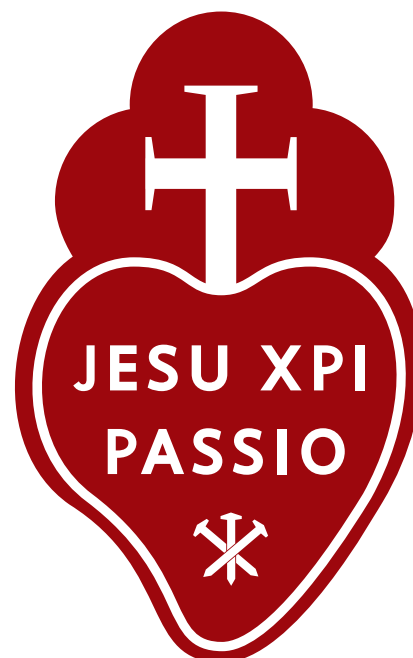


CrossRoads

Bulletin of the Passionist Alumni Association

July 2020



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News from the Passionist Alumni Council



Mike Owens
Alumni Association Coordinator

Thanks to everyone who responded to the 2021 alumni reunion survey. We received over 90 responses. **Paul Schulte** and his team are digesting your feedback and preparing the results for discussion at our July Council meeting.

Mark Brockman and **Carl Middleton** are making steady progress in their research into the Passionist Partners, the Office of Mission Effectiveness and other initiatives as they prepare their lay association recommendation.

Jack Dermody and **Bob Duffield** are working with **Claire Smith** to include the alumni biographies on the alumni website. Many of these biographies were prepared several years ago, so part of their challenge is providing a means for individuals to revise their existing documents.

One of the Council's objectives for the year is to implement a succession plan for the Alumni Council membership and leadership roles. We began those discussions during our May meeting.

Another pending project is providing coordinated communication and record keeping when we are notified of the deaths of formation alumni. An important feature of this project will be an annual remembrance of those alumni who died during the prior 12 months.

Ray Alonzo volunteered to be a contact should any of our alumni need to reach out during the Coronavirus turmoil. His email is: rayalonzo@ymail.com I encourage you to email Ray, even if you just need someone to talk to.

As always, you can reach me at mtowens2368@icloud.com with any questions, observations, and/or suggestions.

Peace to all!



Alumni Council Members

Ray Alonzo:
Chair, Spiritual Formation

Mark Brockman:
Co- Chair, Lay Association;
Technology

Carl DeLage:
Chair, Family Events

Jack Dermody:
Chair, Communications:
Website and Newsletter

Phil Jackson:
Spiritual Formation

Terry McDevitt:
Co- Chair, Administration/
Province Liaison

Carl Middleton:
Co- Chair, Lay Association

Don Noltemeyer:
Co- Chair, Alumni Profile
and Recruitment

Mike Owens:
Coordinator

Richard Padilla:
Co-Chair, Administration/
Province Liaison

Paul Schulte:
Co- Chair, Alumni Profile
and Recruitment

Fr. John Schork, CP:
Province Liaison

Claire Smith:
Communications

Thinking of forwarding this?

Please forward this bulletin to a former classmate or friend who attended school in Passionist formation. The Passionist Alumni Association relies on you to build our membership. Every day we hear stories of renewed friendships and new friendships.

Did a friend forward this bulletin to you because you once studied with the Passionists? If so, please [Click here](#) to register with the Passionist Alumni Association to stay in touch. Thank you.

PAST ISSUES? To read past issues of CrossRoads, [click here](#).

An Interview with Paul Schulte

Your story is one of those rare ones. You directly entered the Passionist novitiate from a regular high school. How did that happen?

Well, I am from St. Louis and my first contact with the Passionists happened in 1964. The upperclassmen from my alma mater, St. Mary's Catholic High School, travelled to Warrenton for an overnight retreat.

In either a moment of boredom or some moment of fervor, I picked up and filled out a vocation card. Believe me, this was pure grace. I hadn't been sitting around wondering if I wanted to be a semi-cloistered monk. Maybe it was some inkling of a religious vocation but slightly weaker than my interest in quantum physics at the time.



What were you thinking as a high school kid...about what your life trajectory would be?

I knew that I was probably going to attend college. I knew I was going to struggle at it, because I was a mediocre high school student at best.

My father had gone to Marquette University, so I figured I would probably end up there. Besides, he told me if I went to a Catholic college, he would pay for it; go somewhere else, I would pay. I may have been a poor student, but I wasn't that dumb.

What did you think you were getting into with the Passionists? It couldn't have been just the contemplative part. What else about them?

Nothing about contemplation. Nothing about prayer. I didn't know a charism from a phantasm much less have interest in it. No, I was impressed by the people **doing important work** and doing it for the Church and in the name of Christ Crucified.

