



Sullivan
1/8

"I'VE GOT THOSE SCHOOLS-CLOSIN'-BISHOPS-
OPPOSIN'-PEOPLE-ALL-HAVE-STOPPED-DONATIN'-
NO-ONE-HERE'S-COOPERATIN' BLUES..."

On the Line

Here's to the
'40 Martyrs'

By Bob Considine



One of the major ecclesiastical events of 1970 was the canonization by Pope Paul VI of 40 English and Welsh martyrs. About 10,000 personages and persons made a pilgrimage from the United Kingdom to Rome to be present at an event that had no precedent. It was really badly covered, considering its unique flavor.

After all, this has been a period of the most determined sort of ecumenism dating from the short but memorable reign of John XXIII, on the Throne of Peter. There have been remarkable trips by the present Pope, a new dialogue with Protestants, Jews and the Greek Orthodox Church. Thus the raising to sainthood of 40 faithful Catholics, cruelly done in by Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, was a sort of risky business, considering the slender ties of the new religious accords between the Anglican Church and Rome.

The Catholic Church of late has been dumping or downgrading saints rather than taking on new ones. As a Catholic, I can say that we've made St. Philomena a non-person to the dismay of countless children, churches, schools and hospitals named for her, if there was a her. A papal Bull has questioned whether St. Christopher gave the Infant a lift across a river in the Holy Land, and this affects millions of wearers of his medallion.

There's been a certain denigration of the role of St. Nicholas as a giver of presents to children, which seems to some of us to be a misguided attempt to shoot Santa Claus. St. Valentine, sole support of many a candy-maker and greeting card printer through the decades, has also had his credentials questioned.

So, then came 40 new saints, this year, generally unknown to the faithful. The Vatican's public relations department, if it exists, is about as enterprising as that of the Dalai Lama. The Vatican does not believe in a "hard sell" on new saints. Matter of fact, it generally discourages admitting new members to sainthood. It has its own Supreme Court which decrees whether or not a person or religious group nominating a deceased disciple for sainthood can succeed.

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Generations of "devil's advocates," canon lawyers appointed by countless Popes to show cause why this or that person should be denied sainthood, have, for example, successfully blocked the canonization of Christopher Columbus. (Chief charge: he was an unfaithful husband.)

The cause and identity of the 40 new saints is best presented in a recent piece in "America," published by the Jesuits of the U.S. and Canada, by Peter Hebblethwaite, S.J. Father Hebblethwaite, a good man with the pen, attended the canonization ceremonies at St. Peter's in late October. Here are some of his observations:

"The (40) martyrs had shown none of that enthusiasm for performing miracles that characterizes their Latin brothers; between them (English and Welsh) they could only muster one, and the canonical requirement of a second was waived."

Some famous last words of the martyrs were recalled:

"As Edmund Campion said at his trial: 'In condemning us, you condemn all your own ancestors.' Father John Bennet, asked by his prosecutor what he thought of the Queen who would put him to death, replied, 'I am her subject; and, as my duty is, I pray to God for her and have done so this very day, before you were out of your bed.'"

Father Hebblethwaite on the diversity of the 40:

"They have nothing of the plaster saint about them. They represent a cross-section of English Catholic life of the period: There were two schoolmasters among them, Richard Dwyn, from Llanidocs in Wales, and Swithun Wells, from Brambridge near Winchester. There were three laywomen among the new saints, St. Anne Line, St. Margaret Ward and St. Margaret Clitherow."

Margaret Clitherow, who lived at number 36, The Shambles, York, was slowly crushed to death by a stone. Her husband called her "the best wife in England."

Don't know about you, but I'm ready to light a candle.

On The Right Side

A Gaelic
David Frost

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



In 1946 I was stationed in Compiègne, France, with an Air France depot. Adjoining the base was a POW camp. German prisoners were used in the depot work. There was a wonderful Franciscan named Father George Kohorst, in his mid-thirties, who had been a medic in the Wehrmacht, but whom the Americans returned to his priestly role. He was appointed chaplain for Catholics in the POW camp. They did the same with a protestant pastor for Protestants. Through Father K, I got acquainted with a few German soldiers, 17, 18, 19 years old. Many of them were beautiful souls. One was Willi Franken. His clean features and honest eyes would have made him the perfect picture of the model Eagle Scout for the front page of the Saturday Evening Post.

While Willi's English was in German idiom, it was clear. One day, remembering he was from Muenchen-Gladbach, I said to Willi: "Goebbels, the minister of Propaganda, came from your city, didn't he, Willi?" "Yah," he replied. "Wasnt he supposed to be a Catholic?" "Yah. But Herr Goebbels was no good Catholic. His mother though was a Catholic. But Herr Goebbels no like his mutter." "Oh, come on, Willi! Every man likes his mother." "No. Herr Goebbels no like his mutter. She haf a big mouth." I thought to myself: "A chip off the old jaw."

I have often pondered the

effectiveness of propaganda. Recently some one told me that Bismarck said: "I don't care who writes the history as long as I control the writing." When we read of the connection between how much money is spent to elect men or women to a political office and the actual success or failure, we are greatly impressed by the effectiveness of propaganda, whether for good or bad; whether to spread the truth or to propagate error.

