

Prep Today



Godspeed
Fr. Shaughnessy, S.J.

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FR. MARTY SHAUGHNESSY, S.J., LEAVES PREP AFTER 42 YEARS

Excerpts from a speech by Ken Panda '88, English teacher, given in Kartovsky Quad on June 8, 2010

“We stand on the shoulders of giants.” Sir Isaac Newton offered that remark over 300 years ago when asked how he arrived at some of his greatest achievements.

The same can be said of Fairfield Prep. Like any institution that has long endured and long flourished, we owe our success in part to those singular individuals whose daily sacrifice and service has made our own presence here possible.

Naturally, many of those individuals are Jesuits, whose names are etched in plaques in Xavier Hall, chiseled in stone on our buildings. Inscribed in our hearts.

Some have passed or moved on before our time: Fr. Tom Murphy, Fr. Joseph Trinkle, Fr. Robert Sproule, Fr. Eugene Brissette. Some like Fr. Hanwell and Fr. Ryan, Fr. Levens and Fr. Gallarelli, are with us now to re-affirm the integrity of our traditions. And some, like Mr. Stockdale and Mr. Olson, are here in the early stages of their vocation to anchor our future.

Then there are those rare few, like Father Martin Shaughnessy, whose impression upon us, institutionally and individually, is so complete, so profound, so enduring, that it remains with us for the rest of our lives.

Several years ago I was sitting with alumni at the Thanksgiving football game when someone mentioned they'd seen Fr. Shaughnessy circulating in the crowd. The buzz among the men was electric...

Fr. Shaughnessy... It was like Elvis...without the jumpsuit or the pompadour.

Instantly, it was 1985 and we were sophomores in Fr. Shaughnessy's class, learning that Moses was “Big Moe” to his friends; that when God called Jeremiah, he said “Hey, Jerry,” and that Noah wasn't just a guy with a big boat and a lot of stuff to clean up. Then there was the wooden shillelagh, wielded with Irish authority, and the first time he gave someone a jug for masticating during class.

But it's only now, 25 years later and now a teacher here myself, that I'm starting to fully realize Fr. Shaughnessy's impact as a teacher on the countless young men who have passed through here.

Last week, I was fortunate enough to hear his “Farewell Sermon,” so to speak, at the Baccalaureate Mass. Father Shaughnessy's sermons are, famously, a compelling and sometimes frantic ride across a spectrum of emotions and values. In his travels around the globe, he has born witness to mankind's capacity for both unthinkable cruelty and ineffable kindness. The places in his sermons are real places; the people, real people; whether it's in Easton or Norwalk; Anchorage, Alaska; or Kingston Jamaica.

In minutes he can invoke fire and brimstone; mercy and indignation; humor and



Fr. Shaughnessy retired his JUG flag, Star Wars light saber and Moses stick — inspiring all to follow the Lord and proclaim “Hallelujah!”

horror; tolerance and understanding. Justice, and forgiveness, and Grace — and you are left transfixed... and transformed.

He takes you on the most vivid of roller-coaster rides across history and theology and experience to show us that the simplest truths are the most enduring:

- That service means helping people not once but always.
- That sacrifice means doing without in service to others.
- That passion is contagious.
- That if we search our hearts, vocation is not an outcome reserved for a select few.
- That being men and women for others is a choice. It is also a blessing.
- That humor—even if poorly executed—is a daily necessity.
- And that love for each other is sometimes the hardest thing. But it's the only thing.

Thursday night, 25 years after I last walked out of his class, I realized that not only is Fr. Shaughnessy still teaching, he's still teaching me. He is that rare teacher, whose classroom has no walls and no time frame.

And this “reassignment” of yours to Boston — is it a “reassignment” or did you just get season tickets? Sketchy Father, very sketchy.

Father I'm not sure you'll have extra time in Boston, but if you do ponder this: success in Baseball is spelled with a “Y,” a “K,” and two “EEs.”

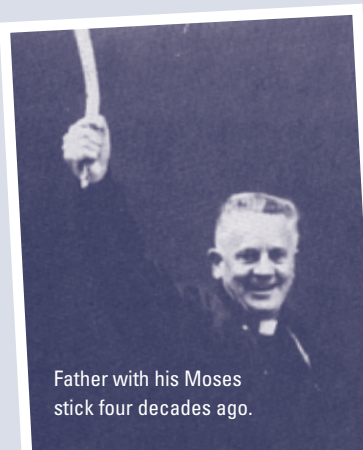
Father Shaughnessy is leaving us to return to his other — his first — home.

And he's leaving us with the example of a lifelong commitment to learning, to education, to service, and to community that has shaped who we were in the past, who we are now, and who we can be in our future.

But Fr. Shaughnessy has given us the full measure of devotion and it is a future we must determine for ourselves.

But We Stand on the Shoulders of Giants.

Father Shaughnessy, *Fair Winds and Following Seas*. Godspeed.

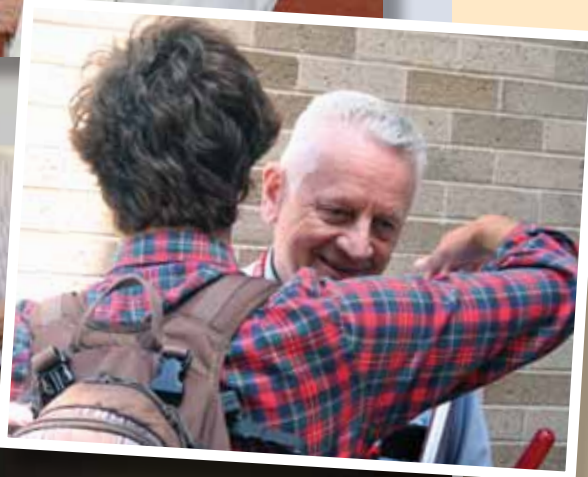


Father with his Moses stick four decades ago.



Fr. Shaughnessy's Song from his homily at the 2010 Baccalaureate Mass

Oh — we played our sports for Fairfield Prep. Some we won and some we lost. We cheered and laughed as we won, and sometimes we cried when we lost — even though we did our very best. We played many sports and we made many friends: friendships that will last our whole life long. That is why we wore with joy — the uniforms that said FAIRFIELD PREP. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!



We thank our parents, we thank our teachers, and all those who make up Fairfield Prep. We thank those who served food, and kept the school so clean. We thank all those who helped with dances and proms, the college hopes, the clubs, and the trips. We enjoyed the arts, the plays, and the bands, but not so much - the jugs. We will never forget all the activities that make up — FAIRFIELD PREP. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!



Oh, we did Christian Service from Jamaica to Ecuador. We tutored the young and talked with the old. We built some homes and gave out food, and many other things — too many to recount. We searched for God during Kairos Retreats. We sought Him in Masses and prayer. We will never stop searching for Him until we see Him face to face. And that is why we sing — Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

And so young men it is time to say goodbye.

You were at Fairfield Prep for four long years, and I have been there for 42.

We never regret and will never forget the time we spent at Fairfield Prep. And so may God bless you — one and all — as we go our different ways. If we never see each other again on this earth, we know that we will meet again in heaven above at the throne of God. That is why we end with the joyful refrain —

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!



The Prep Community gathered on June 8, the last day of classes, to pay tribute to Fr. Marty Shaughnessy, S.J., who has served at Prep for 42 years! He has influenced thousands of students passing through the hallowed halls of our Jesuit school. Father will be the Minister at BC High next year. Contact him: mshaughnessy@sjnen.org

