

**In Memoriam** I first learned about Fr. Paul Gregoire's passing when I checked the east coast obituary before phoning him direct. Our last conversation 6 months before found him in increasing states of dementia, some anxiety at his forgetting who I was, so I thought I had better check first. Here's what I found:

The Rev. Paul L. Gregoire, age 93, a retired Roman Catholic priest, passed away Dec. 29, 2022 at Mount Carmel Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, where he had lived for four years...

Reading a little further I noticed that very little was said about what affected seminarians the most, the quality time he spent with us. The obit goes on to give us some early background essentials.

He became a member of the Society of St. Sulpice on May 5, 1953, and taught at seminaries in Baltimore, California, and Seattle. He returned to the Diocese of Manchester in 1977 and was assigned as associate pastor of Saint Anne Parish in Berlin. In July 1978, he was assigned as associate pastor of Saint Joseph Cathedral in Manchester. He served as pastor of Saint Denis Parish in Hanover and Saint John the Baptist Parish in Manchester, and as administrator of Saint Patrick Parish, Manchester.

Father Paul loved a good game of cribbage and was a lifelong fan of the Boston Red Sox. He had a keen sense of humor and was always quick with a joke.

In 1993, he returned to Saint Charles, the parish he considered home. According to a 2005 article in the New Hampshire Union Leader, he said, "St. Charles was a wonderful return. Coming back to my roots and the community that nurtured my vocation was perhaps one of the greatest satisfactions of my life." <https://www.seacoastonline.com/obituaries/pprt0391582>

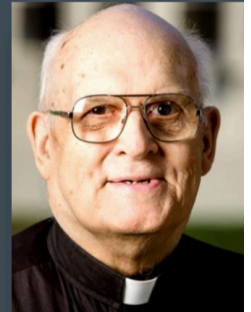
From the above obit I noticed several things which I would like to address more: 1) Very little was said about Fr. Paul's teaching for 23 years as a Sulpician priest dedicated to priestly formation and influencing hundreds of young men *and* the French-speaking Sisters who supported them all. 2) Here, too, Father's interest in sports, humor, and people help him win over students, their families, and support staff, and others he met while on his brief stay with us.

The first person who responded to my request for input was Jack Quatman.

When Tucker Sheehan, RP and I needed a new confessor starting our third year RP mentioned that Gregs had become available and it would be a great move to jump on the bandwagon. I was not so sure because I had my problems with him when he was Prefect of Discipline. But RP talked me into it and it was the best move ever. He turned out to be a great person. After our third year during the summer, Gregs borrowed the Sheehan's Chrysler la Barron and took Tucker, RP, and me to LA for the Russian/American track meet. We stayed at the minor seminary in LA. One day I did not have tix to the meet so Gregs took me to Disneyland. That guy rode all the rides until he was about to drop. It was really hard for me when he got transferred. He was just a wonderful person. He got to know my parents, and had dinner at their place every two weeks.

## Rev. Paul L. Gregoire

1929 - 2022



Joe Barile interjects to say, “Fr. Paul went to a very academic prep school, attending a prestigious college (University of Baltimore), and doing some graduate work at Notre Dame University in South Bend, Indiana. Then he probably earned an MA in history. He was not only a very smart and well educated person; he was a creative, demanding, and caring educator. Tests and papers were promptly returned, which gave students and teacher an immediate feedback on how they were both doing. Helped me as a student and a teacher to be. All of us are teacher’s in one way in another.”

Paul F. Page (R’67) relates the following.

Early on as 6<sup>th</sup> Latiners, Fr. Gregoire assigned Jack Quatman and I as the “*pueri sarcinae*”, the boys whose responsibility it was to post the arrival of packages sent from home to the seminary where they could be picked up in Gregs’ office. Gregs was always available to make sure the packages were delivered...and he seemed pleased that we took **our** responsibility seriously.

Those of us lucky enough to have Gregs as a teacher will remember a good number of things about him and what went on in his classroom. Once I figured out that he seldom called on students whose hand was up to answer a question or give a Latin translation, I decided I could avoid embarrassment by simply putting my hand up, too, a little too enthusiastically as I remember it. Well, you know what happened next: “*Ah. Domine Page. Bene de te ad nos accedat. Iam quaenam est illius postremae lineae translation?*” I, of course was mortified, but never so much as when he drilled us on Latin numbers when he’d consistently call on me to tell the class the Latin number for six. His 500 word freshman Latin Vocabulary Final was probably the hardest test I’ve ever taken. And it was a complete surprise to all of us, Gregs not revealing his hand until the test was passed out. Whew.

