

Remembering Jesuit Fr. John Kavanaugh

Mary Ann McGivern | Nov. 9, 2012 NCR Today

Jesuit Fr. John Kavanaugh was a faithful fellow traveler on the spiritual journey to God. And he brought music.

From the founding of Karen House, the first St. Louis Worker house, John said Mass on Tuesday nights. On Wednesdays, the Worker community had our meeting, then we trooped to the small Jesuit house on the north side. John and other Jebsies, faculty and scholastics, shared the Eucharist with us. Many students, young couples and older believers came to these weeknight Masses. We were a lively, crowded praying community.

When John celebrated, he always prepared a very brief homily. After all, it was 9 p.m. those early years, and impromptu reflections tended to ramble. But more than that, John valued clear thinking and never shirked his responsibility to do his part.

John loved Ignatius' prayer put to music: "Take Lord, receive all my liberty. ... Give me only your love and your grace. That's enough for me." And he often sang "Wondrous Love" and "I Can Almost See the Lights of the City." John lives in the light now. The rest of us are still almost there.

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