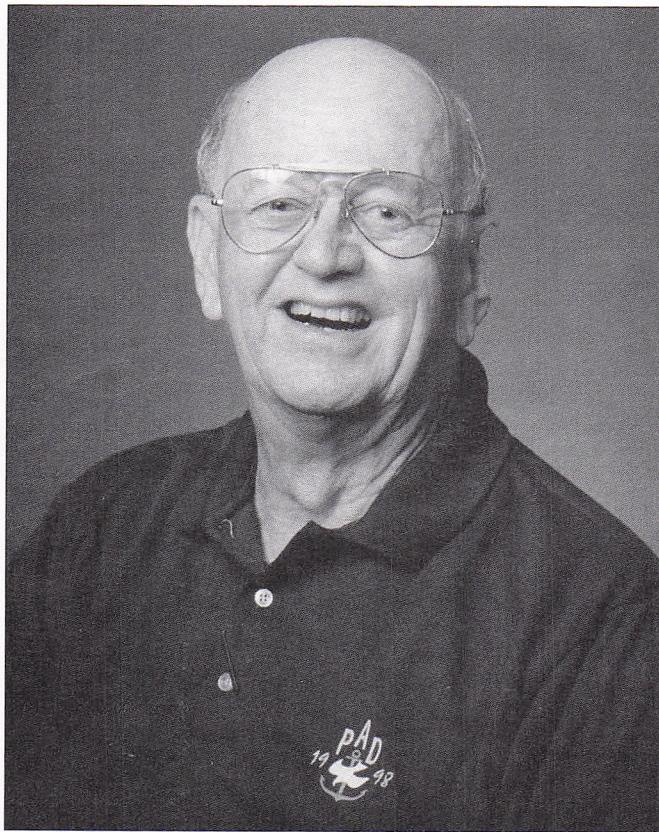


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Brother John Hugh McLinden, S.D.B. (1926-2001)



Brother John H. McLinden

On January 16, 2001 our Community sadly lost one of its most beloved confreres, Brother John McLinden. He entered eternal life at 9:00 am at St. Francis Medical Center in Lynwood, California. He was 74 years old. A funeral was celebrated on January 20 at 10:00 am in the chapel of St. John Bosco in Bellflower, California, presided over by Fr. Nick Reina, provincial, who was surrounded by a dozen Salesian priests and attended by confreres, Salesian Sisters, a large number of members of the Salesian family, relatives, and friends.

In his last will he had asked that the Rosary be said and that the Mass be that of the Resurrection and the theme be “Let the children come to me.” Something of that came through in the Gospel read at the Mass to show that we need a child-like dependence on the Lord. It was a very joyful event with music provided by Victor Wheeler of the class of '93 of St. John Bosco High School.

“Jack” as he was popularly known, was born on January 25th, 1926 in Hawthorne, California, with Daniel McLinden his father and Anna Mary Hinckley his mother. He was one of five brothers. His first contact with the Salesians was at St. Patrick Parish in Los Angeles on September 1st, 1934, introduced to the Salesians by his uncle, William. He later learned that a Salesian school in Bellflower was opening its



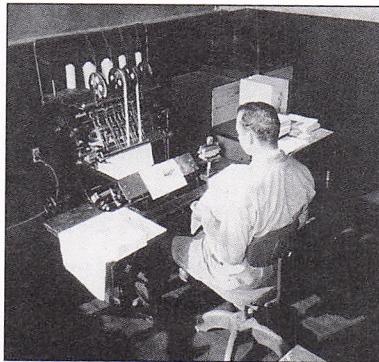
St. John Bosco School entrance in 1940

doors in 1940. His mother, now a widow, decided to send her boys to the school where the students could board. And so Jack was in the first group of students to attend St. John Bosco school when the school opened in 1940. After two years with the Salesians he felt the calling to religious life.

Let me pick up the story from the homily which Fr. Tom Prendiville preached at the funeral Mass. “I want to begin with 1940. It was right here at St. John Bosco in 1940 that with Br. Jack and his late brother, Fr. James McLinden, Roger Luna sitting here, and Ralph Murphy, too sick in San Francisco to come, and I, joined the pioneer class of 40 students opening the school. Ralph and I were day students, while Jack, his brother Jim and Roger were boarders.... But the emphatic point I want to make is those two years that Jack spent in this environment became the defining experience of his life. Throughout his life he looked back at those first two years here as a model of his Salesian life...Obviously all five of us were affected to some extent by those memories, but Jack carried them as no other

memory.... It was the provincial at that time, Fr. Ambrose Rossi, who approached each of us. He called us aside, each one separately, and with great subtlety, great tact, and great delicacy, looked us each in the eye and said: 'Why don't you become a Salesian?' And that is how it happened.

