

(April 20, 1929 - February 15, 1987)

Richard Thomas Ginnity entered our Marist Brotherhood from St. Peter's Parish in Haverstraw, New York. His investiture took place in 1946 and he made his perpetual vows at Esopus, New York in 1952. Brendan cooked for a year at St. Joseph's Juniorate, Tyngsboro, Massachusetts. he taught for many years at several high schools in the New York City area: St. Ann's Academy, Archbishop Molloy, Dubois, Saint Agnes, and Cardinal Hayes. From 1968 through 1971, Brendan served as Residence Director at Marist College, Poughkeepsie, New York. He was also assistant chairman and later chairman of the Marist Brothers Far Eastern Missions. More recently, he was finance officer at Saint Agnes High School, New York City.

Father Thomas R. Flynn of Emory University delivered the eulogy at Brendan's Mass of Resurrection.

"I am the resurrection and the life. . . . Whoever believes in me, though he should die, will come to life."

We gather to celebrate the life of Brother Brendan Regis: to give thanks for his presence among us, to mourn the separation his death causes, to rejoice that he has found peace in the Lord, and to renew our own hope in the eternal life that awaits us all, sooner or later, in God's own time.

How important a name is; it is who we are. Adam naming the animals in the Garden, Moses "innocently" asking God's name before the burning bush, prophets and apostles having their names changed as they were sent on their missions -- - the biblical name was a person's identity, essence, secret self.

Brendan had three names that I know of. The first I learned when I called his brother's home in Villa Ricca near Atlanta. When I asked for Brother Peter, his young niece responded, "Oh, you mean 'Uncle Richie!'" Brendan's family meant a great deal to him. He often spoke of them, especially the youngsters. With humor typically mixed with sarcasm (that's how he dealt with the world), he loved to tease the little ones and goad them into repaying him in kind. He deeply appreciated what his family did for him. I think one of the greatest pains of his last illness was the thought that it caused them, especially his mother, such anguish.

Then there was Brendan Regis, F.M.S. As a member of the Order, Brendan was faithful to his original commitment. Indeed, faithfulness characterized his life as a Brother: having put his hands to the plow, he never looked back. He continued to do his part long after illness would have excused him from the task. He had a keen sense of responsibility for the upkeep of the house that he shared with the Brothers.

Finally, there was Pete to his many friends, both monks and others. I shall ever be grateful for his hospitality and his deep, deep sensitivity-a trait that no doubt caused him as much pain as it made him understanding of others. His humor and sarcasm kept the world at a certain distance- one did not get "serious" with Pete very easily-and yet he was a man with a heart as big as his Irish frame. Pete was

fiercely independent (the reason for his distancing maneuvers) and profoundly loyal to his family, his Order, and his friends. The Lord spared him the life of an invalid, which surely would have been worse than any physical suffering Pete had to endure.

Pete liked short homilies, so I must bring this one to a close.

Our lives are formed and changed by those with whom we live and work. We help change them in return. This morning as we celebrate Brother Brendan's birthday in the Lord, let us offer a prayer to the Lord of life: in thanksgiving for having walked a while with Brendan and in hope of meeting him again at the end of our own journey.

Praised be the Lord, whose death and resurrection are the guarantee of our own, now and forever. Amen. Brother Brendan Regis, F.M.S.

Eulogy delivered by Brother George Kopper at Memorial Mass, St. Agnes High School.

We come together this afternoon for a memorial: a time to remember. Every time we go to Mass it is a time to remember: to remember what Jesus did and why that is important to us.

In addition to doing that today, we come here to remember Brother Brendan: to remember what he did and why that is important to us.

My task is to say a few words about Brendan and that is not an easy thing to do. I know he would not want someone to stand where I am standing and say all sorts of nice things about him. That was not his style. But I am going to do it anyway. I know for sure that Brendan would want this talk to be short, and it will be.

Many of you did not know Brother Brendan at all. Few people knew him well. For many of you he was just someone in the office to whom you went for a textbook or a train pass, to pay a bill or pick up your check. He was someone you passed by once in a while.

For others he was a colleague with whom they had a cup of coffee in the morning and shared a few laughs.

For a few others he was a friend: someone they went out to lunch with --- and he always paid the check.

Simple things. Brendan did not change the world much. Few of us really do. History books won't contain his name. Novels based on his life won't be written. But that fact does not lessen the importance of his life because

Brendan entered the lives of each of us in different ways, and that is always important.

Brendan was a teacher; he taught different subjects in different schools. But the real lesson for us to learn is in his life. Brendan made choices, just as we all must make choices. He was a very private person, a rough, unpolished, incredibly honest piece of work. He lived his life independently. He did things his way. That was his choice. We can all admire that honesty and independence. But the lesson continues; there is more.

Brendan's roughness and honesty and independence were softened by humor and kindness and generosity. For above all, he was a kind and generous person. In that way Brendan touched us all. It is that generosity, humor, and kindness that we must remember. That is the lesson for us to learn.

From Brendan's simple life may we learn that no act is unimportant, no kind word insignificant, no gesture of generosity without its effect on others. We interact with one another every day. Each one of us is important to the other. We do not often realize how important we really are.

The first reading at today's liturgy spoke of friendship. We all know how important friends are to us. They mold and shape our lives and help to make us who we are. But there are also people who come into our lives for only a short time, people we do not know well enough to call friends. They too are important. We should not waste that short time together. It should be a time of kindness and humor and generosity. That is the lesson Brendan teaches us.

A long time ago, I was told that the greatest compliment we can give a person is to say, "I'll remember you." With that simple phrase persons know they have become a part of our life, our world. So as we thank God today for creating Brendan and giving him to us even for a short time, let us also promise that, yes, we will remember Brother Brendan. We will remember what he taught us. We will remember a very kind and a very generous man.