

Father J. Emil Gefell

Following is the text of the sermon given by Rt. Rev. Msgr. James McLaughlin, F.A., V.G., at the funeral of Rev. Dr. J. Emil Gefell, pastor emeritus of St. Peter and Paul's Church, Rochester, Father Gefell died Sunday, May 10, 1959; his funeral Mass was officiated Wednesday, May 13.

There are two occasions in the life of most priests when they are the subjects of a sermon.

One is the joyous festival of his first Mass when his hopes are high and his heart is generous and all his future is before him; the other is the day of his funeral when life is over and the deeds are done and only the past remains.

For some the interval between is short; for others it is long. For Father Gefell it was amazingly long—almost 60 years of priesthood. Yet long of short, he the three, the day comes when we must go down into the tomb to await with hope for the second coming of the Son of Man.

And so we come, grieving, to say a word of farewell to him who for so long was our friend and co-worker and to pray for him, eternal rest. We are not here to judge him nor even to evaluate with a critical eye his ministry, for judgment like vengeance is the Lord's and the evaluation of even the wisest of men is so often wide of the mark.

I am sure that Father Gefell himself would have us use the allotted time to speak on the wonderfulness of the priesthood of Christ, and so I shall be.

St. Paulinus of Nola once said that the function of the priest is to "resounde Christum—echo and re-echo Christ."

This the priest does by preaching the word and administering the Sacraments and offering the Sacrifice and saying his prayers and it might be added, the fidelity and zeal with which he does the latter two will determine both the efficacy of his ministry and the degree of personal sanctification which he attains.

When we say that a priest has done these things well, we have said everything about him that is worth saying.

Everything else is secondary and in a sense accidental: good administration, the power to raise money, the building of fine buildings, as here, wherein we see the fruits of a highly developed taste and the signs of an intense love for the beauty of the Lord's house, honors and high office and power over man's souls.

I know that to some my summing up Father Gefell's long career by saying that he was a good priest will seem like a poor eulogy for a man sixty-three years in the priesthood and that to others it may seem that we damn him with faint praise. But this will be so only for those who look upon the priesthood as they do any other vocation and who have lost sight of the completely supernatural nature of the Christian priesthood.

In other walks of life a man may be a success even though he lacks a love for the things

of the Spirit and thinks little of the need or value of the order of grace. Not so with the priest; let him make light of his grace and let him leave the high plane on which God has placed him and, instead of echoing Christ, he becomes in the word of St. Paul "a blaring trumpet and a clashing cymbal."

Thus it is indeed a great tribute to say that a priest was really a man of prayer with a deep love for his Mass and his Breviary. I know that Father Gefell was just that.

Only last Wednesday, when he had a premonition that the end was near, I visited him for a moment and found him, saying the Divine Office. I asked him if he found it difficult. He answered, "Yes, but though I am forced by weakness to say it piecemeal, thank God I can still say it."

So, too, was his devotion to the Mass. Even when the years had taken their toll and the fatigue of old age had become chronic, he managed to say Mass, first in the privacy of the sisters' chapel, and then when that became too much at an altar in his room and finally, when he could no longer stand, he offered Mass in a sitting position by virtue of an Apostolic permission.

These were the well springs from which in earlier years came his devotion to the orphan and to the fledgling seminarian and to the confused and frightened immigrant. From these, too, came the strength and consolation of his latter years.

Every man, of course, adds something of his own to his priesthood. Some add the jewel of an especially developed virtue, others bring to it the power of a fine mind, some a warm and disarming personality, and so on through the list for there are as many gifts to bring as there are men to come.

I think that Father Gefell brought to his priesthood what the late Pope Pius XI very happily called "lo spirito Romano."

I hope that no one will misunderstand me. When the great Pope in a time of great stress for the Church told a small group of us to cherish this Roman spirit, he made it abundantly clear what he meant by it. It is not something nationalistic and, specifically, it is not something Italian.

On the contrary it is universal in its outlook as the Church itself is universal. It is as much at home in Paris or Berlin or Tokyo or Rochester as it is in Rome. Yet it is Roman in the same sense that Christ was Roman. It is as Catholic and perennial as the See of St. Peter. It is the spirit of Peter and Paul and Lawrence and Gregory and Leo the Great. It is to think with the Church and to love her as the Body of Christ

Belgians Vote End To School Strife

Brussels (NC)—Belgium's House of Representatives has voted almost unanimously for a bill designed to end the Church-state conflict regarding education, and give increased government subsidies to Catholic schools.

The bill, based on a pact agreed to by the nation's three major political parties last November, was passed by 196 votes to two. The two votes against the bill were cast by communist deputies.

