

THE CARDINAL . . .



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... going native in Colombia

... obeisance

... help for Red Sox

... a Man Who Has Defied Classification

From Courier-Journal Services

Boston — Cardinal Richard James Cushing, retiring as archbishop of Boston at the age of 75 because of poor health, has all his life been a man who defies easy definition.

Gruff and raspy in manner, his rough-hewn features and booming voice are only a cover for a remarkable interior personality that has shown itself as humble, generous, full of humor, unafraid of either the controversial or the new.

He is the product of a subculture developed by the Irish Catholics of Boston at the turn of the century to insulate themselves from the cold Yankee Protestant atmosphere of a city that had been the capital of Puritanism.

Cardinal Cushing, 75 years old, was often described as a simple soul in a complex man. His rise to prominence was tied closely to that of two other men—Pope John XIII and President Kennedy—who provided an atmosphere in which the Cardinal's personality flourished.

Cardinal Cushing, whose resignation as archbishop of Boston was announced Sept. 8, was elevated to the Cardinalate in 1958 by Pope John. The move followed 14 years of relative obscurity as an archbishop. Encouraged by the spirit of ecumenism engendered by Pope John, Cardinal Cushing seized the initiative and began preaching in Protestant pulpits, visiting Masonic lodges and court- ing Jewish congregations.

His ecumenical crusade came

while the city of Boston was beginning an ambitious program of renewal, and the doughty Cardinal came to be hailed as the brightest symbol of the "new Boston."

In 1960 he was projected onto the national political scene in the role of spiritual adviser and close personal friend of John F. Kennedy and, along with Robert Frost, the New England poet, he shared the spotlight at the inauguration of the first Roman Catholic to be elected President.

As spiritual leader of 1.8 million Catholics in his diocese, Cardinal Cushing had long been an influence in Massachusetts politics and the association with the region's most prominent Catholic family was a natural one. It was one, too, full of pain for the prelate who sought to comfort the family, first when the President was assassinated, later when his brother Senator Robert F. Kennedy met a similar fate, and finally, when Joseph P. Kennedy, head of the family, died last year.

One of Cardinal Cushing's most treasured gifts, valued by him more than awards and decorations from a dozen foreign countries and governments, was John F. Kennedy's wartime military dogtag which was given to him by Jacqueline.

He said he preferred it to a pectoral cross, that emblem of episcopal office worn from a chain around a bishop's neck. "I have crosses enough without carrying one adorned with jewels," he once remarked, with his usual unfussiness about the prestige and finery of what

he called his "glad rags," his red robes.

Coming on the heels of the bright days of political and religious promise of the early 1960's, the Kennedy deaths and a disintegration of the authority of the church were mighty blows and were plainly on his mind last year when Cardinal Cushing told fellow Catholics: "It seems that all my troubles have come in the autumn and winter of my life. I now feel alone and abandoned."

These were dark words from a man who only a few years before was one of the most optimistic members of the progressive camp at the Ecumenical Council sessions in Rome. At the third session there he made an impassioned plea for religious liberty and for exoneration of the Jews as a deicidal race in connection with the crucifixion of Jesus. Council fathers broke a rule of silence to cheer the crusty Bostonian's spirit.

Richard James Cushing was the third of five children of Patrick Cushing and Mary Dhill Cushing, both Irish immigrants. He was born on Aug. 2, 1895, in a third-floor flat of a cold-water tenement in South Boston.

His father was a blacksmith who earned \$18 for a seven-day week in the trolley repair pits of the Boston elevated railway. His mother devoutly attended mass every morning and her crowning moment came when her son bestowed on her his first blessing as a Bishop in 1939.

A dropout because of com-

pulsive truancy at South Boston High School in his freshman year, the future Cardinal was taken in hand by the Jesuit fathers at Boston College High School and eventually learned to buckle down to study.

Cardinal Cushing was ordained by the late William Cardinal O'Connell on May 26, 1921. He served for 20 years in the Boston office of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, an organization dedicated to raising funds for missions. He was elevated to Bishop in 1939 and was named by Pope Pius XII in 1944 to succeed Cardinal O'Connell as Archbishop.

In 1949, Archbishop Cushing ended a revolt by an ultraconservative Jesuit, the Rev. Leonard Feeney, by excommunicating him for publicly attacking teaching that salvation was possible outside the Roman church.

The issue was a delicate one that involved a principal stumbling block between Roman Catholicism and other Christians.