Again and again I think: "Oh, what would St. Paul do if he were here with the communications available, especially TV and radio! Yet how poorly the Church uses these media. Consider the influence of Dr. Billy Graham and of Dr. Armstrong and his Ambassador College broadcasts. Are our bishops, consecrated overseers and teachers of the Word, less capable of using the most effective means of communication? For thirty years the Church was identified, splendidly, to non-Catholic and Catholic Americans in the voice of Bishop Fulton Sheen. Today there is no comparable voice or image."

These thoughts surged from my subconscious on the occasion of taping a "Talk Show" for Hornell's radio Station WLEA, "1168 on your dial." The Station is owned by Assemblyman Charles Henderson. Recently it got a new station manager, Kevin Doran, who is a thirtyish, innocent-eyed history teacher at Hornell High, and who has worked with radio

stations since he began as a 16-year-old disc jockey. He was a news reporter and columnist for the local TRIBUNE, and has a gift for getting the news, irritating many people, enraging a few, but keeping everyone interested.

A few months ago Kevin said: "WLEA runs many religious programs as a public service. We've had several ministers of the area make tapes, but only one priest. I'd like to tape a talk show on your views about the confusion in the Catholic Church today. Let's set a date." Unlike my patron, St. Paul, who would have said: "Have the recording machine ready, I'll be down in 14 minutes", I temporized reluctantly: "Well, sometime." Since "sometime" wasn't happening Kevin phoned: "Can you be in the Station at 3:30 Tuesday to tape the talk show, Dialogue?" "O.K. I'll be there."

It was my first experience. Kevin, like a Gaelic David Frost delving into a man's soul, introduced me as a "controversial columnist for the Rochester Courier-Journal, the weekly which serves the people of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester."

With that for an opener he began a gentle but adroit baiting on subjects certainly in the minds of men: ecumenism, birth control, celibacy, changes in religious life, especially of the Sisters. The directions and response will be reported in next week's column.

The Church: 1971

A Scholar Views
Priest & Bishop

By Fr. Andrew Greeley



Father Raymond Brown is one of American Catholicism's most distinguished scholars. He does not issue eccentric statements, he does not write columns, he does not predict the end of the Church or the priesthood, nor can he be said to look like a hippie. Hence, there is no way he can be a "personality" and become well known among American Catholics.

In a way, that's unfortunate because scholars are likely to get a hearing in the American Church at present only if they do something bizarre. Yet Father Brown deserves a hearing, for he is the one American Catholic theological scholar who seems to have the universal respect both of his non-Catholic colleagues in this country and of European theologians. His two-volume "Anchor" commentary on St. John's Gospel is a work of awesome scholarship combined with an intelligence and balance that makes that most difficult of Gospels come alive once again.

Hence, it is a red letter day when Father Brown ventures into more popular writing. His book, "Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections" (Paulist Press) is perhaps the best popular discussion of what the New Testament has to say on the priesthood. I suspect it will make Father Brown some enemies.

First of all, arguing from the New Testament notion of discipleship, Father Brown raises some pertinent questions about present phenomena about the priesthood.

Perhaps today, because of the shortage of clergy, we may have to ordain men who are engaged full time in other tasks and devote only one day a week to a priestly function (e.g., celebrating Mass on Sunday). But the strength of the Gospel ideal of vocation suggests that such an approach will be considered an exception to the rule of a full-time priesthood. [p. 23]

But it is not merely the part-time priesthood that he finds somewhat at odds with the New Testament ideal. He also contends that the New Testament notion of discipleship would imply a permanent priesthood. Nor is Father Brown willing to accept on the basis of the New Testament the argument that a lifelong commitment to the priesthood involves an undue hardship.

We speak frequently today about hardships as a modifying factor in the Church's understanding of the lifetime nature of priestly vocation. Legitimate as that may be (and who wishes to question the mercy of the Church), one must recognize that in the Gospels the vocation to special discipleship is portrayed precisely as a vocation to hardships too severe to be generally acceptable. [p. 24]

Father Brown not only defends the ideal of priestly celibacy on New Testament grounds, but also suggests the Church may very well be without its rights insisting on that ideal.

... precisely because the witness of celibacy is conspicuously lacking in many other Christian churches, the Roman Catholic Church has an ecumenical duty to the Gospel to continue to bear an effective witness on this score. Perhaps this would be possible without a law, but one of priestly celibacy that must admit that it is the law of priestly celibacy that makes it clear that those who accept it are doing so for the sake of Christ and not simply because they prefer to be bachelors. [p. 26]

In the second half of his book, he asks whether the bishops are the successors of the apostles. He responds that they are in some sense but scarcely in a sense likely to reassure those bishops who think their role is the same as the apostles. Father Brown even raises the question as to whether "functional apostolicity" might not be present in those Protestant churches which do not have bishops.

One young enthusiast I know expressed the opinion that Father Brown was a schizophrenic because he had combined "a conservative" position on the priesthood with "a liberal" position on the bishopric. Such is the way ideologues think: everyone else must be an ideologue like themselves. It never occurred to this young person that whether Father Brown was a liberal or a conservative was completely irrelevant; the real point is that he is a scholar. "Priest and Bishop" is a reflection of his scholarship.