



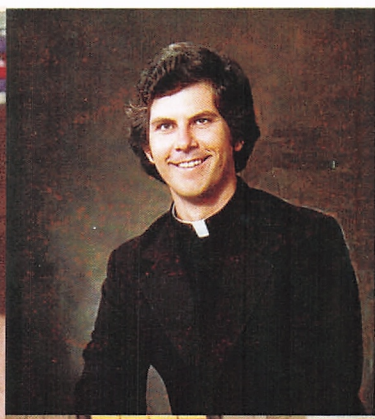
In Prayerful Memory of

REVEREND DOCTOR JONATHAN D. PARKS, SDB

September 26, 1949 - July 11, 2010

First Profession – August 15, 1969

Ordained May 19, 1978



DATA FOR THE NECROLOGY

JONATHAN DAVID PARKS

Born in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, September 26, 1949

Professed August 15, 1969 Ordained May 19, 1978

Died July 11, 2010 Age 60

July 11, 2011

Dear Confreres,

It is one year since the death of Fr. Jonathan Parks, SDB who was the Pastor of St. Rosalie Parish in Harvey, Louisiana. He had been appointed in 2004, and died at the helm of Salesian leadership on July 11, 2010.

In a memorial letter, many details are included about the life and ministry of a Salesian who goes to his eternal reward in Paradise. I would like to incorporate many testimonies of the Salesians of the Westbank, the parish community, and personal insights of the life of Fr. Jon. He had a relatively short Salesian life in his unexpected death at 60 years of age. A very rare blood disease of Amyloidosis, which worked aggressively throughout his bodily systems, ultimately caused his death. What was diagnosed in late March of 2010 claimed his life in early July of the same year. Fr. Jon had a determined attitude of being there for his parishioners, his Salesian duties, extra work in the Archdiocesan leadership and being there for his family. He moved always forward, even though there were some major setbacks in his four month battle. Every effort and resource was being used to overcome his medical problems because he wanted to return to his people and parish. Of all the assignments Fr. Jonathan had in Salesian ministry, being Pastor of St. Rosalie, being back on the Westbank of New Orleans where he was born and raised, he came to full stature and came into full bloom of his Salesian vocation as a son of St. John Bosco. Fr. Jonathan was definitely a go-to person. You could count on him to see a challenge right through to the end. Many material and spiritual accomplishments were achieved in a short period of six years. Perhaps it was a consuming effort that a candle give light – a Paschal burning sacrifice to an area and people that he was very much

connected with.

In looking over our booklet, it gives only a glance of the many untold stories of Fr. Jon. There are some in the parish of St. Rosalie that are putting together a book of stories, insights and witnessing the short life of a good and active Salesian priest.

The suddenness of the passing of Fr. Jon makes all of us pause and reflect, that we who remain in our various Salesian works and activities, seek to connect with a person that God has chosen to work in the vineyard and to achieve the crown of good and faithful servant.

Fr. Jonathan, rest well and know your work carries on by the thousands of people who have called you a friend and who miss you very much.

Fr. James McKenna, SDB
Director



A Message from Fr. Provincial

On July 15, 2010 Fr. Thomas Dunne wrote the following:

Life is changed, not ended

Yesterday the Salesian community in Marrero, the province of St. Philip, the parish of St. Rosalie, and the Archdiocese of New Orleans bade farewell to our confrere and brother, Fr. Jonathan Parks. This was my first Salesian funeral as provincial. Conflicts caused by travel to meetings in foreign countries prevented me from participating in the province celebrations for Fr. Tyminski, Bro. Cauda and Bro. Zito.

The funeral of Fr. Jonathan Parks fulfilled what our Constitution (#54) indicates with regard to the death of a Salesian. The confreres of our Louisiana community gathered around Fr. Jonathan with prayerful and loving support throughout his illness, especially during the last week of suffering. In his community, Fr. Jon experienced the promise of Don Bosco to his dying Salesians: “When the hour comes for him to bring his consecrated life to its highest fulfillment, his brothers help him to enter fully into Christ’s paschal mystery” (C. 54a).

