

Br. James (Jim) Burke: One of the Denver Province's "true characters," Br. Jim Burke died on December 20 at St. Clement Redemptorist Mission Community in Liguori. He was 89, and had been on hospice care for several months.

Br. Jim was deeply devoted to Our Mother of Perpetual Help and lived a humble life of service, but he is best remembered for carefully researching and compiling a personal treasure trove of sports statistics – a comprehensive study spanning more than 100 years, written in his bold hand on loose leaf notebook paper.



James Joseph Burke was born on September 24, 1930 in St. Louis. His passion for sports – especially baseball — may have been influenced by his uncle, Jimmy Burke, who managed the St. Louis Cardinals in 1905 and the Browns from 1918-20.

Br. Jim professed temporary vows at Mount St. Clement's College in DeSoto, MO on February 2, 1958, and perpetual vows on February 2, 1962. He served in ministry for a total of 49 years: working in the laundries of Immaculate Conception Seminary in

Oconomowoc and Mount St. Clement's College for 11 years; and as a parish sacristan for 39 years. Although he was briefly assigned at St. Joseph Parish in Denver and St. Alphonsus Parish in Davenport, IA, he racked up 37 years at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Redemptorist Parish in Kansas City.

He was known well beyond the parish boundary as the Redemptorist who pedaled a bicycle throughout Kansas City. In addition to serving as sacristan, Br. Jim led weekly Perpetual Help devotions in his deep, booming voice for decades. He loved Motown music, and instilled a sense of safety roaming the property like a parish watchdog.

"He was an absolute joy, and very dear to us," said Pat McDonald, parish secretary. "He was a virtual walking encyclopedia of sports statistics and trends. He also had an affinity for weather, and could spout off the average temperature in major cities across the country." Confreres tried, but rarely stumped him, on the facts.

Fr. Jim Shea, former Provincial Superior who was stationed with him in Davenport and Kansas City, quips that Br. Jim is noted for having gone to more universities than any other Redemptorist: for decades, he spent his entire vacation in libraries, researching statistics. In 1998, it was reported that he had combed through files at 80 colleges, 67 public libraries and 26 newspapers in every major city of the country. He never thought to make hotel reservations, he would knock on the door of a local rectory and asked for a place to stay while he was in town.

Failing health necessitated Br. Jim's move to Liguori in 2007, where his recall of statistics continued to entertain his confreres and amazed the staff, who called him "Rain Man." Family and friends joined confreres in Liguori to celebrate his life on December 23, and Br. Jim was interred at the Liguori cemetery on Christmas Eve.

May Br. Jim rest in the eternal peace of the Redeemer. *(Submitted by Kristine Stremel; with contributions from Br. Gerry Patin, Fr. Jim Shea, and Pat McDonald)*