"Jack, Ralph Murphy and I became Salesians in 1946. Jim McLinden and Roger Luna followed in 1947."

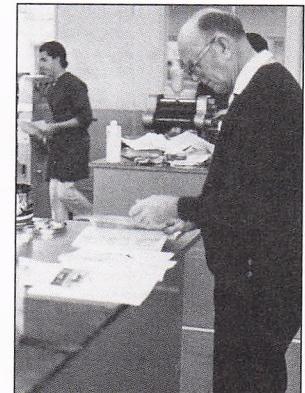


Jack in the Richmond printshop

After the novitiate, Jack continued his studies for two years in the brother training program at Don Bosco College, Newton, New Jersey and then went to Paterson, NJ, to study printing for two years (He had learned the beginnings of the printing trade while in high school in Richmond.) After his studies at Don Bosco Technical School in Paterson, he returned to Richmond for more training in printing and when Bosco Tech in Rosemead opened in 1955 he was assigned there and stayed for 31 years in

the printing department. 31 years teaching printing and sharing his life with the students.

Many of his former students are leaders in the Southern California graphic industry.

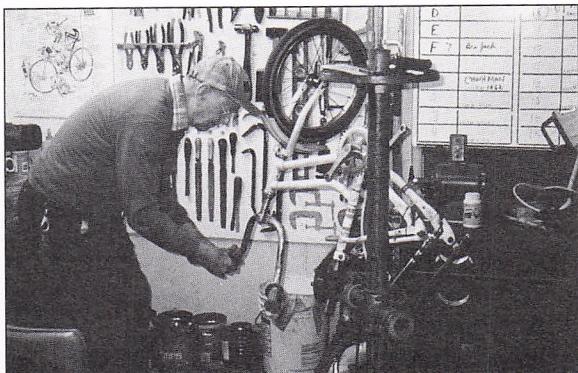


In the photolithography department at Don Bosco Tech

A debilitating stroke in the mid 1980s deprived Brother Jack of the ability to speak. The discovery soon after that he had cancer was equally devastating.

His Apostolic Work

Years of therapy and great effort allowed him to slowly regain some of his ability to speak, but he never had the facility that had characterized the witty Br. Jack before the stroke. Still, he was resourceful: he found other ways to communicate. He was unable to return to the demanding schedule of the technical school, but spent the next ten years working with young people discerning a religious vocation at De Sales Hall in Bellflower. Many found in him a welcoming and gentle presence that assured them in their own struggles. They attribute their own vocation to Br. Jack's example and guidance.



Jack in his bicycle repair shop at De Sales Hall

He also kept busy repairing bicycles to be sent to the Salesian mission in Sierra Leone and helping Fr. Louis Masoero with the “Food Distribution program” for the needy. They also brought food to the Little Sisters of the Poor, the Sisters of Charity, the novices of Mother Teresa and the Salesian Boys and Girls Club in East Los Angeles. When Fr. Louie became an invalid, Jack carried on the “program” and was a constant companion and right-hand for Fr. Louie. After the death of Fr. Louie, Jack continued to distribute food until he was no longer physically able to do so.

He enjoyed bicycle trips. And the lunches he prepared for these outings were something to behold! How he could get a complete meal stuffed into bicycle panniers was a credit to his ingenuity.

The last end

In the spring of 2000 the cancer returned. The superiors thought it best that he live at St. John Bosco High School where he could

be better taken care of. He went through a series of treatments, but these seemed to have no effect. His health deteriorated rapidly just before Christmas. In the announcement that came from his 8th grade classmate Fr. Tom Prendiville, “At 9:00 this morning, Br. Jack McLinden, model of faithfulness, rendered his gentle soul to God”.

Father Tom concluded his eulogy by saying that Br. Jack was a team player. “He had no interest in being in charge of things, but he loved to pitch in and offer his skills and energy to every project. We will remember him for his optimism and smiling way of giving to others. He was the happiest when he was making other people happy.” His favorite phrase was “How sweet it is.”