At the Ecumenical Council in Rome, he told a Protestant colleague: "We're told there is no salvation outside the church—nonsense. Nobody can tell me Christ died on Calvary for any select group."

As the feller says, "he added with a twinkle, "it's great to live with saints in Heaven, but it's hell to live with them here on earth."

Twice he endorsed the John Birch Society. But he was also a life member of the National

Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Those who knew him best say such things are not actually inconsistent. He was, they say, merely reacting on the spur of the moment on a secular matter.

The Cardinal remains an implacable foe of Communism. One of his lasting endeavors in that fight was the formation of the Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle, an organization concerned with recruiting missionaries for Latin America as a counter-measure against the Communist philosophy.

Because of this background, Cardinal Cushing's call for withdrawal from Vietnam, issued shortly after President Nixon announced the Cambodian incursion, received added attention.

"We cannot," Cardinal Cushing said then, "have peace in the streets and on the campus until we have peace also in Southeast Asia."

Sometimes controversial, more than occasionally crusty, Cardinal Cushing could count on the prayers of all in his Archdiocese whenever he was ill. Over a stretch of a dozen years after he reached his 60's, the Cardinal has periodically been the victim of asthma, emphysema, cancer and ulcers.

The New Bishop an Activist

Brownsville, Tex. — For the last four years, Bishop Humberto Sosa Medeiros, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Brownsville, has spent Christmas and Easter in Texas jails.

"He would spend Christmas in the Cameron County jail and Easter in the Hidalgo county jail," a priest said.

The bishop visited the prisoners, offered mass and ate the jail fare on the feast days.

"I want to be with the people

who need me," he said when asked about it.

The bishop has carried this feeling further, sometimes traveling with farm workers on their migratory trips around the United States.

"After he gets transferred to Boston. I'm afraid he'll be too busy to mingle with the people like he has done down here, and that will be their loss," one of his staff members said.

Boy Saves Brother's Life

(Continued from Page 1A)

med that a snake or something had attacked James and grabbed him — after he had been freed. David then carried both brothers to the ground.

"Power authority people as well as everyone else were amazed that James survived," said Mrs. Popp.

Her husband explained that it was felt that several factors contributed to his son's survival — a dry day; his clothes which included canvas trousers, heavy sneakers, sweat shirt; and even the fact the tree was a cedar which, power authority people said, has a lot of sap which provides some insulation.

Popp also credited Peter B.

Miller, 38, of Nedrow, N.Y., with an assist in the rescue. Popp said Miller, also a vacationer, worked 15 minutes on James, using artificial respiration and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

James, who will enter the 6th grade at Good Shepherd, first was taken to Kingston Memorial Hospital in Canada and is now recovering at Strong Memorial Hospital. He suffered third degree burns over 12 per cent of his body but is now listed "very good."

The Pops, who attend St. Joseph's Church, Rush, have three other sons George, a sophomore at Geneseo State; Robert, 11th grade at Sperry High School, and Danny, 8, a third grader at Good Shepherd.

Bishop Medeiros, who was appointed by Pope Paul VI to succeed the retiring Richard Cardinal Cushing as head of the Boston Archdiocese, will be moving from one of the smallest and poorest dioceses to the second largest in the United States. The largest is New York.

In the four-county Brownsville diocese, Bishop Medeiros has ministered to 250,000 parishioners, most of them migrant farm workers. The Boston Archdiocese has 1,917,815 Catholics, and in the past the Boston archbishop has become a Cardinal.

Bishop Medeiros (pronounced Meh-DEH-rohs) was appointed to the Brownsville post in 1966 during a farm workers' strike. He quickly became involved in it, supporting the demands of the workers for a \$1.25-an-hour minimum wage.

"The \$1.25 hourly minimum wage sought by the farm union for field hands has been established by the Federal Government as the smallest amount under which a citizen of this country could live like a human being," the bishop said at the time.

"When the migrant farm workers of America ask for a living wage, they do not ask for charity," the bishop said. "What they demand is theirs by natural right. We have no



BISHOP MADEIROS

time to waste. We must hurry to bring about the needed reforms for situations existing whose injustice cries to heaven."

A friend of the bishop said "In addition to having a great social conscience, he is an activist."

Bishop Medeiros is no stranger to poverty. He was born Oct. 6, 1915, at Sao Miguel Island, the largest of the Azores, and emigrated to the United States in 1931. His family was poor.

Unable to speak English, young Humberto took a job sweeping floors in a textile mill at Fall River, Mass., for 62 cents a day in his spare time.

Wednesday, September 16, 1970

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