

MIDWEST – MIDWEEK

Brothers of Holy Cross – Midwest Province - P.O. Box 460 – Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-0460

June 26, 2019

Eulogy
for
Brother James Bluma, C.S.C.
June 19, 2019

Milton Rosenberg wrote in the periodical,
Pastoral Psychology, that:

“We hunger for a kind of group association in which,
through being ourselves, we may get to something
greater than ourselves.”



James Bluma, it can be said, was very much himself, a man of commitment, a man of principle, a man of strongly held opinion, adamantly expressed even, and through it all, and above it all—a gentle man.

Born in Green Bay, Wisconsin, he was ever a Green Bay Packers’ fan. That and his military service as a marine after graduating from Central Catholic High School made him a formidable personality and an engaging conversationalist. He seemed ever happy and ever eager to talk—about students, about Community characters, and about sports. As a teacher at St. Joe High School in South Bend and as an administrator at Hoban in Akron, he was really preparing himself for the most important job of his career: principal of Reitz Memorial High School in Evansville, where he worked for 14 years as an involved and caring Brother. He was highly respected. Then at Holy Cross College he continued his outreach to students as a math teacher and as Vice-President for Student Affairs.

He often remembered how he was “roped” into work at Holy Cross College: the president needed someone to oversee the National College Association self-study

accreditation report in 1985. The president said to James: “You are the only man for the job.” James said he fell for it, and then stayed for another twelve years. He maintained his energy, according to Brother James Leik, by eating an apple every day at lunch—at his office desk and cutting it with a special apple knife.

Yes, James did all this, accomplished all this.

And through it all one saw a steady direction in this man of principle and commitment. It was a tenacity from deep within—greater than the virtue of his consistency and the regularity of his disciplined ways.

James was a worker bee: many jobs, many functions—a Brother, like so many others with their workloads. And much of that work was behind the scenes, probably unnoticed, but certainly not on display beyond what was demanded of his leadership position at the time. We witnessed—a disciplined demeanor and charitable soul, someone who always inquired into your own well-being, and initiated the question—“Hey, how are you doing?”

This was equally true in his time of decline as well—during his later days at our infirmary. James struggled with a failing memory in his last days. Nevertheless, kindness trumped forgetfulness in this man. Ask anyone at Dujarie, especially the staff. Was this not a gentle soul, always respectful of your person, always courteous and interested in you beyond your service to him? I am sure also there are many here today whose memories of James could likewise write a similar story beyond what the three of us have formally listed here. In everyone’s telling one would find this gentlemanly part of his nature evident, even in those trying times of being confused for the reason he was in the hospital, how he got to the hospital, why he had to be in the hospital, and who had put him in the hospital. James Bluma the gentle-man still came through.

On one particular occasion, three Brothers visited James at Memorial Hospital arriving at his bedside separately. David Martin and William Mewes came together. I was there already on that particular day—all of us doing what anyone else would do—visiting the sick. It was evident Jim had gone into further decline. There was an untouched meal-tray sitting on the table next to his bed. And why hadn’t it been eaten?

“Do you want some of your meal, James?” “No.” “Not just a little bit of what’s here?” “No.” (Emphatically, no.)

With his eyes closed during all those “no” replies and later, one knew James was

definitely being James. And, so we listened as was proper to that special moment because it was more than a mere yes or no to a simple question. In that brief event, in what was a sensitive moment in an end-stage illness, it was James' unique self that spoke most intently. Deeper than his refusal to eat (what anyone would consider a life-giving action) but consistent as always to an inner and greater resolve, came the gentle-man as usual. And, here's proof of that in just one small example.

As the three of us visiting that day were ready to leave, I asked if we could pray with him, whether he wanted a prayer from us. "Yes." Each of the three of us prayed in his own way. We remained silent too. ("Take off your shoes—you are on holy ground.") James, with eyes still closed throughout our vocal prayer and the remaining silence itself, had heard every word, and there would be proof later on.

David and William excused themselves and went their way having been there as a gesture of the same community's love and concern that James Bluma had shown by his similar actions those many years previous. Charity, support, kindness, Brotherhood, just like him we were there for one another in that brief but meaningful encounter. But, in a deeper sense worth reflecting on as well—Who was the giver? Who was the receiver?

I left, not long after that. Before leaving though, three spoonfuls of apple sauce were finally welcomed after one more request of inviting James to eat. "Yes." I said I was going then, bidding my farewell in a sense. I had to wonder, though, whether it would be my last conversation with him. But James surprised us all and gave one more gift to the living. With his eyes still closed, he responded distinctly, purposefully, and clearly and with a palpable sense of calm and serenity in his very person.