THE SCHOOL conflict here began in 1954 when a coalition government of the Socialist and Liberal parties came to power and decreed cuts in state subsidies to Catholic schools.

The pact recognized the right of parents to choose the type of education they want their children to receive and provided that Catholic schools will receive the same subsidies from the central government as are paid to public schools operated by provincial and local governments.

Daily Mass Calendar

Sunday, May 17—Pentecost Sunday (red), Gloria, Sequence, Creed, Preface and canon of Pentecost. Monday through Saturday, May 18 through 23—Mass each day as in missal.

with a deeply personal and pulsating affection.

It makes us see her in all her unchanging beauty and to view her principles in all their robust strength. It makes us rise above the petty and the narrow and the ephemeral, and tells us to place the good of the Church above all else.

It is what distinguishes the true churchman from the ordinary camp follower. Surely Father Gefell had the Roman spirit.

As those of us who lived with him can attest, his thinking was broad and generous, when that of some of his contemporaries was narrow and mean and bigoted. His solution of problems and difficulties, whether parochial or diocesan or world-wide was always governed by his insistence that they meet the challenge, "Is it good for the Church?" He was indeed a churchman.

And yet churchmen too, have their faults and failings like all other mortal men, and so we beg of you a prayer for him that he may rest in Christ with all those who have gone before us and who now sleep the sleep of peace.



London (RNS)—Kneeling at Tyburn Convent in London, 3,000 Catholics receive Benediction from William Cardinal Godfrey of Westminster (on balcony) following the annual procession to commemorate the 1679 century Tyburn martyrs. A small brass triangle in the middle of the road now marks the site of the executions.

Pilgrims Trod Martyrs Path

London (NC)—Young people predominated among the 4,000 persons who took part in London's annual Tyburn Walk—the three-mile route to the gallows taken by the Reformation martyrs.

The pilgrims split up into four sections—each headed by a big Crucifix—to prevent traffic jams. They marched in silence, rosary in hand, through the Sunday afternoon crowds, from the east side of the city right through the West End, to the gallows site at Tyburn, now marked by a cross in the road at the corner of Hyde Park.

Their route approximated as closely as possible that taken by several hundred martyrs who in the days of persecution were dragged feet first over the old rough roads from the old Newgate Jail to Tyburn to suffer the penalty of traitors—partial hanging then disemboweling and dismembering.

The modern pilgrims made three stops on the way, at the ancient Church of St. Etheldreda near Newgate, at St. Anselm and Cedd's Church, and at St. Patrick's Church, Shoho.

At St. Patrick's, the pilgrims were blessed with a relic of Blessed Oliver Plunkett, Archbishop of Armagh, Ireland, and the last of the martyrs to die at Tyburn.

At Tyburn they gathered outside the Convent of the Adorers of the Sacred Heart, where they sang the Lourdes hymn, recited the Rosary and the

Creed. Benediction was given from the balcony over the street by Cardinal Godfrey, Archbishop of Westminster.

Many priests and nuns took part in the walk, one of the most dramatic events in London's Catholic year, which was led by Msgr. Laurence Goulder, Master of the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom, society, devoted to the reconversion of England.

Holy Ghost Devotion Nun's Guide To Sanctity

Vatican City (NC)—Pope John XXIII has singled out the newly beatified Elena Guerra for her devotion to the Holy Ghost.

The Pope granted a special audience to towns people of Lucca, Italy, whose "Beata" was born, and to members of the Oblates of the Holy Ghost, the community of Sisters which she founded.

The audience was held a few days after Pope John assisted at her beatification, the first in his reign. He spoke of her life as an example of how God works through man.

"In her apostolate of devotion to the Holy Ghost and in her life, Sister Elena Guerra gave a shiningly clear example of those abundant fruits which the Spirit of God pours out upon well disposed souls to accomplish His ends.

"These fruits are supernatural light and wisdom through which she knew how to recognize the needs of the Church in modern times to the general admiration of all."

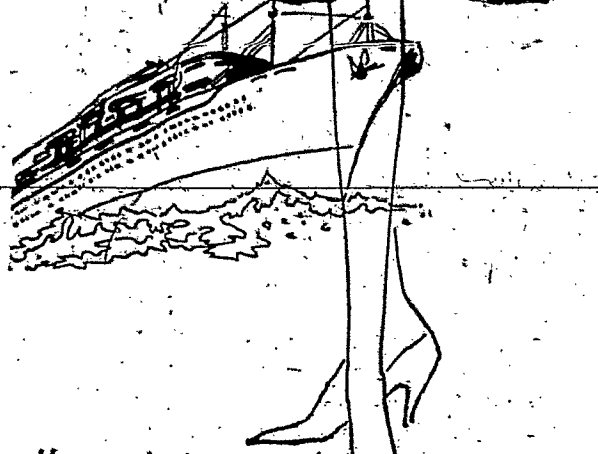
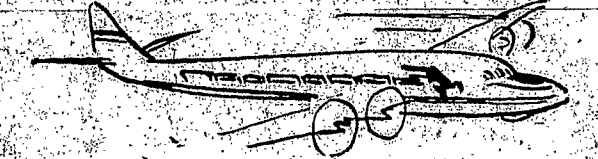
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Considine Given Medal

Detroit (NC)—The 1959 Cor Jesu medal of the First Friday Club of Detroit was presented to Bob Considine, internationally known reporter and columnist, at a club meeting here.

