

MIDWEST – MIDWEEK

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



March 28, 2018

Brother Raymond Trotman, CSC

Brother Raymond was a pleasant and well-liked member of Holy Cross. To meet him at Columba Hall was to meet someone who had stories to tell and who loved to smile. His laugh was gentle and classy. But rather than say he “lived” at Columba Hall, we should rather say he “was” Columba Hall because he lived there, on the Notre Dame campus near the grotto, for most of his life. Of his 91 years, 57 of those years were spent in Columba Hall. After one year at the Rolling Prairie novitiate and one year in Dujarie Hall, he moved into Columba Hall and never left it until this week.



Born in Chicago in 1927, part of his heart never really left Chicago. He attended Angel Guardian Grade School and then St. Michael’s High School. He joined the Navy right after high school at the end of World War II and served in the Mariana Islands attaining the rank of Seaman First Class. Back in Chicago in 1946, he trained for the printing business by serving a six-year apprenticeship with the Chicago Typographical Union, then worked as a typesetter for several different companies until he came to Holy Cross. His primary occupation in the Community was typesetting at Ave Maria Press, a job he held for 36 years, working alongside legends at the Press, legends like Brother Anselm and Brother Mark, until he himself became a kind of legend there.

In the summer of 1959, at age 32, he was not the oldest member of the group of men who entered Holy Cross that year. He was the second oldest—a vibrant 32. He was a fine baseball player, one who was always chosen early for afternoon ball games because he could hit homeruns with ease. Perhaps it was his love for the Chicago White Sox that ran through his blood and facilitated his prowess with a baseball bat. He never prided himself, however, on his athletic ability. In all matters he was self-effacing: on the diamond, in his job, in his interactions with other Brothers.

At Notre Dame he loved playing golf and enjoyed being on the course spring, summer, and fall. One summer day he wanted to go golfing with Brother Donald

Schapker, but in those days there was only one car for the one hundred Brothers in Columba Hall so they got a ride down to Erskine Park Golf Course on the south side of town. After their game, they had to take a city bus to get home. As they were going through town, Raymond suggested to Donald that they get off the bus and go into a tavern for a beer. As they went through the door with their golf clubs, the bartender called out, "Hey, there's no golfing in here." Then they went to the Notre Dame campus to watch a football practice, but Ara Parseghian wouldn't let them stay because he said, "You guys might be scouts for Purdue." They never did get to see the practice that day.

One summer a Brother named Andre came from Canada for a visit to Columba Hall. Raymond took him golfing and thereafter he would say, "I went golfing with Brother Andre." Of course it wasn't the famous Brother Andre, who died when Raymond was 10 years old, but it made a great line that Raymond delighted in using: "I went golfing with Brother Andre."

Raymond loved trains. He delighted in taking a train out West to California. He also loved the South Shore train that could get him from South Bend down into Chicago in two and a half hours.

Raymond was very independent and did not like to ask for help, until he could no longer drive. Then he depended on men at Columba Hall to take him weekly to Martin's Grocery Store so he could buy fresh tomatoes. He loved his tomatoes and could travel all over the county looking for good ones. In recent years he would wait anxiously for the superior's vegetable patch to burgeon with the red delights by August. Then he would harvest daily the ones that were ready for his lunch and supper. In his last year he needed others to harvest for him, and he always appreciated what was brought to him. He was a connoisseur of various types of tomato, and he was not hesitant to pronounce one bland, another one superior.

Raymond's daily schedule never varied. He rose early so he could be at the front door of Columba Hall to meet the paper-man by 6 AM. Then he would take the *Chicago Tribune*, the *South Bend Tribune*, and the *New York Times* down to the rec room where he would spread the papers on various tables. He would then go to the dining room and get a cup of coffee and half a dozen prunes. He would arrange the prunes on a napkin and begin his reading until 7 AM when he would stop for Morning Prayer in the chapel. Then it was back to the rec room. He never went to breakfast: the coffee and the prunes were his breakfast. All morning and into the afternoon he would devour the papers, page by page, and I suspect that the typographer in his brain would evaluate the layout of each page, the evenness of the linear columns, the spacing of the headlines.

He was always first in line for lunch, and his evaluation of the vegetable offerings were classic. He always sat for lunch in the same seat at the same table, generally with the same Brothers who valued teasing him about this and that, teasing that never propelled him into anger. If he were offended by banter, he never showed any kind of need for reprisal. He was a gentleman.

Of course Raymond had opinions, strong opinions on current events, sports, and politics, but he never offended with his views, as firm as they often were. He was accepted as one of the “grand old men” of Columba Hall and deeply respected for his loyalty to Holy Cross, his work in the chapel, and his creativeness at Christmas with the tree in the upper rec room. He was loud in chapel in later years as his hearing diminished, and he liked to set a good pace for psalms, sometimes to the annoyance of Brothers in the vicinity.

His smile was genuine, his attention engaging, and his laugh pleasant. He loved sports, especially the Chicago White Sox and the Notre Dame football and basketball teams. When he could no longer attend Notre Dame games in person, he followed his teams on television and ate up sports reviews in the newspapers. I like to think that his devotion to prayer, work, and sports will continue even now when he no longer smiles and walks among us. He was a fixture at Columba Hall and will be greatly missed. Because he loved baseball so much, let’s send him off with a short baseball poem by Marjorie Maddox:

Dreams brimming over,
childhood stretched out in legs,
this is the moment replayed on winter days
when frost covers the field,
when age steals away wishes.
Glorious sleep that seeps back there
to the glory of our baseball days.

Brother George Klawitter



Brother Ray--he embodied simplicity and humility, virtues at the heart of religious life. As did all the Brothers I knew at Ave Maria. As we all should.

Enjoyed meeting you (Br. Roy) yesterday and then chatting with a couple of "Ave" vets after the funeral service.

Frank Cunningham

Columba Hall Luncheon and Talk David Null Presentation

David Null, President and CEO for Holy Cross Village, presented to members of Columba Hall a talk on Holy Cross Village this past week. Over pizza a present and future view of the Village was shown using a PowerPoint display. It was David's first visit. Updating rooms at Dujarie have already started. Once ideas have been realized, a tour would be a welcome trip.



Reflection



Are we friends with ourselves? Do we love who we are? These are important questions because we cannot develop good friendships with others unless we have befriended ourselves.

Henri Nouwen

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Cartoon
By
Brother
James
Kane,
CSC

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