In those times, though, one can never know what really goes on in the depths of a person. We don't live in their bodies. We can only intuit and read facial expressions and bodily signs. From all readable appearances, though, James seemed at peace, even serene. And then from all that revered silence, as if to confirm a much deeper thing going on within him, he said clearly and distinctly, beyond the terse "yes" or "no" of his earlier replies:

"That was nice. That made my day. All of you. Thank you."

"Thank you." There it was—James Bluma—the consistent gentleman as always—that particular quality of his on full display even in the midst of this time of his having no control, no reason in his own mind why he was there, no understanding of how he got there, and maybe not even knowing where he literally was out came a kindness, a

charitable response, a simple gesture indicating, one must assume, his appreciation of a returned kindness for our visit, but much more importantly a powerful indication of the sacredness of the moment, of his closeness to God. Deep called unto deep.

For him no more time for, or need of, leadership. No more time for, or need of, commitment to work and principle. No more time for, or need of, any further service other than the naked honesty, humility, and openness he displayed in his appreciative response to us. A significant passage had begun one can only assume. But, in another way we should know too, that this straightforwardness and apparent lack of any fear or seeming anxiety came from the accumulated, repeated and kindly behavior of all his previous days. It was his deepest self.

So, James Bluma, Religious of Holy Cross for these 61 years as our Brother, even in the last event you manifested who you were and had always been. Your words too, simple and direct as always, continued to be "yes—yes; no--no," and then came the equally simple and profound clincher:

“Thank you. Thank you all.”

And thank you too, James, for all your work and commitment in the faithful and dedicated consistency involved in that ministry.
Underneath it all was the essential you.

You showed us especially in this simple yet profoundly touching moment, and maybe the last example of your last days with us, what we all must know one way or the other----that Gratitude, Gratitude is the basis of the spiritual life, of all our life.

Still, it is the WHOLE of YOUR life for which WE are grateful.

Rest in peace, James our Brother.

Welcome home (as the Lord must say) to the place
“prepared for you from all eternity.”

George Klawitter, James Leik, and Joe McTaggart each contributed to this eulogy.

Eulogy
for
Brother John Herbert Kuhn, C.S.C.
June 20, 2019



Good morning, I'm Brother Charles Smith from Gilmour Academy in Cleveland, Ohio. Pick up the obituary photograph you received as you entered the chapel this morning and study Brother John Kuhn's photograph. This is the picture of a man who knows how to live. Brother John had a genius for coaxing joy out of life. Today's gospel is perfect for Brother John Kuhn's funeral. Jesus offers the woman at the well living water. John drank the "living water."

A few days ago I was called and asked if I could do the eulogy for Brother John Kuhn. I thought I wasn't qualified. We shared residence only one shortened school year, 1963-64, 56 years ago. It may be that part of the difficulty in finding a eulogist for Brother John is he had outlived all those who knew him best. And John may be too large a personality to eulogize anyway, too gregarious, self confident, independent, gifted, and magnanimous. I believed there were others better able than I, but he is my friend, and I agreed to be part of a "tag-team" eulogy in the hope that together we could do him justice. John would expect a good job from us. As I entered the chapel this morning, I learned that a "tag-team" was vetoed, and I was John's eulogist.

When John and I met in 1963, I was 22, just graduated from college and the same month reporting for my initial teaching post at Holy Trinity High School in Chicago. The Brothers' house on Noble Street in Chicago, a street away from Holy Trinity High School, housed about 30 Brothers that year. When we first met, John was a veteran teacher with a decade of teaching experience and chairman of the English department. I was a completely untested, prospective teacher. Br. John was assigned to be my "mentor teacher." At the end of school year 1963-64, John was re-assigned to become the principal at Reitz Memorial HS in Evansville, IN where he himself had been a top high school student.

Although we never lived together after that, John made sure we were ever friends. In all the years since, John has always graced me with generous warm greeting when we'd "catch up" at Brothers' funerals, province meetings, or jubilees. Today I recall one such gathering at the time when we Brothers were first changing out of our black

cassocks. Someone may have suggested we'd wear cassocks only in our caskets, to which John announced that he wanted it known that he was to be buried in the burgundy blazer. This was his way of confirming the change. That was decades back, and John was always agile, so I think he is pleased with the clothes chosen for him today.