The Passionists of Holy Cross Province had a powerful vocation team at that point. A guy named **Terry O'Toole** was a former FBI agent and trained attorney who became a Passionist later in life. He teamed up with **Frs. Mel Spehn and Chris Mercier** to create a power-packed vocation team. You have heard the old Jordan refrain "I wanna' be like Mike?" Well, I said to myself, "I wanna' be like Terry."

The more I look back at my vocation experience, it was all about Passionist people. I wanted to be part of a community with them some day. As I mentioned, I had no sense of spirituality. I certainly didn't think of myself as a holy person. I knew how to say my Hail Marys and my Our Fathers and I could serve Mass in Latin.

Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam. [Paul and the interviewer begin intoning together...] *Quia tu es, Deus, fortitudo mea: quare me repulisti, et quare tristis incedo, dum affligit me inimicus.*

The interviewer shouts, "Oh my God, I haven't said those words aloud in fifty years!"

[Paul continues.] It's just like riding a bike. It comes right back to you. Besides if I could serve in Latin, surely, I could be a Roman Catholic Religious. Good logic, huh?

It is now June of 1965...55 years ago this month. I'm at St. Mary's High reflecting on the recent senior prom. I rented a supercharged Dodge, you know, with a V-8 engine. I talked a supercharged lady into going with me. Oh, the goodnight kiss— never again—I thought to myself driving home.

Whatever was I doing?

Four weeks later I was on my way to some place called Warrenton and then on to some even more remote location called St. Paul, Kansas.

Whatever was I doing?

When I got to Warrenton, **Scott Woodward**--just out of high school in Houston--was already there and had been there for about a week. I barely drop my suitcase when he says to me "Hey come with us, we're going out to the highway. There's an accident on the road and there's some seculars out there." The poor guy had been there only two weeks. BUT HE WAS ALREADY HUNTING FOR REAL PEOPLE.

Whatever was I doing?

Wasn't your novitiate class so large they split you up?

Yes! Half of our class went to Detroit. Half to St. Paul because of the large numbers. First time ever for the Province and the first of many, many firsts. I remember thinking to myself "I know where Detroit is. I know what they do in Detroit. My supercharged Prom car came from Detroit. But what could possibly be in St. Paul Kansas?"

I literally went from very normal high school life—dating, the cars, you know—to BOOM. I'm on a train with my black coat and tie looking like a scared Latter Day Saint on the way to his mission in ... St. Paul Kansas—wherever the hell that was. It could have been Uganda for all I knew at the time.

What exactly did you step into?

It was one surprise right after another. First you realize that you are now all alone with these people in this rather desolate place. I wanted community and I got it. But where was Terry O'Toole when I needed him? Now I was face to face with **Fr. Fred Sucher** and my sparse Latin was going to be no match for his expectations.

Whatever was I doing?

First lesson: Chapter of Faults. Every morning the community of novices knelt before the Master if they had some "fault" to report, then did so out loud--publicly, for God's sake. Mortification of the eyes—or rather the lack thereof—was usually a go-to fault. No looking at the other novices or professed. You were always supposed to look down at the floor so as not to be distracted from peaceful prayer, or the nagging remembrance of that last kiss. ("Lord help me I can't admit that," I said to myself.) The terror increases as another novice takes it to a new level: "I had indirect eye contact...I looked at a fellow novice through the mirror."

Whatever was I doing?

Next up I learned that Steve Rose--my roommate and novitiate mentor--oversaw the disciplines. I found him tying knots at the end of five "fingers" extending from a rope "handle." With the innocence of postulancy, I asked what he was doing. To my regret, he told me. I had to make my own whip and "discipline" myself. The discipline is obviously based on...and in memory of...the scourging. And the idea was that there was some value in pain. I'm probably bad at the theological aspects of all that. All I know is that you made these multiple knots at the end of a long rope. And you would go to your cell (aka room) two or three times a week. As you prayed—there was a special set of prayers—you "scourged" yourself. Now talk about the ultimate OMG moment!

Whatever was I doing?

What was it like to start life in Passionist formation in the mid-1960s with all the changes in the Church going on?

Both the Church and the Passionists were experiencing seismic change.

Fr. Simon Herbers took over as novice master soon after our vesting. Simon was a holy and gentle man. He was usually a very patient man, for one thing. And patience with us was clearly needed. New people in a new situation (two novitiates) in a renewing Church and a confusing world. Fr. Simon was the man for the time and one of the most influential role models in my life.

Recently I've been sharing emails back and forth with **Jim Ryan**. We were thinking about putting together a group of people to talk about what the novitiate experience meant to us. It was probably one of the most transformative and happy years of my life. Jim would say the same. It was an incredible balance of spirituality, physical activity, intellectual stimulation, and community building—much more than most 19-year-olds would ever experience or even begin to imagine.