During the funeral liturgy I was struck at how this Constitution was fulfilled not only by the Salesian community but also by the entire Westbank community as well. The funeral liturgy took place in the Alario Center, a multi-purpose building that could house up to 2,500 people. This hall was filled with Salesians from the community and province, parishioners, students, teenagers, toddlers, parish staff, Shaw alumni, friends, archdiocesan priests, Archbishop Gregory Aymond and his auxiliary Bishop Shelton Fabre. This assembly came together to celebrate the life and death of a Salesian, a priest, an educator, a colleague, and a friend. Fr. Jonathan had entered the

life-journey of all these people. At the time of his death, they came together to accompany him on his way to the Father.

This funeral celebration gave communal form to the promise Don Bosco made to his Salesians at the time of death: “Death for the Salesian is made bright by the hope of entering into the joy of his Lord, and when it happens that a Salesian dies working for souls, the Congregation has won a great triumph” (C. 54b).

The celebration was characterized by the child-like joy that Fr. Jonathan brought to St. Rosalie Parish, the Salesian community, and the Parks family. Throughout the ceremony, photos of Fr. Jon in “Sponge Bob” attire and enjoying silly games with the children enlivened the sadness of the event with the hope of entering eternal joy with God in heaven.

As we move on in the life of our province, we must come to a few realizations. The death of Fr. Jonathan Parks has left our province lessened because of his loss. For this we grieve. At the same time, we firmly believe that his passing will have a lasting effect on our communities and province members. “The memory of departed confreres unites, ‘in a love that will not pass away,’ those who are still pilgrims with those who are already resting in Christ” (C. 54c). It is our prayer that the passing of Fr. Jonathan Parks will help unite in love the members of our province and the greater Salesian Family for the sake of God’s Kingdom, especially the young most in need.

As I was going through this funeral experience, I remember remarking how it was a Jonathan Parks-type of experience *par excellence*. In many ways, Fr. Jon’s assignment as pastor in St. Rosalie Parish was a blessing for his development as a Salesian and a person. During the years that he served as pastor of this parish community, his gifts and his person flourished as if they had finally found their home.

In my comments at the end of Mass, I thanked the parishioners

of St. Rosalie and the 35 archdiocesan priests present (mostly colleagues of Fr. Jon on archdiocesan boards and commissions) for drawing out the very best from Fr. Jonathan during his service at St. Rosalie. At the same time, I thanked his Salesian confreres for helping Jonathan fulfill what he thought to be the greatest blessing of his life: being professed as a member of the Salesians of Don Bosco.

In his last days, Fr. Jonathan Parks confidently proclaimed that he was going home to his Father. During this period after his death, we join together in carrying on his deathbed prayers for vocations to the Salesian and priestly life.

For us who believe, life is changed, not ended.



**Homily at the Funeral Mass of
Fr. Jonathan Parks, SDB
Alario Center, Westwego, LA
July 14, 2010 by Fr. Tom Ruekert, SDB**

When the fax arrived on Tuesday, July 6, stating that Fr. Jonathan Parks had only a few hours to live, it was like the shot that was heard around the world, around the West Bank, around the Salesian Province. There was shock and dismay. True, everyone knew he had a rare mysterious disease call Amyloidosis. But we heard that it was ‘treatable’ and ‘manageable’. He seemed to recover – May 24th on the feast of Mary Help of Christians, a new analysis rendered Hope; he recovered from the Chicken Pox.”

But, then, at the beginning of the last week, the end was imminent and Fr. Jon and his two families: 1. His biological family, and 2. His Salesian family were preparing spiritually, mentally, emotionally and practically for his transition from this life to eternal life.

There are so many stories, so many things that could be said about Fr. Jonathan Parks – because he was so unique and dynamic, so full of life. I would just like to try to underscore four of his characteristics that have had a profound influence on me: His love of family, His love of people, His cheerfulness and His decisive and confident leadership.

Just a few days before he went into unconsciousness he called our Provincial Fr. Tom Dunne:

a.) to say goodbye

b.) to let him and all of us know that he was ready to go to the Father; and

c.) to let us know that he was offering his suffering up for vocations to the religious life and priesthood. (As you know, he worked as one of our Vocation Recruiters or Directors of our Province.)

And, so here we are at the Alario Center to bid him farewell and to pray for him and his two families. When one of our confreres up North heard his funeral would take place in the Alario Center, he asked, ‘What’s in the Alario Center?’ I told him it was a huge Convention Center in Westwego, which housed graduations, sports activities, large local community events and parties. The confrere responded: “Oh! Jonathan would definitely be pleased.”