Br. John Kuhn taught Trinity seniors in the classroom opposite mine where I had sophomores. He taught me what was needed for classroom management, the importance of having seating charts, maintaining high standards, requiring homework, preparing lesson plans, using an Xacto knife to edit out errors on the blue ditto stencils, and he showed me how to get around in Chicago, how to do silk screen printing, and much more. At that time, John loved classical music, and he was an artist. John wasn't the only mentor. There were many on the faculty who seemed to know the importance of helping a newbie Brother get off to a good start at teaching. On the second floor of Holy Trinity, in adjacent classrooms, I was also mentored by the other Brothers of the English department: Brothers Joe Chvala, Robert Mosher, and Donald Rink. Brother Leon, who taught Latin, paid caring attention to the novice English teacher too. In the office Br. Barry Lambour was principal and Richard Reaume was his assistant. Both made sure I learned the ropes. Any competence I had in the classroom came from those Brother mentors.

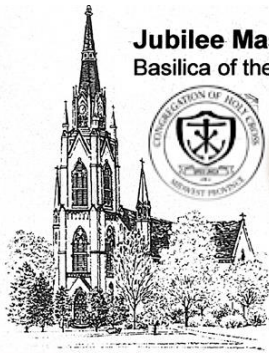
Brother Charles Smith

Pictures from Jubilee 2019



Holy Cross Brothers from Bangladesh and India join our jubilarians in a photo

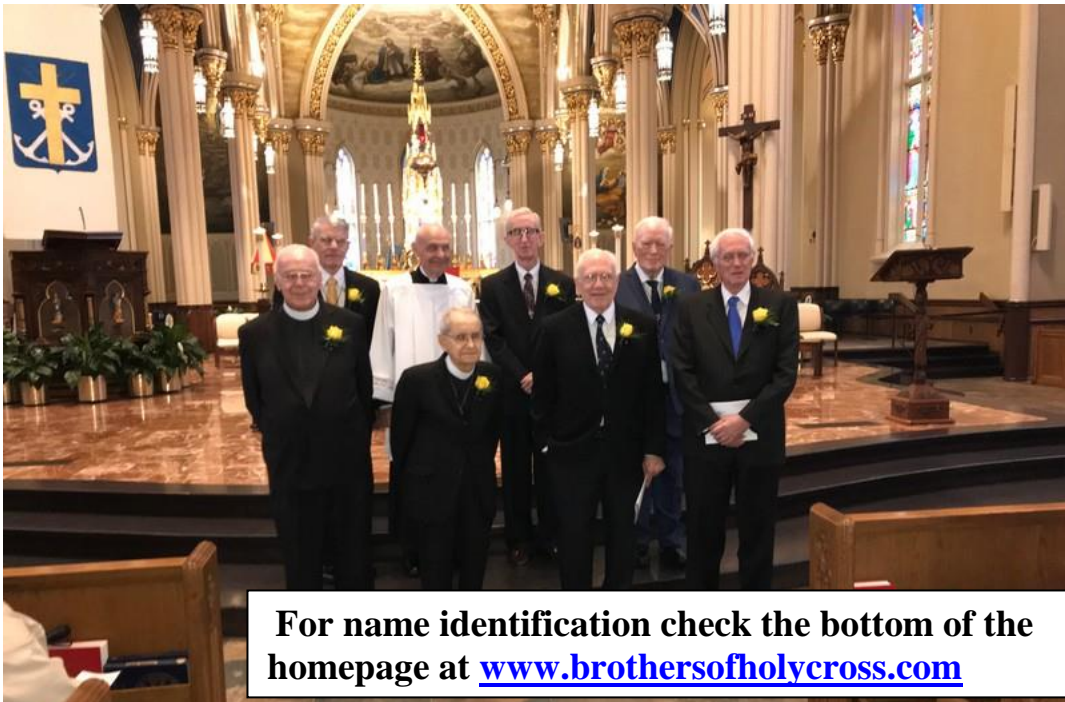




Jubilee Mass ~ 15 June 2019 ~ 10:30 AM (EDT)
Basilica of the Sacred Heart ~ The University of Notre Dame



Two members from the Moreau Province join with our Midwest jubelarians to celebrate: Brothers John Crowe and Robert Falcone



For name identification check the bottom of the homepage at www.brothersofholycross.com



Annual Saint Andre Award Holy Cross Village 2019

Ms. Estella Lane receiving St. Andre Award for 2019 Our Lady of Holy Cross chapel on June 19th 2019.

Visit Holy Cross Village Website:

<https://holycrossvillage.com/>



From the *Voice of Moreau Website*

The website features a Holy Cross sister, a brother, and a priest, with a weekly story on the blog. Check the following link below. Midwest-Midweek will post links to these members as they become available.

[Bro. Benoit, Sr. Anna Golden, Bishop McCauley](#)

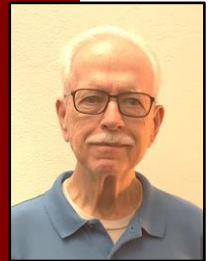


Reflection





Cartoon
by
Brother
James
Kane,
CSC



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