Now, I began to know what I was doing here.

I didn't know that much about what was going on in the Church. I didn't much care. We didn't know what was going on in the world. We didn't much care. We could not watch TV and we were not allowed to listen to music. As the tumult of the 60's began to foment, we were delightfully clueless as we worked together to find ourselves, our relationship with Christ and with one another.

Now I began to know what I was doing here.

How did you feel about the novitiate when it ended?

We took our vows at the end of the year and a day as scheduled. But I was sitting there again...almost in amazement. Here I was, a 19-year-old, and I was embracing the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience plus dedication to the Passion of Jesus Christ. Clearly, I thought I was up for it. In retrospect, I wonder if the Passionists were ready for it. A bunch of professed teenagers—some only a year and day past their prom date. Think about it!

Fr. Simon had been an amazing man and priest. Other Passionists—**Frs. Frank Keenan, Blaise Czaja** and my fellow “fraters” taught me how to think. They taught me how to pray. And they taught me how to build community. Gifts for a lifetime!

How did the Passionists show you how to build community?

With the Passionists, strong community as I saw it came from a common purpose, mutual trust, and personal competence.

I knew the young men around me were good people, strong guys. The vocation program at the time vetted well. These were people I could trust, work together with, and do all the things I envisioned when Terry O'Toole finally convinced me to take the leap.

Our football team in Louisville illustrated that sense of trust. We were an awesome juggernaut of grid-iron prowess. “The Passionists,” as we were simply called, were accused of having a national recruiting program. Which we did. We literally trampled all the other intramural teams at Bellarmine. (One year undefeated and unscored upon.) Our opponents and classmates at Bellarmine also accused us of having nothing to do except practice football and pray for our success while they were out drinking and cavorting around town...which was also true.

I guess it was **Al Cuchetti** and **Mike Carson** (our captains on either side of the ball) who developed an impressive playbook. My job was to play end. Mike Carson was the quarterback. We had “right-outs” and “left-outs” and “buttonhooks in the middle.” My favorite was a play we called “threading the needle.” One end and a halfback went out right behind each other running diagonally across the field. The end from the other side came across and ran right between (or through the opening between them) confusing the hung-over defense. Once through the eye of the needle, every time I looked up, there was the ball. Mike Carson just laid it “reach high” above my head. “Hey Schultz, great touch-down” they would say when I got to the sideline. I didn't score that touchdown, I thought to myself. It was Mike Carson who scored the touchdown. I just looked up and caught it.

So, I guess when I talk about competence and trust, what I mean is you always knew the ball was going to be there. You always knew that this person would be there for you and was good enough to help. That went for football, help with school, or help with navigating an unsure religious and social experience. Every time I looked up, my community was there for me.

The community aspect had many dimensions. **Steve Rose**, my temporary roommate in St. Paul, was the first mentor. At Bellarmine, I came face to face with my poor academic skills. **Jim Bobula**—my first roommate in Louisville—saved the academic day. He was brilliant in college. Jim Bobula never got a B at Bellarmine University. Never! Imagine having a guy like that as a roommate. The closest he ever got to failure was me. I guess it made him uncomfortable, because he lifted me up with his help and example. Four years later, I graduated with honors. Thanks to my community.

There was another group of guys: **Bruce Brennan, Larry Goodwin, Ron Reneau**, and several others two years ahead of us. I looked up to them for leadership. I learned how to be part of community but still be able to separate myself as an aggressive advocate for my beliefs and to do it with light-hearted humor, unflinching confidence, and true loyalty.

If Mike Carson taught me trust, and Jim Bobula taught me how to study, then those other guys taught me how to behave without being “just a follower.” It was all a very positive footing on which to build community for a lifetime.

What was it like dealing with traumatic change at Bellarmine?

Well we were one of the first classes to go to Bellarmine College. It was an amazing experience but, in some way, began to challenge our common purpose. We all knew we were after a life of Passionist charism, ministry, and prayer. But we saw it through a glass darkly as a turbulent society, a turbulent Church, and an unsure Province—all of this confounding in the context of a changing college experience.

When we started, Bellarmine College was an all-men’s college. By the end of our sophomore year we merged with the Catholic women’s college across town called Ursuline College. Women everywhere! And we did not have to mortify our eyes! We came toe to toe with the mini skirt, female perspective, and female interactions with every trip to campus. I would have loved to be the proverbial fly on the wall of the provincial office and priests’ recreation room as this “new normal” emerged. I doubt Fr. Fred had ever imagined a co-ed philosophy program for the professed students of Holy Cross Province.