Two testimonies

One is from **Fr. Harry Rasmussen**, Br. Jack’s former provincial, writing from Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Surrey, Canada.

“My prayers and thoughts are very much with you as you prepare a fitting farewell for a wonderful Salesian. Jack was everybody’s friend and everybody’s favorite. He was cheerful, hard working, optimistic, always of service and ever fun-loving. He was a man of many talents. His technical skills were legendary, but his people-skills even more outstanding. We’ll all miss the good times we had with him. Jack was a “family man” and a community man.

I offer the sacrifice of being so far away and unable to attend his services for his eternal repose and for vocations—especially to the Salesian brotherhood. May we never forget his generous availability, and may Jack obtain for us, through Our Lady's intercession, the grace to grow and persevere in our Salesian calling. And may God bless and reward the Salesians of St. John Bosco Community for being there for Jack when he most needed you.

Fr. Pascual Chavez, SDB, Superior General of the Salesians, was in charge of the InterAmerica Region when he sent his condolences:

Dear confreres of the San Francisco Province:

This morning I got the news about Brother Jack's death. It is very sad news and at the same time a very happy one! I had the privilege of sharing with him during my stay at St. John Bosco, Bellflower, his alma mater, even visiting him during his recovering in the hospital. I was edified by his wonderful human quality, for his strong Christian faith, and for his love of Don Bosco and of the Congregation. He was so quiet, so lovely, so brave, so charming, so fraternal, that I made up my mind to talk with him every day while I was there visiting. Years before I had met his brother Jim when he was here at the Generalate and he was also a happy and cheerful man. What

wonderful Salesians! God bless both of them giving them life everlasting filled with joy.

It is a big loss to the Province and for the St. John Bosco Community, but Don Bosco used to say that a death of a confrere like this one is an honor and a blessing for the Congregation. May God give the Province many and good vocations of coadjutors like Brother Jack!

The morning after the funeral Mass his body was flown to Richmond, California for the Mass of Burial, presided over by Fr. Nick Reina, provincial, and attended by Salesians and friends. He was buried in the Salesian Cemetery awaiting with the other confreres the final resurrection.

After almost a year we are still talking about Br. Jack. We miss him. From heaven, his new home he must console us all with words like these:

“I am home in Heaven, dear ones:
Oh, so happy and so bright

There is perfect joy and beauty
In this everlasting light.
All the pain and grief is over,
Every restless tossing passed:
I am now at peace forever,
Safely home in Heaven at last.”

The Salesian Community of St. John Bosco, Bellflower, California.

Eulogy of Fr. Thomas Prendiville at Br. Jack McLinden's Funeral Mass in Bellflower.

This Gospel passage has been chosen because it reflects a thought that Bro. Jack suggested for his own funeral. In the province we ask each Salesian to reflect on his own death and burial and Jack, years ago, suggested the Gospel sentence: "Let the little children come to me." Something of that comes through in this Gospel that we need a child-like dependence on the Lord.

I want to begin with 1940. It was right here at St. John Bosco in 1940 that with Br. Jack and his late brother, Fr. James McLinden, Roger Luna, sitting here, and Ralph Murphy, too sick in San Francisco to come, we joined for the first day of class at St. John Bosco. Ralph and I were day students; Jack, his brother James, and Roger Luna were boarders. Of course, this chapel was not here where we are gathered, for only the structure to the left of the entrance to the school was constructed at that time.

We did not know the term: Oratorian Model in those days but in a very real sense this place became home and school and parish and playground for Jack. For the boarders it was a seven day week, not a five day week, and the Salesians and students lived and studied and prayed and played together. The young Salesians were always present to the kids. They were (at the time) Br. Frank Ribotta, who died in 1998; Br. Arthur

Grisetti who died in San Francisco in 1995 and Br. Lucian Lomello who joined us for the second semester of that first year. Fr. Lucian is now at White Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles.

Not to forget the Director Ernest Giovannini, the vice director, George Hacker, and the confessor, Joseph Castagnotto.

But the emphatic point I want to make is those two years that Jack spent in this environment became the defining experience of his life. Clearly the five of us were affected by that first year but for Jack, I repeat, it was the defining experience of his life. Throughout his life he looked back at those first two years here as the model of his Salesian life: what it means to live and work together. Now as time went on, Jack may have idealized his image, his memory of those days, but that experience of Salesian family, priests and brothers and students living together never left him. Throughout his life he looked back on that experience as the model he wanted again. Obviously, the five of us were affected to some extent but that memory carried Jack as no other memory.

