

By Pat Haggerty

I always start each day with a brief reflection from *Catholic Digest* called "A Quiet Moment." The reflection for May 1st was a proverb: "A sincere heart can make a stone blossom." That reflection was quite significant to me in light of the recent passing of one of the curates from our parish.

Father Philip Bonvouloir, A.A. passed away on Saturday leaving behind a void for his parish family and his family of Assumptionist brothers. Actually, it isn't really a void because Father Phil's legacy will live on. It is a legacy of caring, living out his priestly life to the fullest, and living a God-centered life rooted in the reality of this world.

As everyone will confirm, Father Phil was a man who was very straightforward and who would always "tell it like it is." Some may have not liked that approach, but one could always count on Father's honesty and no-nonsense approach. His homilies always reflected that. He spoke from the heart and his gospel message was always connected to our everyday lives. That is what made Father Phil so special. He was able to share the beauty of the gospels with the reality of the world. There was no disconnect! It was pure and simple---just like Father.

He was as comfortable in the kitchen as he was at the altar. He could sing the "Exsultet" like no other, and I'm sure he had a pretty good rendition of "Alouette" as well. He was thrilled to share stories with me about his Canadian background. Being of Canadian descent myself, I loved hearing those stories! We shared pork pie (tourtière) recipes and baking tips.

My favorite memory of Father Phil is when he came to visit me in a rehab facility after I broke my hip. I know he was not feeling that well, but he made the trip anyway. He came bearing the Eucharist, a prayer shawl, and his love. My family was with me, and Father made sure they were comfortable with the proceedings and included them in his prayers. This was Father Phil at his best! He loved visiting the shut-ins and those who needed his attention. I will always remember that visit, and I will try to emulate the spirit of love and kindness that he extended to me that day.

I am sad as I write this, but I am happy for Phil because I know he is with the Lord and in His embrace. If I ever see any blossoming stones, I won't be surprised. I will know that Father Phil is close by. With a sincere heart there really are no surprises!