Defining “a common purpose” became difficult. Louisville became a very confused place. We were trying to figure out how to live in a secular world at Bellarmine. How to live in a post-Vatican II church. And all this is going on while we are 19 and 20 years old trying to figure out who WE were. One might say a perfect storm of confusion.

How did that affect you directly?

That is where I learned to think and how to pray harder. What I was supposed to do as a Passionist differed from what I first thought. Clearly, I had to be much more engaged in the world than the original O'Toole model suggested.

What did that mean?

We were in college. 1968. We're talking the '68 election, assassinations, the race riots, getting drafted, the Vietnam War. At the same time, we were very engaged with the Church and its changes. If bringing a guitar to mass in the chapel was confounding for some, the implications for social justice and serving the "poor of Jesus" were scrambling my brain and my spirit.

I was wondering how I was going to do this... as an official of the Church in the modern world. Others were too, and the confusion had its impact. People were leaving. Many discovered they needed long-term personal relationships— marriages, partnerships. Others felt that the constraints of religious life and the Church would keep them from changing the world. For others, me included, it was just too confounding.

If you compared the Passionists to other orders, how do you think they were positioned?

The Passionists to their credit had probably embraced thinking that others probably had not. And we paid the price for innovation and experimentation.

Talk about openness to the possible. We had a professed student who went through the novitiate with us who was completely blind: **Gil Pries**. The Passionists affirmed that a completely blind person could be a priest in the community. We all bought in as well. Ministry was for all who would embrace it.

One incident is unforgettable. You see, Gil had fake eyes. They were glass inserts. One evening five of us including Gil went to **Louie Smith's** house for one of those scrumptious dinners Mrs. Smith was known to prepare. And the tasty bourbon Mr. Smith was known to serve us once we reached 21. But always in moderation of course.

After a delightful evening, we say our good-byes and all five of us get back in the car and head for home.

We were certainly not impaired, but we were—might one say —giddy. The windows were down. This police car pulls up behind us and motions us to pull over. He says, "Gentlemen, what's going on here?" Of course – five college guys acting a little silly on a Saturday night. What would you think?

We told the officer we were returning from one of our parents' houses and he no doubt asked us if we had anything to drink. Being well trained in the Chapter of Faults, we quickly affirmed his assumption. "OK. Let's get out of the car, gentlemen" he says. As we exit, we are frantically trying to explain who we are and what we were doing. As one officer is talking to us, the other guy is running around with a flashlight and shining it into our faces. He shines his light into Gil Pries' eyes and says, "Holy crap! He's drunk as hell. He's totally glazed over."

One of us gently breaks it to the officer that Gil is blind. The cop says, “Oh Jesus, go home. Get out of here.” Salvation was ours. Thanks to Gil.

AHow many of you graduated from Bellarmine and where did you go from there?

Six of us graduated from Bellarmine-Ursuline College in May of 1970 with bachelor’s degrees in liberal arts. We were **Roland Kulla, C.P.; Mike Clark, C.P.; Louis Smith, C.P.; Jim Ryan, C.P.; Norbert Federspiel, C.P.; and Paul Schulte C.P.**

We created our own graduation card and planned to use that rather than the standard Bellarmine-Ursuline fare. On the front we placed a picture of the six of us modeled after a famous picture of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid gang. The movie with Redford and Newman was released in 1969 and was the rage for much of our senior year. A story of lovable and entertaining guys who did not follow the rules. And eventually who were done in by the authorities.

It was every bit a revolt against authority. It was every bit the insistence of immature young men. It was every bit the reflection of a challenging time in the community.

We agreed (I think we were told) to cut the picture off from the invitation itself. The humor was duly noted. The implications about authority were not.

Our 1970 Graduation Photo

Back (L to R): Mike Clark, Roland Kulla, Paul Schulte

Front (L to R): Norb Federspiel, Louis Smith, Jim Ryan

So, What Came Next?

Well, Jack, thanks for your interest but this is way too long already. I could have told dozens of stories, recounted the exploits of Snodgrass and Crayola, and the burial ceremony for my football shorts that were never washed for four years and were ceremoniously buried in the back yard.



I could talk about the incredible experience the six of us spent in small community at an inner-city parish in St. Louis after our graduation. Followed by the complicated return to formation at yet another new experiment called CTU (Catholic Theological Union) in Chicago. I could talk as long about my departure from Passionist professed life as I did about my entry into the Order. So many stories, so many thoughts, feelings and memories that form a fabric of my life that I would not change for all the proverbial tea in China.

The Passionists shaped my life when I was most able to be shaped. I owe them a debt of gratitude, not to mention a fully funded college education. My involvement over the years on advisory boards, Chapter coordinating committees, fund raisers and now the Alumni Council are just a small token of my appreciation.

Sometime I will regale you with the unique story of how the Passionist charism has permeated not only my personal life but my business as well. For another time, and maybe with a scotch in hand.

