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Dedication

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Dedication



courtesy Chuck Barry

In Memoriam

Norman Martin, S.J.

1914-2006

A Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated for Father Martin on February 11, 2006, in Mission Church. Father Liebscher gave the homily, which is reprinted below.

Many of us here this morning have gathered in the past to mark milestones in Father Norman Martin's life—50 years a Jesuit in 1985, 60 years a Jesuit in 1995, then 50 years a priest in 1997. Last fall, with Father Norman's health less robust, the Jesuit community arranged a subdued celebration for his 70th. anniversary in the Order. On those occasions, Norman managed to be the star of the moment and also to point toward greater things—to the ongoing work at Santa Clara, to the Jesuit apostolate, and to God.

This morning, Father Martin gathers us for one more celebration, giving thanks for the 91 years of his life, more than 70 years in the Jesuits, and 58 years of service in the priesthood. We are here because Father Martin has touched our lives, directly or indirectly—touched us with his friendship, charm, wisdom, and kindness. Once again, Father Norman also points our minds toward greater things—toward the Eucharist and the God who has called him to eternal life.

I first met Father Martin in the old Donohoe Infirmary during my own freshman orientation. My roommate had been injured playing flag football. Father Norman, seeing a light on at night, thought it a good time for a sick call. So often he would spontaneously reach out to someone in need. That was more than forty years ago. He would become my teacher, mentor, and friend.

The gift of friendship defined Father Martin's life, and the number of his friends was legion. His bonds of friendship and affection covered Santa Clara, of course, but also spanned Central and South America, Spain, Italy, the Philippines, and many other countries—and let's not forget Hawaii, where he served

during the summers in the 1980s and early 90s. Father Norman loved to be with people and to talk with them in his often a teasing way. He knew what we cared about, and because we cared, he cared, too.

Father Norman asked that we read this particular selection from John's Gospel at today's Mass. In his final hours last Sunday, we read that same passage in his hospital room because it meant so much to him. It is St. John's description of the Eucharist: Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.

For Father Martin, the most important part of life was the celebration of daily Mass, the Eucharist. His daily encounter with the Lord kept him going, as an individual and an apostle, for more than 70 years of religious life. The faith, hope, and love that he found in the Eucharist spread from the sacrament into his life, and from him to the people he touched.

So many of us took strength from Norman's assurances that he would pray for us. After dinner most nights, he went to his room and wrote notes promising prayers or a remembrance at Mass to acknowledge a birthday, mark the anniversary of a death, or join us in praying for a special concern. Just last December, I asked the Jesuits to pray for a student gravely injured in an auto accident. Norman immediately emailed me that he would offer Mass for my student the next morning—and with his typical personal touch, he added that I should be sure to get rest over the holiday.

For all his travels, Father Norman loved Santa Clara above all other places. He came here in 1933 as a freshman and left in 1935 to enter the Jesuit Novitiate. Jesuit life took him to Spokane, then Nicaragua, Colombia, Argentina, and Mexico before he finally returned to the Santa Clara faculty in 1958. He traveled widely for research, but Santa Clara was his

home. He devoted himself to the university in the history department—seeking out new students and promoting its intellectual life. On campus and through his travels, Norman knew hundreds of people and remained available to them as a teacher, fellow scholar, and priest.

For the past quarter century, Father Martin served the university in its development office. That work gave him further opportunity to care for the far-flung Santa Clara family. His interest in people told them that Santa Clara was interested, too. And always, Father Norman's warm friendship communicated God's love to the people he met, wherever he met them.

Norman's engagement with the university and its people never diminished. He had an almost proprietary air about the campus, and he held firm, even feisty opinions on all things Santa Clara—as anyone in charge soon learned. He swam daily at the Leavey Center pool, and he considered the staff and most patrons to be his friends. In bulletins much decorated with exclamation points, he regularly informed the Jesuits about the pool's hours and water conditions.

In recent years, Father Martin took pride that one of his first students in Nicaragua, Mr. Enrique Bolaños-Geyer, had been elected president of his country. When President Bolaños learned of Father Norman's passing, he wrote me in email, "Father Martin is already with the Lord, and from there he looks after us."

