


# MEMORANDUM

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Office of the Moderator  
313-237-5783

**TO:** All Priests

**FROM:** Monsignor John P. Zenz/Lori Paull 

**DATE:** December 19, 2007

**RE: Reverend James N. Brichetto, SJ**

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Father James Brichetto, a Jesuit priest with "the common touch," died Saturday, Nov. 17, at the age of 76. Whether talking with truck drivers over breakfast or chatting with firemen at the firehouse, Fr. Brichetto had a "rough-and-ready" reputation. "His idea of church was being out and about with the people," said nephew Mike Davis. "He brought many people to the faith, and also brought many people back to the faith."

During his 18-year ministry as associate pastor at St. Francis Xavier Church in Cincinnati, he simultaneously became chaplain to the Cincinnati Fire Department, helping those in crisis. Davis remembered: "It was nothing for him to be called out at 3 or 4 in the morning to be there for people in their moment of need."

Perhaps the greatest hour of need came in 1977 at the infamous Beverly Hills Supper Club Fire in Southgate, KY. Fr. Brichetto helped anoint many of the 165 victims killed that evening and comforted those who survived the tragedy. Fire code violations contributed to the carnage as 2,400 people tried to escape a fire that may have started in aluminum wiring.

Fr. Brichetto was a native of Cincinnati, where he attended St. Francis Xavier grade school and high school, graduating in 1949. That same year he entered the Jesuit novitiate in Milford, OH. During his training to become a Jesuit, he earned an A.B. in Latin and an M.A. in sociology from Loyola University Chicago. He also studied philosophy and theology at West Baden, IN, where he was ordained to the priesthood in 1963.

Fr. Brichetto started out as a teacher and coach at St. Ignatius College Prep in Chicago, IL, from 1956 to 1959, while still training to be a Jesuit priest. After ordination, he returned to Chicago as an assistant pastor at Holy Family Catholic Church from 1964 to 1966, where he led the youth and men's club.

He then went back to his hometown to teach at his alma mater, St. Xavier High School, until 1970, and led athletics there. In 1970, he became associate pastor of St. Xavier Church, where he served until 1988, conducting an active ministry to senior citizens, ranging from Bingo to bus trips to European tours.

For the next 12 years, he was administrator, pastor, and associate pastor for several parishes in need. From 1988-93 he worked for two Ohio parishes: St. Michael in New Vienna and St. Benignus in Greenfield. Fr. Brichetto served as pastor at St. Joan of Arc in Indianapolis, IN, until 1995. Though his time there was short, parishioner Carl Henn remembered him well: "He gave vigorous homilies with rigorous theology. We gained an appreciation for the Jesuit order because of Fr. Brichetto."

Two Cincinnati parishes followed. Fr. Brichetto served at St. Antoninus until 1997 and then at St. Louis until 2000. "He simply went where the Lord called him," Davis commented.

It was with reluctance, however, that he followed the call to retirement at Colombiere Jesuit Community in Clarkston, MI, in 2001. That is where he spent his final years and days, always eager to "help out," always hoping to return to work.

Fr. Brichetto is survived by his sister, Sylvia Davis, and ten nieces and nephews.

Services and burial took place in Cincinnati, OH. Memorial gifts may be made to the Jesuit Partnership or the Jesuit International Missions, 607 Sycamore St. Cincinnati, OH 45202, or The Little Sisters of the Poor, 476 Riddle Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45220.

Please keep Father Brichetto in your prayers.

JPZ/lp