

AN ELEGY TO FATHER KITTLE

Father

you were well ahead of your time
so no one knew at first what to make of you
and no one knew if you were black or white
but soon it did not matter *[pre-1964 Civil Rights Act]*

Father

you said Mass efficiently and quickly
your sermons made sense
and made the parishioners laugh and feel good *[pre-Vatican II]*

Father

the children would flock to the hem of your cassock
and chase you as they would a superstar
you would smile
and reach into the pocket of the cassock
and scatter candy to the wind
as the children scattered for their just reward

Father

you believed children needed attention
and you provided it positively
you built basketball courts in parking lots
where there had only been concrete
fashioned temporary soccer goals
organized games of all sorts during recess and lunch hour
taught by example
disciplined the undisciplined
and made them love it

Father

you coached fourth, fifth and sixth graders
and saw talent
where others saw none
you developed amazing teamwork
and eventually talented fast breaking teams

*[and amazed us by one-stepping in
your cassock to remove jammed
basketballs and grazing the rim]*

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Father
you made a lifelong impression on me
and

Father
you know
it is true the good die young
and
you were too young

Father
you deserve this
belated mahalo
and
aloha

Tomas (one of your fourth graders in 1959)
10 April 2008; rev. slightly 18 October 2008