Thanks for the opportunity to share. God bless the Passionists of Holy Cross Province.



Meet Al Maryan



Christmas 1964. This was the beginning of a three-year period which can best be described as an experience that I would never trade, for anything.



My vocation, unfortunately, changed midway through junior year at Warrenton. This was the first extremely difficult decision of my life.

The Prep—First Decisions, First Impressions

My first exposure to the Passionist family was sometime in 1961 when my older brother was considering Mother of Good Counsel in Warrenton for high school. To my parents' utter disappointment, he got "cold feet" when it was time to commit. By then, however, I was thoroughly enjoying visits to our home by **Fathers Joe and Mel**, and signed myself up for MGC. My parents of course were gratified to have this son attend the seminary.

In the fall, my family and I arrived earlier than most students so we could get a good look at the grounds. Later that first day I remember seeking out my newly assigned bunkmate, one **Mr. Tom McGee**. We met in the dayroom. I suggested we head to the dormitory to check out our assigned bunk arrangements since he hadn't been there yet. Arriving bedside and realizing that he was assigned to the top bunk, we immediately agreed it made sense to switch. This was the beginning of a friendship that has grown strong over the past 50+ years. In retrospect, relationships based on mutual trust are destined to last.

After several weeks, the initial homesickness subsided. This was the beginning of a three-year period which can best be described as "an experience that I would never trade, for anything."

A Surprising New Way of Life

I could understand and accept the Prep disciplines because my upbringing was in a strict, disciplined household. The regimentation in the 60's was a key tool of character formation. Sure, we seminarians had doubts and disagreements, but I believe we complied more than rebelled. Couple this with all the encouragement we received to develop a deep spiritual individuality, the result turned out a recipe for building a reliable and moral life perspective. St Paul of the Cross referred to a Catholic Gentleman as one who "always remains quiet and calm in the shelter of God's will, under the mighty protection of the Most High." Also "In all your trials arm yourself with faith, confidence in God and deep humility of heart. Fear Nothing". When anyone might have strayed off course, a quick redirection was always available since we were under the watchful eye of

St Jude, my home parish, had been a new, modern building —devoid of any Gothic architecture and enclosed the congregation beneath a low ceiling. Once one was exposed to hearing Mass and other services in the MGC chapel, a young seminarian could easily be intimidated by the comparative grandness of scale. I surely was.

Fr. Morris Cahill could instill such a deep appreciation for all musical portions of the liturgy. He had an admirable talent for directing each choir performance by interfacing the harmonics and acoustics in the building that I always thought to be MGC's centerpiece. Each year during the week of the Passion and Easter Sunday a sort of magical spirit would engulf me. The Hallelujah Chorus, worthy and fitting, ended this central theme of the Passionists during the liturgical season. To this day it remains a special and important time of year to me.

Even with the designated periods of silence, additional devotions, 24-hour adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, plus the endless spit and shine preparation for all visitors on Sunday, this magic never ceased.

Unforgettable Memories

- Many events at the Prep remain in my memory: Having sung in choir seated between **Fr. Gerard Steckel** and good friend Tom McGee. I'd use that as a potential excuse for my current bilateral hearing loss. Watching the incoming freshmen during meals until the hand signals were understood. Also facing giggles and disbelief from my siblings the first days back home at the family dinner table.
- Enjoying the assortment of physical activities at our disposal, especially the handball courts and trampolines. "No pain, no gain" was ultimately learned as a necessity. Taking endless nighttime walks down the asphalt entrance, or on the pathways of **Fr. Randal's** forest.
- Joining many new and deep spiritual discussions, especially with **Fr. Xav** and classmates.

- Enduring snowball fights between underclassmen and the seniors. As a freshman you quickly learned that when **Mike Clark** (senior) lobbed a couple snowballs in the air, and you stood confused watching their flight path, then POW, a mid-sternal blow would render you immobile for a good several minutes. After trading stares a moment, then you watched as another sucker fell into the same trap and got whacked.
- Encountering a winter ice storm so brutal that St. Louisans took out-of-town classmates home during the shutdown.
- Enjoying the recurrent ping pong tournaments which even Forrest Gump would have struggled to win.
- Fearing getting caught at something, then sentenced to that horrific punishment of traversing the main corridor on the knees.
- Being brave enough, or stupid enough, to join the pole vaulting team with **Rich Padilla**. What a lesson in humility!

A Difficult Decision and a New Career Trajectory

When the thought of committing to all vows became very questionable, my vocation, unfortunately, changed midway through junior year at Warrenton. This was the first extremely difficult decision of my life.

I completed the senior year elsewhere, then passed two years of undergrad work at UMSL interspersed with many a card game.