First, Fr. Jon placed a definite priority on Family. After God, who indeed is a family of three persons, Jon placed his biological family first.

In Luke’s Gospel we read: “When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth, where Jesus grew strong and was filled with wisdom.” We could change the words from Nazareth to Gretna, where Jon had his roots and never forgot them. Jesus was a family man, 30 years of His life – spent at Home!

In our Salesian Book of Regulations, we read: “The Salesian who has left home to follow Christ loses none of his love for his relatives, especially his parents; he gives it expression by his prayers, letters and visits.” And he remembered how Jonathan never failed to give “Expression,” abundant “Expression” to his love for his family. He would end his daily phone calls to family with the words: “Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Love Ya.”

In many ways, Jonathan was the HUB, the control coordinator of so many family get-togethers, parties, celebrations. He would even arrange the food – mainly, “Batato” Salad, Finger Sandwiches and Red Beans and Rice.

One day he came and asked to have a family gathering in the Parish Center on a Sunday. I reminded him that ordinarily we don’t have private family groups use the center, that it would certainly be

okay, since Jonathan was an associate priest, Salesian, etc. I allowed it. I asked him to keep it LOW KEY (can you imagine Fr. Jon doing anything Low Key?) “Oh no problem” Jon replied. Then at about 10:30a.m. one of those inflatable tent-like bubble things arrived and was blown up! Later in the day a Choo-Choo train came down 2nd Avenue with special rides for the kids, tooting its horn, with David Woledge, a Shaw alumnus, driving the train.

His love for family was always tangible, palpable, huggable, real. You felt his love for his family. Don Bosco said: “It’s not enough to love the kids; they must feel loved.” Fr. Jon made you feel loved.

And if “they” had a problem, it was Fr. Jon’s problem too, and he would roll up his sleeves and help fix it.

Secondly, his love for family spilled over in his tangible, palpable, genuine love for others.

Jonathan loved people! He was an off-the-wall extrovert. He loved clowning with kids. He loved making them and others laugh. He was energized by large gatherings – parties, festivities, social events – Alario Center-like events. And just as he would go out of his way for his biological family, so, too, he would go out of his way for his parish family and others.

I recall one day back in 1975 when Jon was “just” a Brother. Brother Jon visited Shaw and looked up some former students he had taught. He knocks on the door of my room at 11:00 p.m. and says. “Hey Fr. Tom” how would you like to hear some confessions?” I said “sure – why not?”. And so I walked up and down the Shaw parking lot hearing the confessions of 7 or 8 guys at 11:00 p.m. to midnight.

Fr. Jim Heuser, our former Provincial writes: “New Orleans gave us Salesians a gift in Father Jonathan, with his strong sense of family and friendship, and an effusive and joyful Southern style. It blended well with the warm relational approach advocated by Don Bosco.”

Jonathan's love for others was expressed in and through "hospitality" – another key word to associate with him. He was the epitome of Southern hospitality. He volunteered to be the person in charge of hospitality for an educator's convention held in a New Orleans hotel. Of course, elicited the help of friends like, Patsy Heiden and Karen Perque. Once he told me: "Tom, hospitality is really important." Hospitality was in his veins.

The third characteristic of Fr. Jon that I think was outstanding was his outstanding, energetic cheerfulness.

We read in Scripture: "God loves the cheerful giver." And we read in our Salesian Constitutions, that one of the components of our Salesian spirit or chrism is optimism and joy. C.#17 states: "Because he is a herald of the Good News, the Salesian is always cheerful. He radiates this joy and is able to live a Christian and festive way of life: "Let us serve the Lord in holy joy." Now doesn't that sound like a personality profile of Fr. Jonathan! When I think of Fr. Jonathan's tremendous spirit of cheerfulness, joy and optimism, I think of adjectives such as:

Flamboyant – We are familiar with flambeau carriers in the Mardi Gras parades! Well, Fr. Jon, was always on Fire – Fueled up – Raring to go. One of the definitions in Webster is: "given to dashing display."

Another word I think of when I think of Jonathan is **Effervescent** – Webster describes this as: to bubble forth; to show liveliness; Effervescence = Exhilaration.