The medal is inscribed "gold for service to God, silver for service to country" and is awarded annually to a layman who has distinguished himself for contributions to both.

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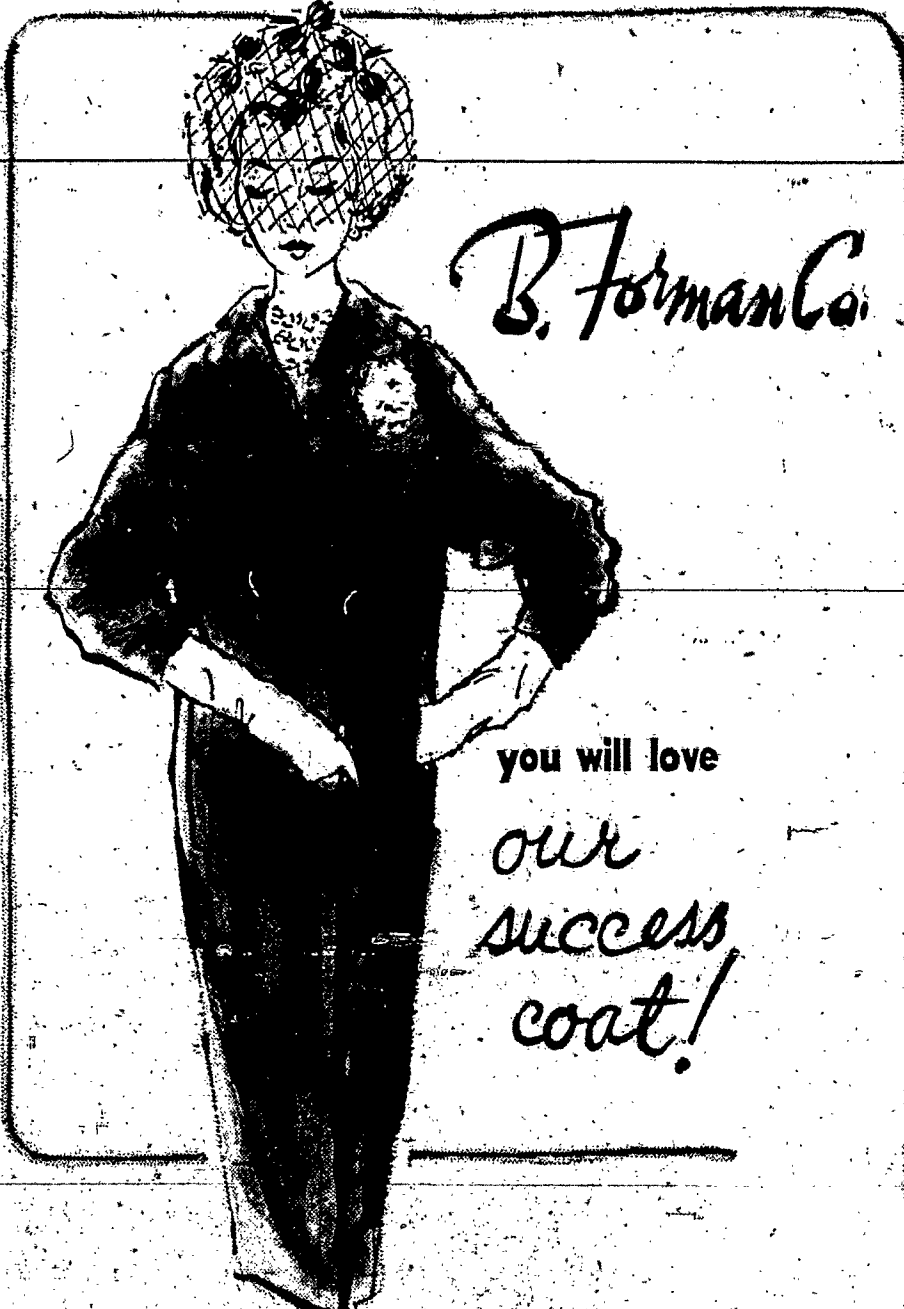
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