I chose to skip the first semester of junior year and that decision proved to be overly risky. By late September my draft number of 181 was called up even though I didn't receive the draft notice until four days after meeting with a selective service recruiter...and enlisting.

Thus began an Army career as a combat medic that spanned almost eight years through early 1978.

Right off the bat, getting dumped out of an upper bunk in the Prep when oversleeping proved useful during similar re-occurrences in basic training. Muscle memory kicked in how best to land and prevent real injury and embarrassment. So a big thanks goes out to **Joe Moons**, who had been a designated punisher of those who overslept. Joe seemed well versed in this job, and today still delights in reminding people just how much enjoyment this gave him. And guess who greeted me as recently as the 2019 Reunion in Detroit with this reminder? Forgiveness can be a difficult virtue to practice all the time.

Remember my earlier reference to Forrest Gump? Well thanks to all those previous tournaments at the Prep, my ping-pong proficiency catapulted me to runner up to the champion of the 1st Armored Division in El Paso in 1972.

Another memorable Army moment involved a visit from a fellow alumnus: one **Fred Licciardi** who unexpectedly arrived in San Antonio. He exemplified the era's common appearance of true believers and advocates for peace, love and stopping the war.



Fortunately, it was a short visit since my superiors weren't appreciative nor willing to condone these ideas. We both knew how to stretch the truth in that spot.

Throughout my enlistment, that Passionist foundation of mental & spiritual discipline proved useful at several duty stations, especially when separated from my growing family.

Monterey, California, proved to be the best assignment. Fond memories include living within 1/2 mile of the coast and building sand castles with a toddler on pristine beaches. Carefree drives along coastal Highway 1 past Pebble Beach, Big Sur, Hearst Castle and San Bernardino, jamming to the Beach Boys and other surfer sounds.

A Civilian Once Again

Now out of the army, and because Kathy and I had endured seven moves in seven years, we jointly decided to return to our families in St. Louis, even though there were opportunities to live on either coast.

A decent position became available in commercial and industrial sales. This turned into a twenty-five-year career— successful, stable & rewarding, allowing our two children to grow up near most aunts, uncles, cousins, and especially both sets of grandparents. During the bubble of the eighties, we were able to relocate to a better suburb and much sought-after school district.

We did get to live the “good life.” Highlights included the ‘82 World Series. We attended all playoff and home games courtesy of a close relative employed with the Cards. With a steady advancement in the sales career, we travelled to the Caribbean a couple of times and all over these United States. Other associated perks encompassed generous expense accounts, sales conventions, gratuities through key account management, and bonuses.

From Darkness to Hope

But living “the good life” led to an unsuspected loss of self and spirituality which was compounded by a gigantic ego and dependence on too many mind-numbing substances, mainly alcohol.

Through the Grace of God, a door opened that allowed me to escape from a very dark side and gain entry into the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Since then (August 1985), as outlined in a certain Big Book, I've been given the gift of continuous sobriety. I learned this gift is fragile and can evaporate without warning if the maintenance of a fit spiritual condition isn't practiced daily. A level of sanity and trust came only after experiencing a real roller coaster of emotions. Using specific tools outlined in the twelve steps of AA, my faith, hope & self-worth were restored along with my marriage and relationship with my children.

Some Best Years Were Still to Come

During the 90's I acquired a passion for golf. It grew rapidly into a new addiction. I've hacked over rocky terrain in Metropolis, Wyoming, and on the gorgeous bentgrass courses of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Parenthood is one of marriage's greatest rewards. Both children advanced through high school into adulthood too quickly. Even though most fathers should look forward to walking their daughter down the aisle, when called on to do so, I froze. This strange voice kept convincing me not to take that first step and she would remain ours. Only with some gentle but firm persuasion was she able to convince me that it was OK ... to let go.

Since that February in 1993, her family has grown by three children. She and her husband were recently looking forward to becoming empty nesters, but that hope was dashed once the pandemic set in.

From our point of view, what they say about "grandkids being much easier to raise than your children" is absolutely true. Grandparents can choose to not take them home.

A mutual spirit of hard work has been key to building a healthy and solid marriage. Over the past 50+ years, there has been many a time when Kathy and I have been able to find a resolution even when a problem approached a nuclear level on the disagreement scale.

Music has always had a soothing effect on me. Our generation has experienced some of the most diverse and thought-provoking lyrics and melodies (except for heavy metal). "The Impossible Dream" to me was always an inspirational favorite. Now that retirement has happened, the quest to reach the unreachable star seems closer at hand.

The Joys of Prep Days Came Roaring Back

Some divine destiny seemed hard at work in 2014 when we attended a trivia night fundraiser. We arrived early and settled in at the end of a long table with some good neighbors. Just before the festivities began, the undeniable baritone voice of a certain **Mike Moll** filled the air as he arrived to join our group. He had no idea we had mutual friends.

