



FR. PAUL J. CUDDY  
**On The  
Right Side**

The prayers on memorial cards given out at funerals rarely have satisfied me. There is a standard prayer that "the Sacred Blood of the Saviour drop down and extinguish the devouring flames of Purgatory", which is dramatic, but I think theologically unsatisfactory.

When Cardinal Newman was explaining the apparent exaggerations of Latin spiritual writers, he observed with humanistic understanding that prayers flow from people's culture and temperament as well as from theological convictions. He used as an example, *The Glories of Mary* by St. Alphonsus, founder of the Redemptorists. He pointed out that the fervid enthusiasm of the saint for Our Lady reflected the fertile poetic culture and passion of an 18th century Italian writer bursting through his book. Newman remarked that the same book might repel the colder Englishman who might read it. Newman's insight helps me to understand the memorial card, even if I am repelled by it.

On the first day of Fall, I thought: "Why not write an article on Purgatory? Homilies on eschatology — death, judgment, purgatory, hell, heaven, resurrection — are rare. And some Catholics are wondering if Purgatory has gone the route of St. Philomena." So began the search for memorial cards: souvenirs of the deaths of my friends and relatives. They were scattered in drawers, books, especially in breviaries. In an older breviary I found no memorial card, but did find a letter from Willi Frenken, dated July, 1955.

Who is Willi? Just before Christmas, 1945, I was transferred from the Munich area to the air depot in Compiegne, France. The depot collected supplies, and also had a stockade of German prisoners. These prisoners helped with the loading, packing, cleaning up, sorting, etc.

Through a great Franciscan, Father Georg Kohorst, himself a prisoner and the best soccer player in the stockade, I became friends with several teenage German soldiers. None was finer than Willi. It is no exaggeration to say that he exemplified the soul of ideal Catholic Christianity. He was 18 years old, with the clear, olive skin of many Rhinelanders. He was innocent but not naive; intelligent, religious, with a profound devotion to the Eucharist, the Blessed Mother, and the Church. His concern for his fellow prisoners was unobtrusive and genuine. When I would share some chocolate or other prized delicacy with him and his friends he would quietly share his with others who had none. For some years after the war I sent an occasional letter to him at Muenchen-Gladbach.

In the breviary was this beautiful letter of July, 1955:

"I enjoyed, to hear again from you. I see, that you stand in Casablanca, at present a hot place on the political heaven. I was enjoyed too, to read your letter. Through this letter I keep a little of my English. Many thanks!

"I hope father, that you are well. We are well too. I have a little girl, eighteen months old. She is our joy. I am happy every day, when I come back from my job and see the shine eyes of my infant. I hope that God she health well.

"The life of the people in Germany is normal again. The track of the war faded. But we see that the men only looken to materielle things.

**Basilians Offer  
Theology Talks**

The theology department of Aquinas Institute, under the direction of Father Thomas Bales, CSB, will conduct a series of four lectures on the meaning of the sacraments in the life of a Christian. The program is scheduled for the first four Mondays of November from 7:30 until 9:30 p.m. in the school auditorium.

The purpose is to help adults achieve a more active and intelligent participation in the new Liturgies of the Sacraments.

On Nov. 1, Father Donald McCarthy will present the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism and Confirmation. Nov. 8, Father Bales will present the Eucharist — a celebration of life.

Nov. 15, Father Edwin Kline will discuss sin and the Sacrament of Penance. Nov. 22, Father Robert O'Halloran will present the Sacrament of Marriage.

A registration fee of \$3 for the series or \$1 per lecture will cover the price of reading material.

"I didn't hear any time from Father Kohorst, but I now that he still stand in a boy's schule at Vlodrop on the Hollands border. I will whrite him too the next days. I close my letter, while I greet you very heartily. Excuse my fault!! Your Willi."

From memorial cards to Willi Frenken may be a circuitous route to a discourse on Purgatory. But Willi is so inspiring that his example may impel us to such virtue as to avoid that quasi-middle state. We discuss Purgatory next week.

**Thursday Deadline**

Thursday noon is the deadline for news and photos for the Courier-Journal of the following week.

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