A third and simpler word is **Sparkle**. Fr. Jon brought sparkle to people's lives.

He loved to teach me how to speak "Westbankese":

1. No it's not Pecan, it's "Becon"
2. No it's not the kitchen "sink" it is the kitchen "zink"; you wash dishes in the "zink."

3. And when he went food shopping, he'd say: "Well, I'm going to make groceries."

The fourth characteristics of Fr. Jon is that of this **Confident Leadership**:

He loved challenges.

He loved responsibility:

- For being a High School Principal; running a school

- For planning a Vocation Convention and ordering palates of Don Bosco playing cards.

- For building a new Middle School and buying up properties.

- For ordering a new monstrance or new statues – and having the same statue blessed three times by three different dignitaries.

- For being on the Presbyteral Council, and other Boards.

- For traveling around the Province with his Continental Platinum Membership Card. Whenever he traveled Coach he'd always ask for a "Complimentary Upgrade" to First Class. At one of his birthday parties, we typed up a certificate to him – it read: "Perpetual Complimentary Upgrade for Doctor Jonathan Parks."

When Jesus called Peter, He told him to "Feed His Sheep." At his ordination Fr. Jon embraced this leadership role and did it very effectively.

Our general chapter #24 says this "Every Salesian (SDB) is an animator, and strives to fulfill the task more efficiently." Fr. Jon was certainly a dynamic animator in everything he undertook.

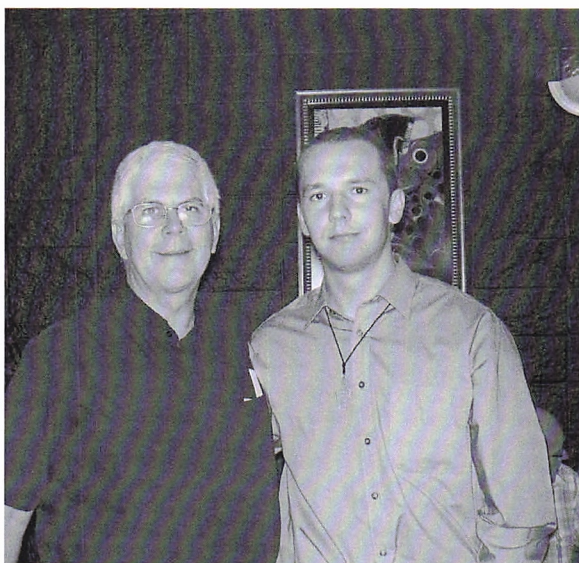
Years ago there was a company that manufactured a clothing product with the words "No Fear" on it. (I had a cap that had the words: No Fear.)

In life and in death Fr. Jon's faith in God, love for family, love for people, effervescing cheerfulness and dynamic animating leadership,

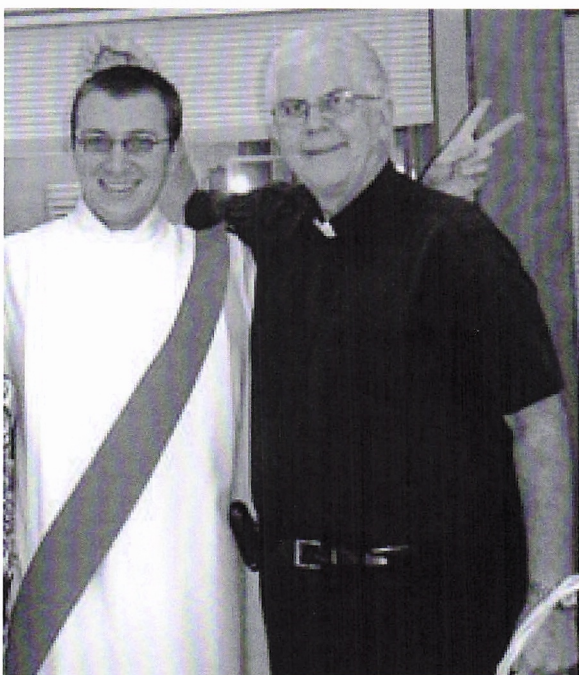
enabled him to live life to the fullest, like no one else, with No Fear. Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord...