Bingo, one thing led to another. I straight away attended the Louisville Reunion that year. This happened to kindle a long lost desire to reconnect and today has morphed to full participation in this Alumni group. Other reconnecting includes joining the elite gathering of Archangels (pronounced "Arch—as in the St. Louis Arch—Angels") in St. Louis along with the pleasure to help coordinate the 2017 and 2019 reunions.

My military service taught me the value of camaraderie. Being a Passionist Prepster Alumnus, I am experiencing that camaraderie—that closeness—at a new level.

In the event you have an opportunity to stop by the Prep in your travels, yet are unsure of the directions, contact me.

Sometime in mid July in this year of 2020, we are due to close on a new house in Wright City, only about 6 miles from Warrenton. Our door will remain open to the casual visitor who may be travelling through metro St. Louis.

One final quote from St. Paul of the Cross, *"If you correspond to the designs of God, He will make a saint of you. Be generous, and remember that we ought to walk in the footsteps of Jesus crucified."*

Our offer of an open door is an extension of "being generous." We can walk together down that long asphalt driveway in the footsteps of Jesus Crucified like we did as teenagers.

A Day at the Prep in Warrenton

By: Ray Alonzo



It was August 1966. School may have been back in session but it was still summer, as you could tell rushing out the gym door for afternoon rec. The air was like hitting a wall of heat after living in air-conditioned classrooms and halls all day.

Our swimming pool was huge, but probably not as large as I remember it. But then I had helped paint it in May the year before, so I feel like I may only be exaggerating the size a little bit. The water had been in the pool all summer so it wasn't cold by any means, but it was perfect as we jumped over the side and into its blue coolness. Later on, the apple cart

rattled its way out to the pool deck and we towed off to settle around our afternoon snack. Today it was those little cartons of milk that were always so good and cold. We sat on the brick wall on the south side of the pool in the shade of the maples, chomping on small red apples with the summer smell of chlorine and freshly cut grass enveloping us.

I loved getting back to the Prep. I mean, I had things to do and friends and all back in St. Louis, but friends out here were different. It didn't take a slap across the head from Sigmund Freud to see my allegiances had changed and this was truly home now. Like, the guys in my class were....

My reverie was interrupted as the chapel bells started chiming, which meant we had to get moving, scooting barefooted down the walk towards the locker room. It was 4:30 so there wasn't much time to play around and still be in chapel at 5:15—showered, dressed, shirt tucked in. (Nothing set one of the professed off like a student with his shirt untucked. It was like we were waving the flag of belligerent disobedience or something). What with hanging up swim shorts, showering, dressing and all, we barely made it, dashing in through the sacristy doors, hitting the holy water fountain to bless ourselves, genuflecting in front of the altar, then splitting off to our own pew.

The setting sunlight streamed in overhead through the chapel windows, reflecting off the beige walls in shimmering gold light. I knelt in place correctly, in one of those Passionist pews with its strange yet very comfortable tilt backwards to accommodate a half-kneel-half-sit position. I don't know who the genius was who ordered those pews, but I prayed for him almost every time I knelt.

It felt so good being in chapel each evening. After playing dodge ball during P.E. (which provided a completely legal way to vent any aggressive feelings harbored towards brothers), then swimming for an hour and a half, my muscles would be spent but really relaxed. On my back, my plaid short-sleeved "Leave it to Beaver" shirt with the fruit loop in the back might still be damp from a quick job of drying myself after a shower, but the shirt collar nestled around my neck, warm, soft and comforting.

One light illuminated the top of the head of the crucified Christ, two candles were lit on the altar, and I remember that the chapel always smelled of incense, whether it had been used recently or not.

We prayed to Mary, our mother, then to Jesus. (Mary first, so she could get her Son's attention for us).

When Father Gerard walked from behind us to the altar, genuflected, then turned left towards the refectory, we silently scampered out of our seats to make our way down the hall to dinner. It always amazed me how shiny the mop crew kept that hall. It glistened like it had just been hit by a spring rain.



We entered the refectory and broke ranks like a spreading tributary as we each quickly claimed the back of our assigned seats. We stood like statues as the professed walked in and took their places on the raised tables around us. Heads bowed, grace was said. We scraped wooden chairs out and sat.

We waited for the weekly assigned table mate to head back to the kitchen and bring out the food. Our table was all sophomores and juniors, seasoned vets in the culinary cutthroat cavalcade which was about to commence.

A senior had been assigned as reader and he began intoning the book selection.... “Day at Trinity,” by Lansing Lamont. I think that particular book was read at every evening meal for at least eight months. If we had been a bit older, the subject matter, the making of the first atomic bombs, might have fascinated us. As it was, we learned to tune it out and concentrate on our meals.

