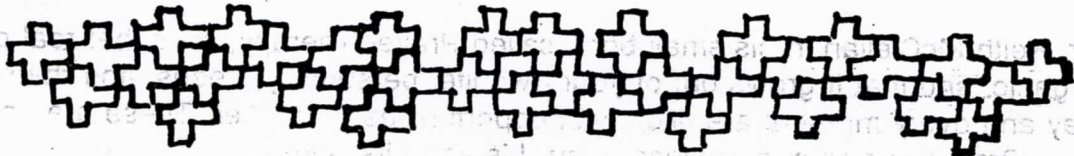


Midwest Bits and Pieces

August 1, 1992



BROTHERS CELEBRATE JUBILEES: MANY ACTIVE IN DIOCESE

Jill Boughton

Notre Dame --- Besides the priests and sisters whose anniversaries were noted in *Today's Catholic* June 14, nineteen brothers from the Midwest Province, Brothers of Holy Cross, observed jubilees with Eucharist and a reception on June 13.

Brother Remigius Bullinger of Phoenix, Arizona, was celebrating his 60th anniversary of vows. Five brothers were commemorating 50 years: Brother Roman Koenigsknecht and Brother Eduardo Michalik, who live at Notre Dame's Columba Hall, and Brother Berry Lambour (Akron, Ohio), Brother John Federowicz (St. Paul, Minnesota) and Brother Hobart Pieper (Dhaka, Bangladesh).

Four brothers living in the diocese celebrated 40th anniversaries. Brother Robert Dierker serves on the staff at St. Joseph High School while Brother Raymond Harrington teaches at Holy Cross College and Brother Bernard Donahoe is chairman of the history department at St. Mary's College. Brother Jerome Quella lives at Dujarie House, Notre Dame. Living out of town are Brother Joseph Berg, who works at Catholic Charities in Alexandria, Virginia; Brother Richard Shea of Berwyn/Cicero (Illinois) Council on Aging, Brother Raymond Kelly (St. Andrew Church, Cape Coral, Florida) and Brother Bernard Klim of Fort Portal, Uganda.

Celebrating 25th jubilees are Brother Arthur Gohl, Maintenance Director at Columba Hall, Notre Dame, Brother John Tryon, counselor at St. Joseph's High School, and Brother Shaun Gray, staff member at LeMans Academy in Rolling Prairie. Brothers serving elsewhere are Brother Richard Kearney, school counseling program coordinator with Catholic Charities in Oakland, California and Brother Joseph Tsiquaye, who works with laity formation in Sunyani, Ghana.

Celebrant for the 2 p.m. liturgy at Sacred Heart Basilica was the Rev. David Schlaver, C.S.C., Editor/Publisher at Ave Maria Press.

Brother Thomas Maddox, C.S.C. of Edmonton, Alberta Canada, was the homilist while Brother Daniel Kane (Gilmour Academy, Ohio) prepared and directed the music. 300 guests joined the jubilarians at a reception at the Holy Cross Brothers' Center arranged by its superior, Brother Joseph Fox.

"Prayer Therapy:" by Brother James Greteman, C.S.C.

Fr. Keith McClellan in his small book called Prayer Therapy, says that real prayer is organic, and that it grows out of your own life, personality, needs, and rhythms. Each day and every moment are filled with opportunities for prayer. These are some:

- Prayer begins in a restless heart. Listen to its' stirring.
- Prayer is yearning for one's true home. Follow its' lead.
- Prayer is like a garden. Tend it and it will be fruitful.
- Don't worry about words or formulas. Prayer is a listening.
- Prayer has many methods. Do it your own way.
- Pray always, but schedule special times too. The spirit, like the body, needs formal exercise.
- Prayer and love need few words.
- Bring your anger to prayer. Hot metal can be molded.
- Pray when you're worried, for it puts everything in perspective.
- Use quiet times for prayer. Silence draws you to the Infinite.

Maybe you could add to this list with some of your experiences and tie them to prayer.

PROPHETS, POETS, AND PRAGMATISTS

Brother Thomas Maddix, CSC

"What God does first, best and most is to trust us with our moment in history. God trusts us to do what must be done for the sake of God's whole community." This quote by scripture scholar Walter Brueggemann, represents one of my favorite quotes about our mission as Christians and provides a framework for our celebration.

Today, we celebrate with our jubilarians not only their experience of trust in God's Providence but also God's invitation to each of them and to us to work for the good of all people.

Jubilees also provide us an opportunity to reflect upon our call as Christians as well as members of the Congregation of Holy Cross. Our constitutions open with the summons, "Come. Follow Me." The call of Jesus has been heard by each of us gathered here today. Not only once, I would wager, but often throughout our lives. It's a call that beckons us not only to our various lifestyles and careers but also to deepen who we are and the values that shape our very existence.

Likewise, it's a call that at times like the person in the "Hound of Heaven", we have resisted. How often does our experience mirror that of the poet who writes,

I fled Him, down the night and down the days,
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways of my own mind....

Like Jacob, we have often found ourselves "wrestling with God," and limping away gracefully wounded from a match which pitted our will and desire against God's call within us. The wrestling and our woundedness flows from the experience that to be faithful to God's call, we often have to let something die, painful as it may be, so something fresh and renewed can emerge.

Finally, there are moments within our lives we can sing with the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, "The world is charged with the grandeur of God, It will flame out, like shining from shook foil..." At these moments in our lives, we freely yield to God's call and follow, even though we don't know where God's voice leads.

