

J. Fillmore Elliot, SJ

1930 - 2004

Brother J. Fillmore Elliot was born in New Orleans on Dec 30, 1930. He came from a spiritual family which produced two Jesuit priests (Clyde and Larion) and two Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaille. After graduation from Jesuit High, Fillmore joined the Jesuits in 1948. .

Fillmore belonged to that generation of Jesuit brothers who did not study for professional degrees. He “became” the community infirmarian for Grand Coteau and Spring Hill for more than twenty years. His disposition was as therapeutic as any medicines he proffered. Was there ever a Jesuit so continually cheerful, extroverted and helpful by nature? He was notorious for adjusting the Society’s rules for the care of the sick. If he had a failing it would be that in his work he tended to run in all directions at the same time to do everything for everybody.

In 1974-77 he labored in Campinas, Brazil as nurse and sacristan. After Brazil, he undertook a similar ministry at Immaculate Conception in Albuquerque (1978-84), in particular visiting the hospitals on a regular basis.

Fillmore suffered a near fatal heart attack in Albuquerque, so he was moved to the infirmary at Ignatius Residence. It came to light that beside serious cardiovascular problems, Fillmore suffered from diabetes. But as much as his health allowed, he spent seven years of ministry to the residents, driving some to their medical appointments and collected their medicines. He helped the neighboring pastor with Communion and other services. But he was not finished yet.

In 1993 he received certification in hospital pastoral ministry, which he then practiced in Tampa General Hospital for ten years, even when he was reduced to a motorized wheel chair. But his health required him to return to New Orleans for skilled nursing care at Our Lady of Wisdom hospital. In his final years he was renown for making coffee for the

people in his wing and bringing it to them – quintessential Fillmore. And on Feb 24, 2004, just months before his death, Bro. Elliot was crowned King of Mardi Gras at Our Lady of Wisdom. No one in the world could have matched his reign over the chaos and mirth. His grade was that of Jesuit brother, and Br. J. Fillmore Elliot was truly a brother to all Jesuits of the province.