

A Reflection From John Gill '97
Written by Mike Strauss '87

Padre

This week the Saint Ignatius Community mourns the loss of a dear friend, Father Frank Canfield, SJ. Father C, Papa C, or Padre, as he was known to many, was a kind and gentle soul who joined Saint Ignatius in 1996 as a chaplain after a long high school career as teacher, coach, counselor, and principal at both University of Detroit High and Toledo St. John's.

When one first met Father Canfield, he or she may have noticed a few age spots or wrinkles, but behind those marks of time were eyes that twinkled and a boyish smile. Within seconds, Father's warmth and gentleness would put anyone at ease, and one felt like he or she had just connected with an old friend. Whether it was a student in crisis, a faculty member in a hallway or at a social gathering, or a Labre friend on the street, Father Canfield showed that person the same aura of love and care.

Father Canfield was a sports fan (albeit a Detroit fan) and was a fixture on the sidelines or in the stands at many Saint Ignatius games. However, Father made it well known that his favorite team was the Christian Action Team. He was a regular at C.A.T. meetings and activities, supporting the students in their good works with our community. Father spent many Sunday nights himself on the streets of Cleveland, visiting with those on the margins, often having to be pulled away from a conversation at one camp to move on to the next stop. He also participated on the Cleveland Mission Trip. He joined many Kairos retreats. He helped in the Bigs and Littles program. He lived as an example of faith in action, and he invited our students to do the same. Father would work into a conversation with a student about what the student did outside of the classroom, and if the student was not involved with much, Father extended an invitation to attend a C.A.T. meeting. When the student showed up, Father's eyes would light up in delight, and there might even be a good chance Father would offer the student a sip from his always-present mug of coffee he would tote around campus.

Father Canfield was a gift to all that he met. He made the Saint Ignatius community better. Inevitably everyone felt better after an encounter with Father, whether it was a brief passing on the Mall or a heartfelt conversation in his office.

We raise a warm mug of Maxwell House to honor the blessings your presence has left on all of us, Padre.