Call then, as Joseph Campbell writes, enables us to follow our bliss. He says, "If we follow our bliss, we put ourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for us, and the life that we ought to be living is the one we are living. Wherever we are - if we are following our bliss, we are enjoying that refreshment, that life within us, all the time." (p. 1 The Power of Myth). Powerful words and a clear description of what happens when we live in concert with God's call within and among us.

Our readings today dare us to trust in God's abiding Providence. If we follow our bliss, we reveal God's light through our actions, attitudes and values. As Theresa of Avila has so clearly stated, "The only hands that Christ has are our hands." For the word of God as spoken in Deuteronomy provides direct insight into the meaning of discipleship and biblical living not only for biblical times but also for us today. Discipleship and biblical living, the writer reminds us, is not beyond our strength or reach. Nor is it "out there somewhere or downthere somewhere." No, the writer challenges, "It is in our mouth and in our heart for our observance." In other words, faith, the Voice of the Living God, springs from within, and God challenges us through intuition, imagination and movements of the heart to be "lights" wherever we live and whatever we do.

The invitation is clear and it's this on-going summons that we celebrate today. The call each of these men has heard over and over in their lives and been invited to answer. As the constitutions of The Congregation of Holy Cross state, "We wished to abandon all to follow Christ. We learned in time that we still had it within ourselves to hold back. We wish to be wholehearted, yet we are hesitant. Still, like the first disciples, we know that Christ will draw us along and reinforce our localities if we yield to Him." (#7). Is this not the tension all of us have in trying to respond to God's call with all our heart? But also a necessary tension if we seek to follow our bliss and live lives of integrity and graciousness as bearers of light at this particular moment in history.

In the very early Church before religious congregations were formed, the lay men and women who paved the way for the emergence of vowed religious communities had the distinct task of **"making a distant God personable to the people around them."** It seems to be that the challenge of our early ancestors in the faith remains constant for us today. When asked by people who fail to pray and believe in a living God, the great reformer John Calvin remarked hundreds of years ago that many have forgotten who God is or fear praying because God might ask them to do something they don't want to do. Is that not true today.

Today's readings dare us to trust in a God who dwells among and in us even though we often don't feel God's presence or see God's light in our midst. Furthermore, our Gospel reading urges us to share that experience of a living God by using our energies, talents and insight to bring light into the world. Yet, we are free to resist God's ever-present invitation. If we choose to ignore God's invitation, the Gospel writer reminds us, the light gets put under the bushel basket and the world grows dark.

Darkness fills itself with paradox. For Christians, the dark night of the soul represents a time of unlearning and learning as well as a time of dying and rising. It's a time in which the path becomes blurred, the steady anchors fade and we find ourselves looking for direction, meaning and substance, both as individuals and groups. The temptation when God calls us into the uncertainty of darkness is to flee: to flee the questioning, the searching and the wrestling. In other words, it's going to cost something, and often we don't want to pay the personal and corporate price of God's invitation.

For if we flee God's summons, we miss the grace of transformation and find ourselves clutching the different "isms" of our day; fundamentalism, conservatism, individualism, liberalism and consumerism and not grasping the hand of Christ in faith, hope and love in the midst of darkness. As the writer of Deuteronomy reminds us, the Word is very near to us; we only have to recognize it. Likewise, the experience forces us to ask, do we really believe God's Word dwells within us as individuals and as communities and urges us on even in the midst of uncertainty, uncharted roads and an apparent absence of God's presence.

Another type of darkness emerges during this period of uncharted journeying when we fail to yield to Christ's call in our lives. It's the darkness of indifference, listlessness, boredom, and false security. Born of fear, this type of darkness freezes us into patterns of denial, isolation, slow burning anger, warring factions and hopelessness as individuals, groups and cultures. And, we need not look too far for plenty examples of this within our midst!..

Thus, as we reflect upon the challenges God puts before us today, we need to constantly ask ourselves, are we open enough, risking enough and vulnerable enough that God may give us a destiny we do not plan, control or contrive?

Recently in reading a series of books, I have been amazed at the number of books focused upon the care of the soul. For instance, Richard Rohr, in his book entitled *Simplicity*, states that where at one time we thought our purpose in life was to save our soul, our invitation now is to discover our soul. His reflections mirror a lot of people today who have travelled the uncharted roads of life. On this path they have learned the craft of soul-making. Through the process of learning to tend their inner garden by the process of weeding, pruning as well as nurturing the new life God gives them, they welcome new life, energy and vision into themselves and the world around them by integrating various turns in the road their lives have taken.

Let us, then, celebrate with our brothers their religious journey of soul making. As they have wandered the back, main and uncharted roads of life, they have been about soul-making. Through them and their many gifts and talents, we have learned something of the process of saying yes to God's call as well as clues to the many ways in which God prods us along the journey.

From these men too we have witnessed the diversity of gifts that make Holy Cross such a unique group within the Church and society. When Holy Cross was fashioned in the soul of the 19th century France, we benefitted from a school of spirituality that nurtured a vigorous commitment to ministry grounded in an experience of a living God, Jesus. Furthermore, the school urged its disciples to know the Jesus who they followed and not flee from where that experience of Jesus leads.

Today, then, we celebrate the jubilees of some of our prophets, poets and pragmatists who in their own way have dedicated themselves to bringing light into the World by obedience to Christ's summons, "Come, Follow Me." Through their lives we have come to understand a glimpse of journey-filled hope as defined by Vacal Haval, the President of Czechoslovakia, who said, "Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense regardless of how it turns out."