But by the time I was a junior in high school, having had Gregs for three solid years of Latin, I could read and write Latin quite well, a skill I have somewhat maintained over all these years.

His enthusiasm for American History had all of us reading and reading and reading. I began wearing glasses shortly after that year after months of late night reading with a flashlight in my closet after “lights out”. Gregs made it all worthwhile, though.

Well, a couple of memories. Paul Gregoire was a good and kind man thrust into the unhappy position of dean of discipline. He did uphold the law. But he also had an understanding nature and a wit only those of us in his classroom could/would appreciate. I am so glad that he was my teacher, one of the very best I have ever had.

Jack Snider relates the following. “I cannot remember which year it was ('64,'65, or '66), but Fr. Gregoire asked our history class what was President Warren Harding famous for. Herb Manchester answered first, but Father said he was incorrect. I raised my hand and said that Warren Harding was the first president to throw out the first pitch to open baseball season. Father G. smiled and said, "You're absolutely right, Mr. Snider.” It had to be springtime, around opening day.

Classmate Fr. Larry Percell answered my request to add to the the east coast obituary how he knew and respected “Fr. Paul”, as they called him back there. Thanks to Larry for letting the east coast parishioners, family, and friends know what Fr. Gregoire did in his brief time with us at St.Joe’s.

I met Father Paul in September 1961 when I entered St. Joseph College, the minor seminary for the Archdiocese of San Francisco. He was a priest of the Society of St. Sulpice at the time. He was always kind and encouraging. He served as my spiritual director during my senior year of high school (1964-65) and was just the spiritual guide I needed. We had a brief reunion in 2007 when he attended my class's 40th anniversary of graduation from St. Joseph. I was privileged to welcome him and my classmates to St. Nicholas Parish in Los Altos, CA where I was serving as pastor. Father Paul was a model priest.

**Father Larry Percell**

(as reported in the Legacy obituary)



Paul Page, Paul Gregoire, Joe Barile, Jack Quatman, and Pat McQuillan here at a 2007 class reunion which flew out Fr. G as our guest of honor, share food and memorabilia.

Mike Huvane remembered his new confessor/counselor in the following way.

- Can't believe he was 32 in 1961 when we were 6<sup>th</sup> Latiners (freshmen in high school)– I would have guessed in his 50s
- As a 6<sup>h</sup> Latiner, I remember him appearing a bit stern – probably a prerequisite for being the Prefect of Discipline
- In 4<sup>th</sup> High, I switched to Fr. Gregoire as my confessor – a breath of fresh air and a really smart move; I remember him being kind and approachable and not ‘stern’
- Fr. Gregoire was the only one who ever spoke to me about the ‘facts of life’ – in a kind and knowing way
- When I left St Joe's after 4<sup>th</sup> High (senior year of high school) he was gracious to me and accommodating.

Here are a few stanzas Joe Barile wrote and read at our 2007 class reunion about his friend and mentor, and our class Guest of Honor. Even his passing has brought us together, once again. Thanks to those classmates who responded in a timely fashion to allow this sharing of sentiment to be expressed. Thanks also to the SJC/SPS Alumni Association for passing this on to its alumni it has on record.

*“Tempus Fugit et non comebackibus”*  
 was just the needed stimulus  
 to get us through another day,  
 making Latin class much more fun  
 when he taught in this playful way.

Though Gregs (to us) was in control  
 he never bruised or shamed our souls,  
 when saddled as dean of discipline.  
 A wise young man at thirty-two,  
 he seemed older with hair so thin.

And now, almost in a heaving sigh,  
 forty years have gone good-bye,  
 yet our memories alone still thrive,  
 The child *is* father of the man,” and  
 lucky were we to have survived

And had him with us way back then:  
 as teacher, mentor, to many friend.  
 Thank you, Father Paul Gregoire,  
 for walking with us once again,  
 a chance to even up the score.