerous sustaining goods and pleasures of life as well as literature, music and the other liberal arts of nature wherever he discovered them. With his Germanic sense of order, matured by his proper Latin and Greek and incisive moral background, he also developed an accountant's balanced sense. As President I received several wise notes from Dominic in terms of untangling faculty conundrums, and suggesting ideas for engaging College finance, through inventive academic initiatives that would enlarge financial reserves. His insights urged me to call him in the summer while he was engaged in an endeavor of underwater archeology

in Mallorca, Spain, to agree to become Academic Vice President in view of an illness-based resignation of the then Academic Vice President. Brother Dominic reluctantly, yet graciously accepted. His subsequent plan, he discovered refined in the cauldron of trial and error, administrative reorganization plus the imagination of other creative concepts by associates, eventually eliminated deficit spending and provided stable support.

After retiring from active academic life, Brother Dominic-John turned to writing and living a thinker's life in the company of his Brother associates, where intellectual spontaneity, jocosity argumentation, and respect prevailed. As walking ability lessened with age, and falls were a hazard in an active community, Dominic realized that a change had to be made. The day he announced to his community of Brothers that he thought it best to move to the Brothers' care facility at the Mother House in Napa, he did so with tears clearly in his eyes, which prompted tears in other eyes as well. He loved his home, his Brothers and the depth of feeling was graciously returned. He took to living and enlivening others in Napa as he continued writing not one but two adventuresome tomes. And then there was the most pleasant *100-year celebration* outdoors at the site of pool and grove in the hilly wonderland of Napa's impressive vineyards. And today, as life demands of us all, the remains of this effervescent servant of Christ rest comfortably in the close-by Brothers' resting-place, with his awesome thoughts and wondering eager soul being overwhelmed in the joyous reality of his faith-filled hopes and the incredible "seeing" *the Lord of all* face to face, as well as his presence with his God, family, friends and associates – surrounded by love unbounded!

Br. Mel Anderson, FSC