

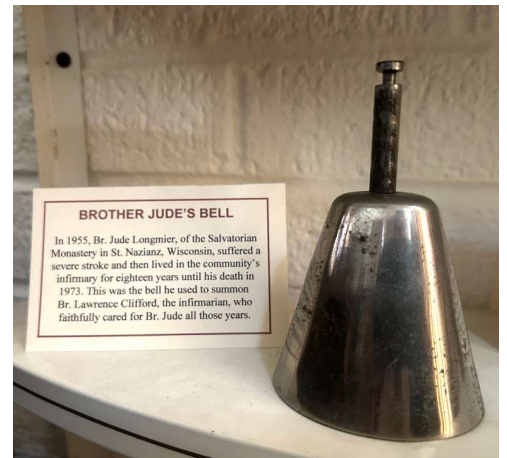
“BROTHER JUDE’S BELL” - THE HUMAN SIDE OF ARCHIVING



When people tour the Archives, what they see most are document boxes filled with letters, books, articles, photos, etc. And throughout the Archives, hanging on the walls or placed on the shelves along with the document boxes, there are the many artifacts we have on display: art pieces from our foreign missions, altar vessels and other liturgical items, rare books, old typewriters and cameras from the Publishing Department, and lots of other things people find fascinating.

While those many document boxes on the shelves are important, people would rather see the “stuff” we have on display and to hear the stories that go with them.

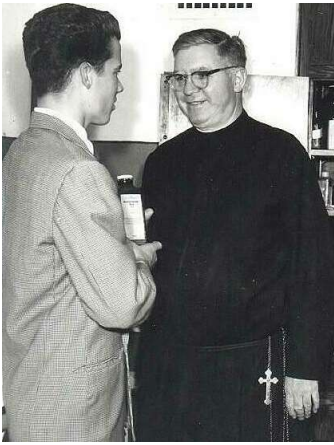
One of the gentlest stories we have to tell has to do with this bell. From 1955 to 1973, it was “Brother Jude’s Bell.” When you ring it, it has the softest tinkling sound you’d probably ever hear from a bell. You would have to be close-by to even hear it, certainly no more than just a room or two away.



Brother Jude Longmier SDS was, for many years, the boiler operator for the various boilers throughout the Salvatorian Monastery / Salvatorian Seminary complex in St. Nazianz, Wisconsin. But in 1955, he suffered a massive stroke at the age of 51. While hospitalized, attempts were made to try to help him regain some mobility, but the effects of the stroke had been too severe. He could not walk, he could not speak, and he could use only one arm. From that year until his death in 1973, Brother Jude occupied a room in the infirmary of the

monastery and he was cared for by Brother Lawrence Clifford SDS, the infirmarian. Brother Jude called for him by using the bell whenever he needed something.





Jovial, patient and easy-going, Brother Lawrence (whose bedroom was next to Brother Jude's in the infirmary) faithfully brought meals to his resident patient, bathed him, and took care of his every need. He also wheeled him to the chapel for Mass and community prayers each day, and brought him outside on nice days to get some fresh air.

For the students in the seminary, seeing him at Mass was the only way most of them ever knew Brother Jude – whose silent witness to his daily suffering offered in prayer each day served as a real example of a different kind of “ministry” for the students.

In April 1973, Brother Jude died peacefully in the infirmary and was laid to rest in the community cemetery on Loretto Hill. His room in the infirmary was cleared out and cleaned, and “Brother Jude's Bell” – now silent – was packed away.

Brother Lawrence died seven years later in 1980 and was also laid to rest on Loretto Hill, just a few feet from the grave of Brother Jude.



In 1986, when the Salvatorians permanently closed the monastery in St. Nazianz, the Province's Archives – which had been housed in the monastery since 1896 – was moved to its present location in the tower of St. Pius X Parish in Wauwatosa. When going through the many boxes of items to be archived, Brother Edward Havlovic SDS (my immediate predecessor) found this bell, wrapped carefully in tissue paper and placed in a small box. Inside, there was also a hand-written note from Brother Lawrence. It told the story of “Brother Jude's Bell” and how it had been answered so faithfully all those eighteen years. And the last line Brother Lawrence wrote was this: ***“I never want to hear this bell again.”*** Even for patient and kind Brother Lawrence, there was a breaking point.

That's the “human side of archiving.” It isn't about the “stuff” but the stories that go with it. Now, whenever I give a tour of the Archives and tell the story of “Brother Jude's Bell,” I find myself with a smile on my face, but also with a bit of a lump in my throat and a tear in my eye. I knew both of these wonderful men, and their shared story – with all its joys as well as its frustrations – is a heartfelt one indeed.

~ *Michael R. Hoffman SDS*
USA Province Archivist