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Brother Richard Grieco, FSC 1948-2012

October 7, 2012



Eulogy given by Peter Grieco, Br. Richard's nephew

My earliest memories of my Uncle were going to my Grandparents house and playing in the backyard there. It was the house he grew up

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in located near the Triboro Bridge in Astoria. I was only 8

years old when we moved away but I have many memories of meals and holidays there. I remember Rich as a patient grownup who always had time to listen to me even as a small child. Every birthday and holiday was not complete without him for as long as I can remember.

Rich was born in 1948, the younger brother to my Father. In that time and that place in the world being the younger son often meant playing second fiddle to his older brother, the first born son. But Rich never complained; never complaining was a common thread in Richard's life – a trend that continued to this very week.

When he was only a freshman in college he took his vows and stayed committed to them his whole life. Not many people have the strength and faith to decide the course of their life and stick to it, especially as a 19-year old. But Brother Richard took immense joy and pride in his calling. And he was not a person to complain. He was not in the least bit shy when it came to his love, Holy Name School. Rich spent almost his entire adult working life (38 years) at Holy Name.

Brother Richard's eyes would light up whenever he was talking about Holy Name. Whether it was putting in a new computer lab, or testing a new pilot program, he was always at his most joyful and dynamic when he was talking about Holy Name. People don't often associate modern and cutting edge when thinking of a Catholic School that is over 100 years old. But Holy Name was under his direction. His was one of the first schools to put in computer labs and use them in education; if there was new programmable gadget or computer program he never hesitated to try it. To give you an idea of how far ahead he was, just go to www.holyname.com. Not .edu or org or Holynamewestside.com. He had reserved that domain name years before most organizations were

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thinking of “.coms”. Just imagine how many facilities there are in the US named Holy Name, many probably larger with a lot more money to throw around. There were probably more than a few frustrated facilities who couldn't understand why they couldn't be Holy Name.com. Students and parents could check schedules, homework assignments, and most importantly, the cafeteria menu, from home. It doesn't sound very groundbreaking now but he had it literally years before most schools. It also gave him a platform to showcase his students' talents and achievements. He would constantly send emails out telling everyone in the family to go and see the latest videos or artwork.

I was never a student at Holy Name, but I know Rich took no greater joy than in the success of his students, faculty, and staff. He was always planning to improve Holy Name in some way shape or form. I can remember how excited he would get talking about redoing the gym or the auditorium. I was never a student at Holy Name but I do have one personal story about Holy Name. When I was running a restaurant on the Upper West Side, a little less than ten years ago, I had a young woman working for me whose child was having a very tough time in public school. I mentioned it to my uncle one night over dinner at Tonio's in Brooklyn. The next morning he sent me an email link with information to give her about enrolling and getting a scholarship available for kids transferring from public schools. Within a short period of time, her son was enrolled and doing better. This is just one child over 38 years that Brother Richard and Holy Name had an impact on. I am sure many of you out in the audience could relate many such stories. Stories such as those are my uncle's true legacy. Outside of work Richard loved life as much as anyone. He was a diehard Mets fan, an affliction and love he passed on to me, that I am now passing on to my son. I am very happy we got to go to one game at Citi Field together to balance the many we went too at Shea. Indeed if the Mets had been in the playoffs this year, I think Rich might have managed to hang on a few more weeks. He also loved to travel and enjoy the great outdoors. Some of my fondest

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memories of Rich are going camping with him and my younger brother, David, in the mountains of North Carolina. We would have to work as translators for him sometimes. Listening to a lifelong New Yorker speaking to a native Appalachian dweller could be quite entertaining. He also loved to go fishing and would take me and my brother fishing as well. Richard also took many vacations and cruises with other Brothers as well. He loved a retreat he had taken to the mountains of New Mexico as well as the area in Rhode Island where he will be put to rest.

But you could not speak of Rich's *joie de vivre* without discussing the breaking of bread. There was also nothing Rich enjoyed more than a good meal shared with family and friends. I will always remember walking around the streets of the city with Rich trying to find the best Peking duck. He was a fearless eater, he would pick the Chinese restaurants that had no English menus or speakers, go in and just say Peking duck for two. Rich expected you to hold your own at the table. It wasn't a meal unless you ordered your own appetizer, 1st course, 2nd course, and dessert of your own. And don't forget the after dinner cocktail or coffee and, for most of his life, a cigar. Whenever I smell a cigar to this day it makes me think of Rich. I brought two of my friends from Georgia to visit over spring break one year and they were like deer in the headlights at dinner. I know Rich always looked forward to the end of year banquets he would do with the Holy Name faculty and staff. He would plan those out like a military conquest. When he would visit with my family he would relish getting the chance to make us his Chicken Marsala. Rich knew and appreciated the importance of breaking bread, something far too many people take for granted. I am sure almost all of you can remember sitting around a table with Rich enjoying food and drink. And I am sure that is how we can best celebrate and remember him. If you go out tonight - order the veal.