Indeed, Father Norman now looks after us. The Jesuits from Santa Clara and the California Province join Father Martin's many, many friends in mourning him. We shall miss him in the weeks and months ahead. Jesuit, scholar, teacher, priest—most of all, he was our friend. Now, he prays for us at the heavenly banquet, and so let us join our prayers for him at this earthly supper of the Lord.

Timothy O'Keefe interviewed Father Martin for the 2005 The Historian. The article is reprinted below.

At the beginning of the fall term of 1933, a young — and even younger looking — graduate of San Mateo High School was deposited at Santa Clara to begin his college education. The youngster had planned to attend Cal Berkeley, but his mother had other ideas and delivered him to the Jesuits at Santa Clara University. Whatever residual disappointment he may have felt soon disappeared and Santa Clara changed him completely. Within a couple of years the young economics major took another decisive step and entered the Society of Jesus as a scholastic. His long and distinguished career as a Jesuit had begun, and this July Fr. Norman Martin — now in his ninetieth year — will celebrate seventy years in the Society.

After his initial training at the Jesuit seminary at Los Gatos, “Mr. Martin,” even then called “Fr. Martin” by his students, returned to Santa Clara University where he taught English and Latin. But his stay there was cut short when the Jesuit Curia in Rome asked the California Province to send a scholastic to serve as an instructor at the Colegio Centro América in Nicaragua. With only a few semesters of Spanish language classes at Santa Clara, and not without some misgivings, Mr. Martin was soon teaching his new charges both English and World History — in Spanish. Even as a relatively novice teacher, he must have made a significant impression on his young students. After many years, one of these former students, Enrique Bolaños, recently contacted Fr. Martin, asking him to stand near him on the platform as he was sworn in as the new President of Nicaragua.

After teaching in Nicaragua, he was next assigned to Bogotá, Columbia. Had it not been for his Jesuit superior’s concern about the German

submarine peril in the Atlantic during the Second World War, he would have gone to Spain for his training in theology. Instead, he spent several years in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he was ordained in 1947. In this serendipitous or providential manner began Fr. Martin's long professional association with Latin America and its rich history and culture.

Although he was accepted for graduate work at Harvard, Berkeley and Stanford, Fr. Martin chose to pursue his M.A. and Ph.D. in History at the National University of Mexico. There he studied with Professor Edmundo O'Gorman and, very soon after completing his dissertation, he published two books. His particular area of research and expertise was the history of the *vagabundos* of Colonial Mexico, pioneering social and economic research on a marginalized and neglected segment of the population. During his nine years in Mexico, Fr. Martin completed his final stage of Jesuit training and, because of his familiarity with the rich local archival sources, he guided and befriended visiting historians of the stature of Woodrow Borah and Arnold Toynbee.

After his return to the United States in 1957, Fr. Martin joined the History Department at Santa Clara and began teaching Latin American History the following year. He quickly won respect, admiration, and wide popularity as a dynamic and inspiring teacher. Fr. Martin would teach for more than two decades and establish a reputation as a "Pied Piper" attracting an appreciative following of new majors to the History Department. Despite his classroom success and his enjoyment of teaching, Fr. Martin also spent extended periods of time doing historical research in Spain (as a Guggenheim Fellow), in Mexico, and at the Jesuit Institute of History in Rome. In the late 1970s, he was asked by the University president to assist with Santa Clara's fund raising.

Although he missed his teaching and scholarly research, for the following twenty years he played a significant role in developing the financial resources for Santa Clara's expanding campus and improving educational quality.

Today, Fr. Martin remains actively involved in the University and serves as Assistant to the President for University Relations. In recognition of his many years of service, the President's Club recently celebrated Fr. Martin's ninetieth birthday at their annual dinner. Now, as he nears the celebration of his seventieth anniversary as a Jesuit, his colleagues and his hundreds of former students join together in expressing our appreciation for all he has contributed to the historical profession, the History Department, and to Santa Clara University.