

Remember Brother Paul Groom, C.F.X.



PHOTO: Brother Paul Groom in Bolivia. It gets cool in the mornings in the Alto, 13,500 feet above sea level. Brother Paul Groom keeps warm with a heavy jacket as he walks to class. (Originally published in "The Xaverian," Fall 1969).

If it is true that there is a special place in heaven for those who make community life livable for others, then Paul Groom certainly is enjoying a double crown. As Brother Cornelius Hubbuch commented on Paul's years at Ryken High School, "He was a joy to live with." There would certainly be no dissent from Brothers who had the privilege of living with Paul over the seventy years of his religious life as a Xaverian.

Born in Brooklyn and educated at Holy Name, Joseph Francis Groom left Brooklyn on his graduation from the eighth grade to travel to Saint Joseph Juniorate on Oak Hill in Peabody, a place which would hold very warm memories for him until the day he died. Entering the Novitiate at Old Point on January 6, 1936, as was the custom for aspirants in those days, he received the Holy Habit and the name Paul of the Cross on the Feast of the Assumption in 1936. After his graduation from The Catholic University, he began his teaching career at Keith Academy where he quickly established himself as a superb teacher, one whom boys remember long after they become men. As a tribute to his influence as a teacher, there were at least three of his "Keith boys" at his funeral sixty-five years after he had begun teaching there.

After eight years at Keith, Paul spent seven years at Cardinal Hayes, six of those as Superior of the community. In 1956 he became the vocation director for the American Province. The large Novitiate classes of those days were, in part, a testimony to his zeal.



PHOTO: Brother Paul, C.F.X. at the San Jose School, Bolivia, talks to a group of students in an informal session. (Originally published in "The Xaverian," Summer 1967).

In 1963 Paul became a missionary to Bolivia, serving both at Carmen Pampa and in the Alto at San Jose where, once again, he had a profound impact on his students. They, in turn, had a profound impact on him as he himself commented on those years, "I grew to love the simple Indian people with whom I worked and lived." Not only did Paul teach in our schools in Bolivia but he conducted Bible study classes in the homes of the Indian natives in the evening. Since he was never good with names, American boys were always "Coach" and Bolivian boys "Pavito" or Little Turkey.

Returning to the United States in 1973 because of ill health, he worked at the New School in Brooklyn, New York, before being invited to Ryken High School in 1973. Concluding a teaching career of forty years in 1981, Paul remained in Leonardtown and became involved in the hospice program. In the thirty years which he spent in Saint Mary's County in Southern Maryland, he grew to love the people and the county very much. They returned the compliment.

Paul was a self-described "ladies' man" who reveled in the company of women and who thoroughly enjoyed his summers at Adrian. As his friend Brother Peter Fitzpatrick commented on Paul and the Adrian Program, "It rejuvenated Paul, expanded his heart and mind, broadened his viewpoint and outlook, and energized him for a deeper commitment to his vocation to minister God's healing touch of love to all he would meet in his journey of life."



PHOTO: Veteran Bolivian missioner, Brother Paul Groom, poses in front of the Cochabamba house. (Originally published in "The Xaverian," Mid-Winter 1970-1971).

Paul spent the last twenty-two months of his life at Xaverian House in Danvers, wondering why he hadn't come there sooner. Even in old age and infirmity, he was still a joy to live with, and the Director of Xaverian House, Brother Thomas Ryan, commented at Paul's funeral, "Paul was a man of many diverse apostolic works and living situations as well as a man of profound personal, intellectual, and spiritual strengths, all of which finally led him the way to the doorstep of his Father's house." Paul, who rejoiced in the Xaverian community on earth, must certainly now be rejoicing in the Xaverian community in heaven where so many of his friends had preceded him.



JESUS, MARY
JOSEPH, XAVIER
+
IN MEMORY OF
BROTHER PAUL, C.F.X.
(Joseph F. Groom)

Born in Brooklyn, NY	January 5, 1918
Entered the Congregation of the	
Xaverian Brothers	January 6, 1936
Received the Holy Habit	August 15, 1936
Profession of Vows	August 15, 1941
Entered into Eternal Life	May 12, 2006

LET US PRAY
Into your hands, merciful Father,
we commend the soul of your servant,

BROTHER PAUL

Receive him in your loving mercy
into everlasting life, where, in the
company of your saints, he, his
family, his Brothers in religion,
his students and friends, and all to
whom he ministered in life, will live
forever in the peace of your loving
presence. We ask this in the name of
Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen

PHOTO: Brother Paul Groom's memorial prayer card.