Fr. Jonathan was always eager to welcome young future Salesian priests to share with them his knowledge.

Top photo, Brother Tomasz Hawrylewicz with Fr. Jonathan. Brother Tomasz came to St. Rosalie from Poland, spent the summer with Jonathan and the children. He returned home to complete his studies and returned to St. Rosalie following his ordination to say Mass.



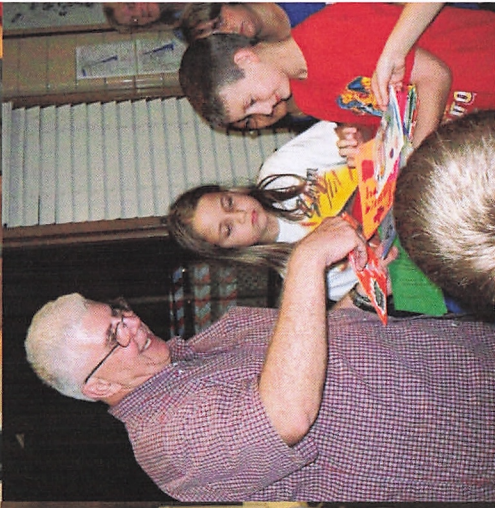
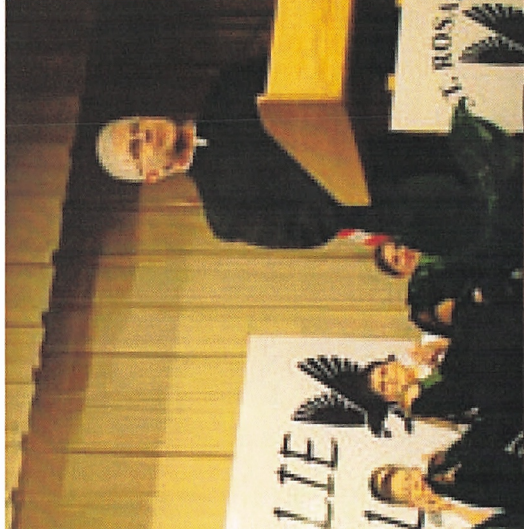
Bottom photo, Deacon Karol Kulpa, also from Poland, enjoyed a summer at St. Rosalie working with Fr. Jon and the children of the parish before returning to Poland for his ordination.





Father Jonathan
Always with
children!





By Father Michael Mendl, SDB

Father Jonathan David Parks, SDB, pastor of St. Rosalie Catholic Church in Harvey, LA, since 2004, died on July 11 at West Jefferson Medical Center in Marrero, LA, after a months-long illness. He was 60.

Father Parks, the son of Charles and Elaine Weicks Parks, was born in New Orleans on September 26, 1949, and raised in Gretna, Louisiana, where the family attended St. Joseph's Church.

Father Parks was introduced to the Salesians when he attended Archbishop Shaw High School in Marrero, where he was in the second graduating class (1967). Strongly influenced by the Salesians who taught him, especially Father Paul Avallone, the school's first director and principal, he entered Don Bosco Seminary in Newton, N.J., where he professed his first vows as a Salesian on August 15, 1969.

He earned a Bachelor's degree from Don Bosco College in Newton in 1972 and was assigned as a teacher at Archbishop Shaw High School for two years; he taught U.S. history and religion.

In 1974 he enrolled in the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, for theological studies. He earned a M.Div. and was ordained to the priesthood on May 19, 1978, in Columbus. After ordination he served young people and the Salesians as a teacher and school administrator in Cedar Lake, Ind. (1978-1979), Ramsey, N.J. (1979-1980 and 1988-1990), Tampa (1983-1988), Don Bosco Tech, Boston (1980-1983), and St. Dominic Savio High School, East Boston (1990-1993, 2001-2004).

After earning a doctorate in educational administration/superintendency at Boston College in 1996, he was appointed superintendent of schools for the Salesians' Eastern U.S. Province in 1999 and served until 2004. Father Parks also was vocation director

for the Salesians from 1983 to 1984 and 1993 to 1996, and associate pastor of St. Rosalie Church from 1996 to 2001.

He was a frequent speaker at the National Catholic Education Association, and member of various boards including the National Religious Vocation Conference, and Cafe Hope in Marrero, La. He was a member of the presbyteral council of the Archdiocese of New Orleans and a consultant to the Office of Education of the archdiocese.