You know it was the Provincial, at that time, who approached each of us Bro. Jack, his brother Jim, Ralph Murphy, Roger Luna, and me. He called us aside, each one separately, and with great subtlety, great tact, and great delicacy, looked us each in the eye and said, "Why don't you become a Salesian?"

And that is how it happened.

Jack and Ralph Murphy and I became Salesians in 1946. Jim McLinden and Roger Luna followed in 1947.

Jack continued his studies for a couple years in Newton, NJ, and then went to Paterson to study printing for two years and then more training in printing in Richmond, California and when Bosco Tech in Rosemead opened he was assigned there and stayed for 31 years in the printing department. 31 years teaching printing and sharing his life with his students.

What do we learn from Br. Jack?

First, to be a faithful disciple of the Lord and a faithful Salesian.

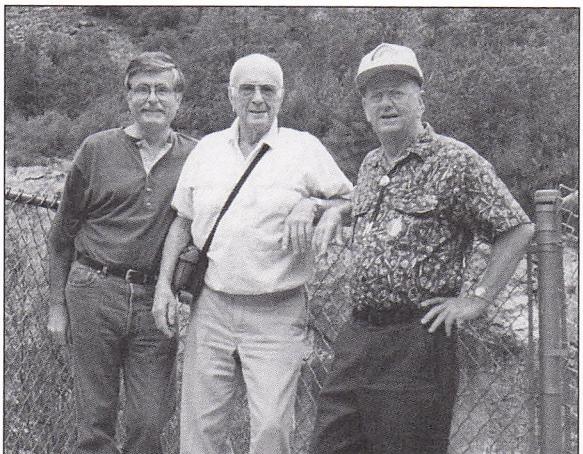
Jack was always happy and content in whatever assignment, whatever community he was assigned to. Faithful, loyal, and strong in his attachment to Don Bosco and the apostolate to the young. Faithful for 31 years to his love for young people.

Secondly, what stood out in Jack when he was active: Jack was a team player.

Academic advancement was not for Jack. Power, authority, position were not important for him.

To be part of a group and offering his work and talents to further the group was his life. The loyal member of a school de-

partment: Jack with his mechanical bent would repair any press or instrument in the printing shop regardless of the gears or mechanism involved. His contribution to the group. Other Salesians could lead the community but Jack, the team player, was always there willing to assist in any way. An outing to Death Valley in those days meant that Jack would organize the camp site and keep everything in order while the rest of us were flitting around taking in the sights.



(l to r) Joe Lockwood, Frank Bracchi and Jack on one of the Bosco Tech community outings.

Thirdly, we learn from Jack to accept whatever condition of life Providence sends us. With a heart attack and with a stroke Jack could not continue his teaching. Words did not come. But Jack was still the team player. He had to help. And two examples stand out: With Fr. Louis, his friend and sometime mentor, he began an apostolate of collecting food and taking it to the poor and needy. Even after Fr. Louis could not continue this work, Jack, alone, continued this apostolate of helping others who assisted the poor.

The other example: Jack could not go to the missions but, the team player, he could help those working in the missions. With his mechanical skill he repaired who knows how many broken down bicycles which he presented to Br. Michael Herbers for shipment to the mission in Sierra Leone. In fact, there are a number of these repaired bicycles still waiting for Br. Mike to ship to the missions.

And lastly, one can only admire and hope to imitate his optimism and patience in suffering. In his twilight years he had only words of gratitude for the kindness shown to him in this community and by others. His ability to smile through his pain can only be the result of years of giving for others.

I cannot conclude without speaking of Jack's life before 1940. I said 1940 was the defining experience of his life. But there was life before 1940. And that life was Mrs. Mac, his mother. Mrs. Mac found herself a widow at an early age with five young, energetic boys tearing up the house. But we who knew Mrs. Mac know who was in charge. Mrs. Mac took a job at the post office to take care of her family. She had to acquire an interest in baseball to be a part of the life of her sons. She would pile them all into her little car on the weekends and take them to the Hollywood Stars when they were playing. Years before the Dodgers came to Los Angeles.

The marvelous qualities we find in Jack came, without a doubt, from Mrs. Mac.

