

HOMILY
Funeral Mass
Brother Dale Barth, CSV

Let me begin by offering the prayers and sympathy of the entire Viatorian Community to Dale's family who are with us here this morning. We are grateful for his 55 years in the Viatorians and join you in sadness over his death.

I also want to welcome all of you who join us this morning in prayer and thanksgiving for the life and ministry of Brother Dale Barth. As one member of our Community was quoted as saying—just hearing the name of Br. Dale Barth conjures up a smile. And there is real truth to that. Dale was a man of good humor, with a remarkable ability to relate to young people. He spent 23 years at Saint Viator High School and had an open door policy in his office. Kids would come and go, would sit and talk and gossip, anyone was welcome, occasionally Dale would bark out commands or simply just listen. He had a sixth sense about when things were not going well in a kid's life—at home, at school, with friends---and he would offer a safe and non-judgmental ear.

He was a man of nicknames and, what I used to call, his Barthisms. Now some are shareable here and some are not! They often reflected his relationships---with some of us in the Viatorians he had names for us---for Fr. Rinn it was Ricky---for me it was Mouse---for his good friend John Dodd it was Red---and when a young Mark Francis began to grow a beard it was Mr. Whiskers---all of them were a way of Dale communicating his love and care for you.

My nickname for him was Bear---largely because as I came to know and love him over these nearly 50 years he could truly be a bear---gruff, tough, demanding---and oh my if he was mad at you---he said to me one time, you know my tongue can get me in trouble sometimes, to which I responded---do you think!! But I also knew that inside he was a teddy bear---sensitive, emotional, deeply caring, willing to help you in any way when you needed him.

And if you knew Dale, you would know some of his Barthisms---again--some relatable here and some not!! Be true to your teeth or they'll be false to you---Buy you books and buy ya books and all you do is chew he covers---there is not too much going on between those ears--or after encountering a particularly tough piece of beef---that cow roamed many a hills before they got it!

It was difficult to watch his health decline in recent years, his confinement to his scooter that, incidentally, he became quite proficient at maneuvering. In good weather he would be outside—up and down the driveway at the Province Center---most recently wheeling over to the intersection of Euclid and Dryden to watch the construction of a new house on the corner. I once asked him what he was doing out there and he replied, very matter of factly---just keeping an eye out that they don't mess it up---well, maybe his response was a bit more colorful.

But in these recent weeks as I would visit with him---the words of Paul to Timothy frequently came to mind---I have fought the good fight, I have run the race, I have kept the faith. Today we come together to celebrate his life, to give thanks for his 55 years of religious life as a Viatorian. We come together as a people of faith and embrace the words of Jesus---Do not let our hearts be troubled---have faith in me. Dale was not troubled these recent weeks---he had come to know

Christ as his way, and truth and life. He would say to me whenever he saw me recently---I hope you're working on that homily, Mouse.

And so we should not be troubled. The faith that brings us here together, the faith that Dale embraced in his life and ministry, the faith in Jesus Christ that allows us not to be troubled ---even in our tears. We who remain and continue the journey of life rejoice that Dale has completed that journey and now shares eternal life with Christ. And so we return him to the God who has loved him all the days of his life.

In the words of Isaiah the prophet---the words that I suspect Dale made his own in recent days--

"This is our God, we looked to him and he has saved us---let us rejoice and be glad."