Father Parks is survived by his twin brother Joseph Anthony Parks of Pineville, LA; his younger brother Kenneth (Iona) of Virginia Beach, VA and his sister, Christina (Raymond) Fleming of Gretna, nephews, Conor Parks and Kevin (Amy) Marmillion; niece, Janet Lambert and grandnephew, Kenneth Lambert, Jr.

In these last years he returned to the West Bank and was a gift to them, enriching so many who struggled through hard times with his priestly zeal and simple devotional faith. Greatly loved by many, he will be greatly missed.”



Fr. Jonathan prays with his twin brother Joey.

A Letter from the Western Province

July 12, 2010

Dear Tom:

I write in utter shock at the suddenness of the passing of Fr. Jonathan Parks. It does not seem possible that so vital, intelligent, and effective a Salesian as he, could be called home so soon in his life. May he be at peace in the paradise Don Bosco promised along with bread and work.

The news came while I was attending the “SOB” Reunion in Berkeley. Over 62 people were present at the concluding Mass, which I offered in the company of all those former Salesian brothers of ours and of Jonathan’s, along with their wives and significant others, that God would welcome Fr. Jonathan Parks into eternal rest with a loving and merciful judgment. Someone reflected that all those years we were praying for the one among us who would be the first to die, that God had Jon in mind. The Reunion, without losing anything of the celebratory tone it enjoyed all weekend, turned into a virtual Salesian Exercise for the Happy Death.

On behalf of the Salesians of the Province of Saint Andrew I assure you and all our brothers in the Province of Saint Philip of our closeness at this moment. We will be united in prayers and offerings for Jonathan, for his family, his parishioners, and for the whole Province.

May the Lord send us many more vocations like Jonathan’s, faithful to the very end, bringing “his consecrated life to its highest fulfillment.” He literally died working for souls, winning a great triumph for the Congregation (C 54) and for the Salesian Family of the United States and Canada.

Sincerely in St. John Bosco,
Rev. Timothy C. Ploch, SDB
Provincial

Eulogy
by Ms. Mary Wenzel
Principal of St. Rosalie School

I first met Fr. Jon back in 1992 when he first came to St. Rosalie. Like many, from the moment you met him he always seemed to be a part of the defining moments of our lives. While working at St. Rosalie over the years, the people of the school and parish changed his life forever, helping him personally define what his true calling in life was.

He was always there for everyone and ministered to anyone who crossed his path. Like Don Bosco, he believed in educating the whole person, body and soul united. He believed that Christ's love and our faith in that love should be the first in everything we do – when we work, study and play. For Fr. Jon, being Catholic came easy and he shared this love he had for Christ with everyone he touched 24 hours a day.

When administering sacraments, Fr. Jon did it in such a way that you truly felt God's presence. He always had a way of speaking which would keep the interest of everyone, no matter what your age. And you always had to be worried, because you never knew if he was going to call you out of the crowd with an embarrassing moment. We all loved and will cherish watching him say Mass, having him bless special items, watching him celebrate Christmas Mass (even when he would fall asleep on the altar at midnight Mass), and the washing of the feet during Holy Week services; as he did all of these with such grace and dignity, causing everyone to be moved by his spirit.

One of my teachers recently stated, "I've heard that you have to be childlike to get into heaven." Well, as we all know, Fr. Jon has a first class ticket to heaven in this area! He was not afraid of getting on the children's level and acting like one of them by doing cheers with

the cheerleaders, singing with the children, even when he did not know the words and he would just sing all the wrong words, and most of all, especially singing his favorite song with the children “Sponge Bob Square Pants.” During the fair, which we all know was very special to him, he would make sure that the committee always had religious items in the children’s Fun Zone area. He would always go over to the Fun Zone area and make sure to get some of the “religious glow items.” Believe it or not, he got more excitement from giving these out to the adults around the fair. Daily, Fr. Jon and I would text, talk on the phone and walk around campus while meeting to discuss things about the school. He always said he loved being a principal, admired me for what I have done, but he wouldn’t want to do my job again in a million years. One of his big jokes, even through the last few months was, “Principals never die, they just lose their faculties.” His main reason for being glad he had moved on from that position was because he loved the fact that he could walk onto the school yard or into any classroom and rowel the children up. He would even drive by the school yard and toot his horn, while waving out of the window and all the children would run to the fence. But, as we all know, he loved being able to then leave and have the teacher handle settling the student back down. As we all know he had a special way of making the school yard, a children’s Mass, or a classroom setting come alive. The children of St. Rosalie were truly mesmerized by his love and devotion to them. He had a special way of having the children gravitate towards him.

