

(March 4, 1929 - April 16, 1999)

by John Sugrue ('60) 1220 Puritan Avenue, Bronx NY 10461 718-823-7749
jsugrue@stjohnsprepschool.org)

In 1952 as a junior at St. Ann's Academy I had the good fortune of meeting Brother James Gerard. As a young monk assigned to St. Helena's High School eight years later, my good fortune continued, for Brother James was on the faculty there. He was most supportive of me in the classroom and especially in community.

In 1972 when I took a leave of absence and eventually changed vocations, Jay was still most supportive - our friendship didn't change. In 1974 he was my best man when I married Kathleen, and in 1979 he was godfather to our second daughter Kerry.

When our daughters Beth and Kerry were growing up, we spent many a day at Avenue C in Bayonne for a cookout, and at the various residences where Jay and Frank Farrell lived for a visit and dinner. Even when the girls became teenagers, they still enjoyed going to see "Uncle Jay." They were always comfortable with him, as he always had a sincere interest in what they were doing.

Brother James was a religious who taught not so much by words but by his actions. He certainly did good quietly. He also enjoyed the good things in life - going to the opera, a good dinner, travel.

When we got the call from Jay's sister Catherine about his death, one of the hardest things for us was to call Kerry, a sophomore at Marist College, and Beth who was studying in the Marymount program at University College, Galway, Ireland. I told the girls that knowing Jay he was on the best trip of his life. (Over the years as we traveled together, he used to tease me that I should have rented a convertible.) Kerry reminded me that he was probably driving around heaven in his red convertible.

It has been over a year since Jay died; we still miss him. When I pray for special favors, I have a litany of saints that I pray to - my mother and father, my sister Marie, and added to that list as of April 1999 was Brother James Gerard Dixon ('46). He is a true son of Champagnat. Rest in peace, Jay.