



## *Father Robert A. J. Brungs*

Father Robert A.J. Brungs died in St. Louis on May 8, 2006, at the age of 75. Born in Cincinnati, he entered the Society in the Maryland Province but worked most of his life in the Missouri Province. He

was a Jesuit for 57 years and a priest for 42 years.

Four years after he completed his doctorate in physics at Saint Louis University, he co-founded ITEST, the Institute for Theological Encounter with Science and Technology, and spent the next 38 years as its director. At his death, the institute had more than 400 members in 35 countries, representing all major scientific disciplines, medicine, law, the humanities, philosophy, and theology.

He collaborated with members of ITEST through conferences he organized to bridge what he believed was the false chasm between the grace of faith and the glory of science. He took science and faith so seriously and so radically, and he worked tirelessly to show the world how the two were so united.

Throughout his career, which began as a physics teacher and theology professor at Saint Louis University, he wrote extensively. He authored four books and many articles. His books include *A Priestly People* (Sheed and Ward, 1968) and *You See the Lights Breaking upon Us: Doctrinal Perspectives on Biological Advances* (ITEST, 1989). He was also executive producer of two award-winning short films, "Lights Breaking: A Journey Down the

Byways of Genetic Engineering" and "Decision."

He encouraged the church hierarchy and the rest of us to be concerned with the revelation of Christ in the context of the physical and biological sciences. He was one of the first to raise questions about new advances in the biological sciences — what he called the third technological revolution in human history. He believed genetic engineering, like all human activity, must be subjected to standards of morality.

In 1973 Pope Paul VI named him a consultor to the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Believers, an organization promoting discussions between the Church and those without religious beliefs. He also served on the U.S. bishops' Committee on Science and Human Values.

Much of Brung's work was done in a small room in the Jesuit community building adjacent to the university, but his influence reached across the globe. Upon hearing of his death, the scientists, teachers, physicians, and theologians who were his partners in apostolate — from this country and even from the far reaches of France, New Zealand, and Brazil — showered ITEST with e-mails of solidarity and gratitude and faith.

His lasting legacy is his love for God and his Lord's creation. A few days before he finally and fully belonged to God, he said to Sister Marianne Postiglione RSM, "All I want is to love God." It was apt that she heard this testament, for he was singularly blessed by her collaboration in the apostolate, which made so many of his projects possible, and by their friendship.

— Father Michael G. Harter SJ