



Obituary for Jon Aidan Marr

August 7, 1933 – May 19, 2022

Jon Aidan Marr (born Jon Marr Stark) died on May 19, 2022, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He was eighty-eight years old.

Jon was born August 7, 1933, in Denver, Colorado, to John Hutton Stark and Margaret Marr. He attended the Kent School in Denver and Pacific Grove High School in Carmel, California. He returned to Colorado to study at UC Boulder, where he graduated in 1956 with a degree in English and a life-long love of theater. However, Jon felt called to serve his faith and found his spiritual home in the Episcopal tradition. He was encouraged by the Episcopal bishop of Colorado, Joseph Minnis, to attend seminary, which he did at Nashotah House, WI.

Following Father Jon's ordination at St. John's Cathedral in Denver in 1959, he was appointed Vicar of St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Estes Park. At the time, he was the youngest priest ever to serve there. During his seven years in Estes Park, he grew the parish and established a coffee house for young people of all faiths.

In 1968, Fr Jon took a leave of absence and traveled to Paris, where he encountered and joined the student uprising of 1968, a life-changing experience for him. Later that summer, he moved on to London to work for the decennial Lambeth Conference, a gathering of Anglican bishops from around the world. Following that, he continued to Chicago to attend the Urban Training Center for Christian Mission, where he met Jesse Jackson and joined the Vietnam War protests during the 1968 Democratic Convention.

In 1969, Fr. Jon returned to Colorado to accept the position of rector of St Andrew's Episcopal Church in Denver and to bring to fruition his intention to serve God by serving those in need. He quickly established a new religious order and monastery, the Order of the Holy Family (officially recognized in 1974). The Order's mission was to serve Denver's unhoused and transient youth

and young adults. The Order provided shelter, food, medical care, and job training. During that era in Denver, many considered such an undertaking to be uncomfortably radical.

However, Father Jon's vision and the work of the OHF proved groundbreaking, filling a true unmet need. Many young adults whom the Order served stayed on to help others. They eventually adopted a uniform of blue denim, soon shaped like the habit worn by monks. Jon is remembered by numerous former residents and members of the Order who say that his work and the example he set was life-changing and inspired many to become Episcopal priests.

In 1984, Fr. Jon and the remaining monks of the OHF relocated to Santa Fe, NM, where he continued his ministry until his retirement from the church. While there, he legally changed his name to Jon Aidan Marr.

In 1987, Jon established Braemarr Kennel in Santa Fe, a widely respected boarding and pet crematorium business. During its nearly two decades of operation, Jon did not falter in his mission to creatures of God, saving countless lost and abandoned dogs and cats from euthanasia. He boarded them for free at his kennel, inevitably moving them into his home when more space was needed. Dozens of animals lived their final years in peace and comfort, blessed by Jon's care and love.

During his years in Santa Fe, Jon also found joy returning to his early love of acting. He lent his resonant voice to radio and voiceover work and engaged in Santa Fe's community theater, notably appearing in a production of T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. A personal highlight for Jon was the chance to play Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust*, staged at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in New York City.

Following the sale of Braemarr, Jon spent his final years in Socorro, New Mexico, where he had moved to be closer to his sister, Elaine.

Those who knew Jon celebrated his beautiful soul and the good work he performed on earth. He lived his faith with energy and dedication and his signature charisma, theater, and élan. His powerful intellect and creative energy remained forever in service to his heart.

Jon is survived by two half-brothers, Robert and William Stark; his older sister, Elaine Spencer Marr, preceded him in death in 2020. A memorial service and inurnment of Jon's ashes will take place at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Denver on Saturday, October 19, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. MT. The service will be live-streamed at <https://www.standrewdenver.org/livestream>.

"He did not say: Thou shalt not be tempested, thou shalt not be travailed, thou shalt not be afflicted; but He said: Thou shalt not be overcome. God wills that we take heed to these words, and that we be ever strong in sure trust, in weal and woe... and all shall be well."

- Julian of Norwich