We saw table mate Bob carry a full tray of assorted serving bowls and platters, tight-roping his way back to our table as a squad of other servers split round him going to theirs. Larry had the end seat at our table and quickly grabbed the meat platter off Bob’s tray. He dumped it all on his plate, placing the empty platter back onto Bob’s tray. Jim, on the end seat on the other side of our table had seized the mashed potato bowl and scooped all of those onto his plate before laying the empty bowl back onto the tray as well. What might look to an outsider like some extremely self-centered behavior was actually a well-designed plan to optimize our chances for obtaining seconds on meat and potatoes. With the now empty platter and bowl, Bob dashed back to the kitchen, second in line in front of other returning servers whose tables obviously did not have our tables’ skill set.

Yes! I thought as I watched Bob reenter the kitchen in front of the others. Suppressing my excitement, I punched Brown on his right in the arm as we both grinned broadly. The whole table exchanged knowing glances as Bob returned with bowls of mashed potatoes and another platter of whatever that meat was today. Feast! Larry passed his plate to his left as Jim passed his to the right. Everyone took their portion and passed it on around the table, secure in the knowledge that we would each be having another plate full!

It's not like the enforced silence was a difficulty or even limited our dining routine. We had signals for everything. A shake of the wrist requested salt and pepper. A flattened, upturned palm was asking for the platter to be passed. Cupping the hands in a bowl shape usually meant, "May I have the vegetables?" And rapidly squeezing the hand into a fist meant please pass the ketchup. It was a pretty good system and you got used to it fairly quickly. I remember going home at Christmas freshman year after months of refectory training. I was telling my folks about some fascinating subject or other and mindlessly reached out in front of my teenage sister, rapidly squeezing my fist into a ball in front of her chest to request the ketchup. It took awhile to calm her down....

The Rector's hand bell rang. All action stopped. Forks paused on their way to mouths as everyone turned in his direction.

"In honor of the first day of practice for the long distance team.... You may let the talking begin"...

Cheers pelted the walls of the dining hall and conversation leaped to a manic pace as everyone began talking at once. This was a rare treat. It was usually only a special occasion like a visiting Bishop that got us speaking privileges, so this was Fr. Rector just being funny about the long-distance team. At least he was grinning like he thought he was funny. I couldn't tell. I never understood because old people always had a weird sense of humor.

After Fr. Director led us back to chapel, I stayed in my pew to think out the day. Life was pretty good. Except for Latin. It seemed like Latin was all built up like with building blocks and if you didn't get the first couple of blocks and understand the foundation, you had no chance of getting any better at understanding it. As my freshman year had been a complete academic disaster, I hadn't gotten those building blocks and understood nothing in the class. So I honestly didn't know nor cared how many pieces Gaul was divided into!

I drifted back to homeroom for study hall. An hour and a half until rec seemed like a lifetime. Then we only had like forty-five minutes of recreation for our continuous games of Risk, or pinochle, before the Great Silence and lights-out. It always put me in a panic trying to get more game in than was possible with the given time constraints.

Eventually, the Director came in and flashed the lights, a signal to put down the cards, replace the cue sticks, put the ping pong ball under the paddles and gather to kneel around the front door, once more in silence.



“This shirt was found in the laundry with no name tag. Does it belong to anyone?” He asked, swinging it over his head.

No one spoke or raised a hand. After a few seconds Herber reached out for it, turned it over in his hands, carefully checking out the label, inspecting it, trying to decide if it might have been his or not. Fr Gerard was not known for his saintly patience.... “I know.... Looks clean. Smells clean...” The room erupted in laughter and Herber immediately decided the shirt was not his.

“All right. Head on down.” We rose and walked to chapel. The Great Silence started now and it was pretty serious business. Infractions were not dealt with lightly and retribution was swift. So nobody talked, goofed around, or even smiled. A quick nightly prayer in chapel then back to the dorms for bed.

Near the dorm entrance and close to the restrooms, a candle was lit in front of the statue of Paul of the Cross where we each paused to nod good night to our patron saint.



Then we walked past aisle after aisle of bunk beds that seemed to stretch forever to the red exit light over the back door. Beds on one side, lockers on the other. The room was divided down the middle by a wall and both sides of the room were mirror images of each other with beds and lockers switched in position. The first floor dorms were for freshmen, while sophomores and juniors were assigned to the second floor. Seniors were far above us mere mortals and had their own building. Within ten minutes everyone was settled down and in bed. It was so quiet you could hear the owl that nested somewhere close in Fr Randal's Forest, calling out as the first brown leaves of Autumn skittered across the courtyard sidewalks outside our windows. The bells in the chapel spire rang out once more and day was done.



Ray Alonzo in front of the chapel,
many Augusts later.

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