



## Fr. Patrick Leo James LaBelle O.P.

July 1, 1939 - December 11, 2017

Patrick Leo LaBelle died on December 11, 2017 at CareMeridian in Fairfax, California surrounded by loved ones. Leo was born to Emmett & Alice (Boyle) LaBelle on July 1, 1939. A proud Roman Catholic his whole life and a native of Vallejo, California, he graduated from St. Vincent Ferrer Grammar and High Schools before studying at St. Mary's College of California in Moraga. He entered the Order of Preachers (Dominicans, Western Province) in 1959 and received the religious name Br. Patrick. He made religious profession on September 8, 1960. He was ordained a priest on April 23, 1965 at St. Francis de Sales Cathedral in Oakland. He was given an honorary Doctor of Divinity by St. Mary's College in 1975 and earned a Doctor of Ministry in 1994. Because of his love for the Christian Brothers (F.S.C.) and his years of hard work among them and for those they serve, the Brothers awarded him their highest honor, Affiliation, AFSC.

Fr. LaBelle happily served all of the People of God in his 52 years of priesthood, but he had a special love for college students and young adults, whom he loved like a father. His assignments included St. Thomas More University Parish (Associate Pastor and Pastor), Eugene, Oregon, Blessed Sacrament Priory (Prior) and the Newman Center at the University of Washington (Director), Seattle, Washington, Vicar to the Provincial, President of the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology (2 terms), Berkeley, California, Regent of Studies of the Western Dominican Province, St. Mary's

College Dean of Students, St. Mary Magdalen Parish (Pastor), Berkeley, California, the Catholic Community at Stanford (St. Dominic Parish, first Dominican Pastor), Stanford, California and Vallombrosa Retreat Center (Director), Menlo Park, California.

In no matter what context you met Leo, Patrick, Fr. Patrick, or Fr. LaBelle, you never forgot him. His belief in the goodness of people, his enthusiasm for his work and his plans for the next big thing were always larger than life and infectious. But when you spoke to him one-on-one, you were the complete focus of his formidable attention. He guided many, old, young and everywhere in between, through various problems, crises and issues with piercing insight, a heart as big as his personality, good humor, and an uncanny ability to get the listener to believe, as he absolutely did, that they would overcome whatever struggle they had, no matter how insurmountable it seemed. And he was usually right.

Fr. Patrick was a true son of St. Dominic, a preacher of the Good News. The mission of Jesus was the mission of the Church, and all of the members of the Church, without exception, had work to do. God loved them, and everyone, yes, but you have work to do, a mission. He never shied away from controversial topics in his preaching (or conversation) when they needed to be addressed. His hearers did not always agree with him nor was that what he looked for. Rather, he wanted his preaching to help his listeners to think and act as he strove with integrity, “to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with” God (Micah 6:8) and “to love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39) If he helped you to do that, whatever that looked like in your life, he was happy.

Leo once said that people were his hobby. Boy, did he love his hobby! He loved being in touch with his family, his Dominican brothers and sisters, his friends and acquaintances, current and former students, current and former

parishioners and colleagues, university presidents or the person serving his meal; they were all equally important to him. He had a gift for accompanying people on their journey through life and serving as a mentor. It did not matter whether it was for a long time or a single meeting, he was always genuinely interested in the person in front of him and their flourishing.

Patrick is survived by his brother, Robert, and his sister, Claire, their spouses, children and grandchildren. Services will be at St. Dominic's Church, 2390 Bush St., San Francisco. The Vigil will be on December 14 at 7:30 PM. The funeral Mass will be on December 15 at 10:00 AM. Interment will follow the Mass at St. Dominic's Cemetery in Benicia at 2:30 PM. Donations in his memory, to support the formation of future Dominican priests and brothers, can be sent to Western Dominican Province, 5877 Birch Ct., Oakland, CA 94618-1627 or at [opwest.org/frpatrickmemorial](http://opwest.org/frpatrickmemorial)

# Cemetery Details

## St. Dominic's Cemetery

585  
hillcrest avenue  
BENICIA, CA 94510

# Previous Events

## Vigil services

DEC 14. 7:30 PM (PT)

St. Dominic's Church  
2390 Bush Street  
San Francisco, CA

## Mass of Christian Burial

DEC 15. 10:00 AM (PT)

St. Dominic's Church  
2390 Bush Street  
San Francisco, CA

## Service

DEC 15. 2:30 PM (PT)

St. Dominic's Cemetery  
585  
hillcrest avenue  
BENICIA, CA 94510



# Tribute Wall



“ *Fr. Patrick Leo James LaBelle O.P.*

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November 29, 2022 at 08:20 PM



“ *As a visiting seminarian from the Church of England in 1994-95, Pat taught me preaching, and it was utterly inspirational. He personified the charism of the Order of PREACHERS in a remarkable way, and his generosity of spirit was profound. I shall always remain deeply grateful to him.*

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**Dominic Barrington** - February 09, 2018 at 06:10 PM