I could go on telling stories about Rich's love for life all day. From his love for his four-wheel drive Jeep, to watching the

latest special effects driven blockbuster film, to the relish with which he drove like a lunatic on the BQE, inches from the cars around him. He often commented that he would have liked to have been a NYC cab driver for month or two because he believed he would have been a great cabbie. He put in a large fish tank and a larger TV at the Brothers residence, and was very happy finding and planning the renovation of their current residence, when he had to leave the Clermont Avenue house. I know Rich was not happy to leave the Residence at Bishop Loughlin, but he took it in stride. The move was a memorable one and my Brother and I were happy to help.

As Rich's health began to wane, he took it all in stride and never complained. The harshest blow and the one hardest for him to accept was when he had to leave his beloved Holy Name before he was ready. I am sure he always planned to work there as long as he could, and he did. That day just came sooner than he had planned. But I never heard him complain, even when I knew he was frustrated. As his legs continued to fail, he took pride in telling me how he was getting the best motorized scooter and lift. How the doctors he was seeing were the best, and the facilities he was bouncing around in were so nice. When I came to see him in the hospital days ago, I knew if he could talk, he would tell me how he had finally had every medical procedure known to man done to him, and how this hospital was so great - just look at the view. Brother Richard was a private man, not prone to complaining. The very last message I received from him was that his leg was getting better and he was looking forward to us coming up for Thanksgiving. I am sure many of you wonder why he never sent out the message that things had become as serious as they had, and given everyone one last chance to be together. I know I have been struggling with that as well.

The poet and philosopher, Jorge Luis Borges, once wrote that we are all witnesses to life. When we die, what the world truly loses isn't our bodies, but our memories and the thoughts we

have not shared. Rich had been in and out of the hospital many times over the last few years, and I am sure he expected to come out again and be with us all for a little while longer to share his memories. But as Borges points out we never know when we have laid eyes upon a face for the final time, and I praise God that I got there in time to say farewell. I believe Richard knew I was there to say goodbye. I am also very thankful he had the opportunity to meet my son several times before he passed.

Limits by Jorge Luis Borges

*Of these streets that deepen the sunset,
There must be one (but which) that I've
walked*

*Already one last time, indifferently
And without knowing it, submitting*

*To One who sets up omnipotent laws
And a secret and a rigid measure
For the shadows, the dreams, and forms
That work the warp and weft of this life.*

*If all things have a limit and a value
A last time nothing more and oblivion
Who can say to whom in this house
Unknowingly, we have said goodbye?*

*Already through the grey glass night ebbs
And among the stack of books that throws
A broken shadow on the unlit table,
There must be one I will never read.*

*In the South there's more than one worn
gate
With its masonry urns and prickly pear*

*Where my entrance is forbidden
As it were within a lithograph
(photograph).*

*Forever there's a door you have closed,
And a mirror that waits for you in vain;
The crossroad seems wide open to you
And there our-faced Janus watches. T*

*here is, amongst your memories, one
That has now been lost irreparably;
You'll not be seen to visit that well
Under white sun or yellow moon.*

*Your voice cannot recapture what the
Persian
Sang in his tongue of birds and roses,
When at sunset, as the light disperses,
You long to speak imperishable things.*

*And the incessant Rhone and the lake,
All that yesterday on which today I lean?
They will be as lost as that Carthage
The Romans erased with fire and salt.*

*At dawn I seem to hear a turbulent
Murmur of multitudes who lip away;
All who have loved me and forgotten;
Space, time and Borges (Richard) now
leaving me.*

*Please pray for the happy
repose of the soul of
Br. Richard Grieco, FSC*

Born *Richard Domenick Grieco in New York, on February 19, 1948*

Entered *the Narragansett, RI, Novitiate on June 29, 1966*

Received *the Religious Habit on September 1, 1966*

Pronounced *Perpetual Vows in Narragansett, RI, on June 25, 1973*

Brother Richard died at Riverview Hospital, Red Bank, NJ, on October 17, 2012

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Thursday, October 18, 2012

Viewing from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

*De La Salle Hall
810 Newman Springs Road
Lincroft, NJ 07738-1608*

Friday, October 19, 2012

Mass of Christian Burial at 2:00 pm

*De La Salle Hall
810 Newman Springs Road
Lincroft, NJ 07738-1608*

Saturday, October 20, 2012

***Burial in Brothers' cemetery at 11:30
am***

Lunch

*Christian Brothers Center
635 Ocean Road
Narragansett, RI 02882-1314*

***SUFFRAGES FOR OUR DECEASED
BROTHER RICHARD***

District: 50 masses

***De La Salle Hall community: 30
masses***

***Each community in the District: 1
mass***

*Brother Richard underwent serious
surgery this past Monday. He passed
away peacefully in his sleep in the early
morning hours due to complications from
his surgery. May he rest in peace.*

Tour of Duty

1971-1978

teacher

New York, NY

Holy Name School

1978-1980

assistant principal

New York, NY

Holy Name School

1980-2009

principal

New York, NY

Holy Name School

2009-2011

convalescence

Brooklyn, NY

De La Salle Brooklyn Community

2011-2012

retired

Lincroft, NJ

De La Salle Hall

*May the soul of Brother Richard,
and all the souls of the faithful
departed, rest in peace.*

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