She was the valiant, faithful mother. She accepted whatever life sent her. She was always in good humor, generous, willing to help.

And so was Jack.

We thank Mrs. Mac for giving sons to religious life.

We pray that Jack is now enjoying the heavenly banquet prepared for the faithful.

The McLindens were part of St. John Bosco School, Bellflower, and the Salesians from 1940 to 2002



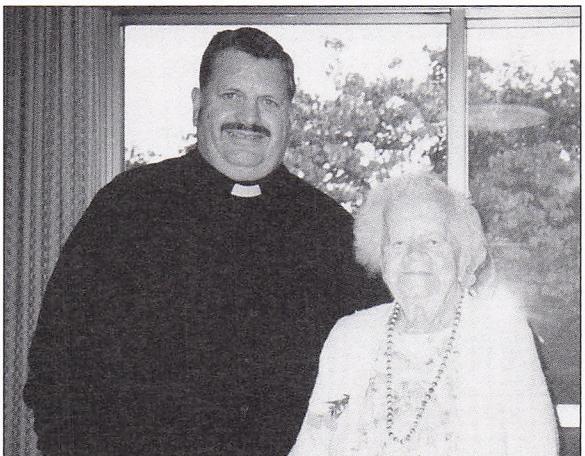
Jack's Mother, "Mrs. Mac" volunteered in the office at Don Bosco Technical School, Rosemead, for 30 years.



Jack, with his brother, Jim (l) and Fr. Louis in Venice. Jim was working in the Generalate in Rome at the time. He died shortly after this photo in Japan, where he had spent most of his life, of cancer.



Dan, Joe and Jack visiting Jim in Tokyo in 1990.



Jim and Mom in 1985.



The McLinden brothers with Fr. Frank Nakagaki, SDB, (in the wheelchair) who was an seminarian in Richmond in the late 1940s.

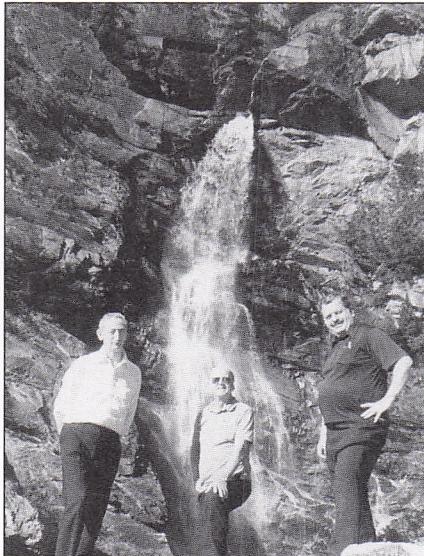
Br. Jack's 50th Anniversary as a Salesian



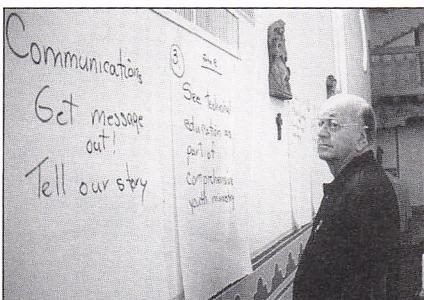
Celebration of Br. Jack's 50th anniversary of religious profession, Sept. 15, 1996 at De Sales Hall, Bellflower. Above, Jerry Bonjean witnessing his renewal of vows, and below Jack chatting with Br. Coletto.



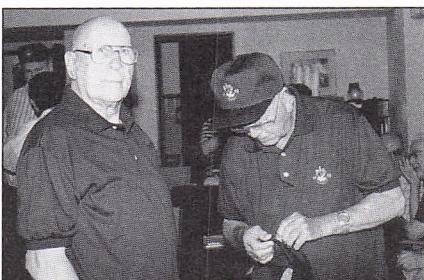
Tom Prendiville and Ralph Murphy join Jack for a photo after their joint celebration of their 50th religious profession.



Br. Ben Natoli (l) Jack and Jim visit Yosemite National Park.



Pondering at PAD IV, San Juan Bautista.



Always ready with a helping hand, here with Anthony DiFalco.

Brother John Hugh McLinden, SDB

Born: Hawthorne, California
January 25, 1926

First Profession: Newton, New Jersey
September 8, 1946

Perpetual Profession: San Francisco, California
June 24, 1952

Died: Lynwood, California
January 16, 2001



Salesians of St. John Bosco

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