As we are reminded in the gospel of Matthew, Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.” As we all know, Fr. Jon lived this way with the children every day of his life. Anytime we would approach him with an idea or a favor for the children, his response would be, “Anything for the children.”

He truly loved everyone, and especially the children. While walking around campus, he always made a point to tell any child that he would see or while in a classroom visiting, “Remember that Jesus Loves You.” There was no doubt in their minds that Jesus loves them. He was always happy, cheerful and joyful. His love, joyful spirit, and smiling face will never be forgotten. One of my teachers stated, “It will be like a flower garden with one gap in it because he is and was so special to the kids and all of us at St. Rosalie.”

Fr. Jon touched many people’s hearts and lives and he had a very special way of making everyone feel extra special. He always made sure to thank everyone and to make sure that everyone knew how much he appreciated them. His famous saying to all women that did something nice was, “Thank you Princess.” Even in the hospital he was telling the nurses this and they were arguing while leaving his room over who he was calling princess. He also had a way of delegating and getting what he wanted done. Even when it meant using his collar and his title, he would often say, “But I’m a priest, I’m a priest.” Just one more tribute as to why he was loved so dearly – when he wanted something he put his mind to it and would not stop at anything until it was done.

I was fortunate enough to be able to spend the last week with Fr. Jon and his family and I was holding his hand when he passed away. I always remember him telling me over the years that we are all only here for a short amount of time until God calls us back to be with Him. Fr. Jon had made peace with God’s decision and was ready to go home to his Father. As we all know him well, he always comforted others and told us it was ok to cry. But let us remember that he would want us to remember him as that wonderful childlike person who was so special to everyone and we now know that he is the presence of God and will continue to watch over each and every one of us. As Fr. Jon once said a few years ago, so eloquently at a funeral Mass for one of our teachers,

“Let us all remember,...her life has only changed, not ended.” Let us all remember that Fr. Jon may no longer be with us physically, but he has now obtained the reward of eternal happiness with God, which he lived and preached in his ministry every day and that “his life has only changed...not ended.”



At the Mass celebrating the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of his ordination, Father Parks blesses his family. His nephew, Kevin Marmillion; his sister, Christina Fleming; niece, Janet Lambert. Also in photo is his grandnephew, Kenneth Lambert, altar server.

A Celebration of Life:

Tribute to a True Priest and Friend **by Blair Constant**

Associate Editor of *The West Bank Beacon*

(Below are excerpts from a very lengthy article that appeared in *The West Bank Beacon*, August 2010 edition.)

When we think of “public service,” especially in Louisiana, the first thing that comes to mind is politics. However, there is a greater area of public service, and on July 11, 2010, the West Bank lost the profile that exemplified it when Father Jonathan Parks, SDB, pastor of St. Rosalie Catholic Church in Harvey, passed away, succumbing to a rare blood disease called Amyloidosis...

...Fr. Jon was blessed with many endearing qualities. He was a leader, an advocate, a comforter, a comedian (of sorts), and a foundationally spiritual person. The Salesians’ mission is “to be a friend – a friend to kids who are poor, kids abandoned, kids at risk, and their education – and, in doing so, to be a friend of Christ.” Fr. Jon was the embodiment of the Salesians’ mission. That’s why in 2004, many of us realized that we were being blessed with a gift by having Fr. Jon serve as Pastor at St. Rosalie. Fr. Jon’s heart was filled with devotion for children and their education...

...The funeral ceremony took place July 14 at the Alario Center with Fr. Jon’s family, extended family, including his Salesian family, the Provincial, Auxiliary Bishop Shelton Fabre and Archbishop Gregory Aymond, and several hundred friends. Fr. Jon’s ministry was a tribute to the Salesians, at a time when a world short of priests is in dire need for that kind of leadership. The Provincial and Archbishop shared with those in attendance that Fr. Jon told them that his suffering before his death was a suffering he was willing to bear for the call to vocations.

As for the rest of us, I leave you with a few final thoughts on Fr. Jon. First, in defining “What Constitutes Success,” a competition participant wrote, “he has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often and loved much; who has gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who has left the world better than he found it, whether by service to others or a rescued soul; who has never lacked appreciation of earth’s beauty or failed to express it; who has looked for the best in others and given the best he had; whose life was an inspiration; whose memory is a benediction.” Fr. Jon’s ministry and his life is a success story!

Second, since his passing, or for that matter, after the passing of anyone close to us, we naturally question why they were taken from us. The two main thoughts are usually: (1) our missing their physical presence in our lives, and (2) we believe that they had so much more left to do. It’s easy for us to think this way with Fr. Jon’s passing, because we believe he had so much more left to do in this world. But, for those of us with faith, we know that God has called him home because his work is done. St. Paul tells us that we are the gardeners in God’s garden, and our job is to plant the seeds of faith in others, and it is up to them and God to nurture the seeds to grow and bear fruit. Fr. Jon has planted so many seeds in so many of us, not just here on the West Bank, but wherever his ministry brought him. He did his part, which was the part God was directing him to do. The rest is up to us!

“The children were Fr. Jon’s number one priority, and whatever the kids needed he made sure they got it. He was 100 percent Salesian in his ministry. As busy as Fr. Jon was with his schedule and his efforts, he was a true priest of God with his works. His ministry with kids simply boiled down to his own faith and love of God, and everything else just fell into place. I thought of him as friend, pastor and boss in that order. What I learned from Fr. Jon was to stay active, not idle, with ministering to others and that throughout the journey of faith to keep your eyes on God and to keep moving forward to him.”

– Matt LaGrange

Coordinator of Youth Ministry
at St. Rosalie.

“He showed me a better way of thinking; to think more through the eyes of faith, and he made me and others want to improve our relationship with God. It’s like he was a politician for God!”

– Steve Perque

Parishioner and friend.



**Archbishop Hughes
former Archbishop of
New Orleans presented
Fr. Jonathan Parks with
“The Distinguished
Student Award.”**

**An award recognizing
students of the local
school system.**

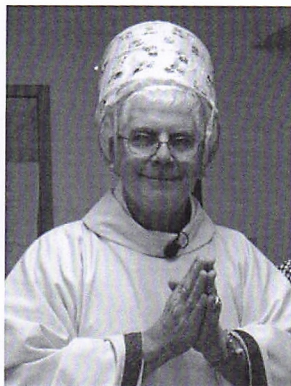
On the occasion of Fr. Jonathan's 30th Anniversary of his ordination, the congregation of St. Rosalie Church got together to celebrate, as was the tradition, especially when Fr. Jon was pastor, that we celebrated everything.

On this day, Jonathan wore the same chasuble that he wore when he was ordained. Facing the congregation, he asked: "How many of you, can honestly say that you can wear the same thing you wore thirty years ago? Well, look here, "I can!" **(Photo right)**

Following the Mass, everyone went to the Parish Center for the reception. Guy MacDonald and his daughter, Shay LeBlanc had prepared a skit – the story of Jonathan's life, set to the music of Row, Row, Row Your Boat. Fr. Jonathan Parks animated every phase with his usual humorous antics.



(Left) Fr. Jon steps high above the crowd to read his cards. (Below) He displays his "Sponge Bob" bonnet for the children.



FINALLY, I AM

Home

Finally, I Am Home,
so happy in His sight,
My joy and life now perfect
in the *glory* of His light

All burdens now have ended,
all suffering has passed,
And I am filled with awe
at coming *home*
to Him at last.

At heaven's gate He welcomed me
into His warm embrace,
And I could feel all pain eclipsed
by his redeeming *grace*.

I could not have imagined
anything could be so grand
As the love I feel now...
in God's *presence*
where I stand.

– Cathleen Zeller



December 3, 2009

This photo was taken by Rachel Simerly at the baptism of her second child. The older child is holding Father Jon's hand as they walk to the baptismal font. Upon seeing this photo he said:

"I want you to keep this picture, and when I die, I want it at my funeral... that's the angel coming to take me to heaven."