



Blind Seminarian Ordained Deacon

With his seeing eye dog by his side, Charles Kuebler is ordained to the diaconate at Holy Family Church in Hillcrest Heights, Md., by Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Lyons of Washington. Msgr. David Foley (center), pastor of Holy Family, looks on. Deacon Kuebler, who has been blind since he was 10 years old, is studying to be a priest of the Washington archdiocese. (RNS)

Father Warren Dies At 102

Saratoga Springs, [RNS] — Father Cornelius Warren, CSSR, who "lived under eight Popes and 20 U.S. Presidents," died here June 18, nine days after his 102nd birthday.

Gibbons of Baltimore ordained him a priest.

The oldest priest in the 243-year history of the order founded by St. Alphonsus Ligouri, Father Warren was on his 80th year in religious vows and his diamond jubilee as a priest when he died in the order's infirmary.

A missionary, Scripture scholar, pastor of several parishes, seminary rector, and for nine years consultant to the Redemptorist provincial, Father Warren did not fully retire until 1970 when failing eyesight brought him to Saratoga Springs. At age 92, he was teaching weekly religion classes to 10-year-olds in a Maryland parish.

He drew the attention of the Vatican daily, L'Osservatore Romano, which remarked that both Pope Paul and President Ford had sent letters of congratulations to him last May, "to that rare someone who has lived under eight popes and 20 Presidents."

Already able to read Latin, German, French and Italian, in his nineties Father Warren began the study of Spanish with the help of several Puerto Rican Redemptorists so that he could be of spiritual assistance to a group of refugee nuns from Cuba.

FORMER VICAR DIES

Pope Pius IX was reigning pontiff and Ulysses S. Grant was in the White House in 1873, when Cornelius Warren was born in Roxbury, Mass.

Boston — Bishop Eustace Smith, OFM, first Vicar Apostolic of Beirut for the Latin rite Catholics of Lebanon, died here June 13, 1975, at the age of 67. He had suffered a stroke on June 9. Bishop Smith served in Beirut from 1956 until 1973, and since his retirement had been in residence at St. Anthony's Shrine.

The Church 1975



Fr. Andrew Greeley

If you want to get a good feel for why the Catholic Church is in trouble in the United States, you should keep a close eye on Father Al Nevins, the Maryknoll priest who edits "The Sunday Visitor." With friends like him, the Church doesn't need enemies.

Father Nevins recently took me to task for "negativism." Religious practice has drastically declined; there are almost no young men or women entering the religious communities; seminaries are half empty — those that haven't closed; 85 percent of the population rejects the Church's birth-control teaching; contributions (in real money) are down over a billion dollars; Catholic magazines, newspapers, and publishing companies are dropping off like flies; 30 percent of the college-educated under age thirty have left the church.

Father Nevins wants me to dance a merry hornpipe and sing a happy little song?

I wonder what he would have said to Jeremiah.

It turns out that there is a special kind of negativism that Father Al has in mind: I have been known to criticize bishops, and that is a terrible thing to do.

The leadership of the American hierarchy has presided over one of the great collapses in religious history, but in Father Al's tidy, respectful little world, you don't say a word against them.

And Paul shouldn't have confronted Peter "to his face" on the matter of the gentile converts. Peter undoubtedly had a "valid reason" for what he did.

Nevins is confident that there must be a valid reason why I'm not permitted to do parish work. Such touching faith is impressive. Whatever bishops do is right; and when the rest of us feel oppressed we must resign ourselves to Father Al's homely little pieties. Bishops know best.

He's also sure that the Archbishop of Oklahoma City is free from all blame in the departure of the John XXIII Community. It's not a matter of having evidence in that messy

and complicated case. Nevins doesn't need evidence; he knows on "a priori" grounds that bishops always do the decent and honorable thing.

And I have the temerity to criticize the catechetical directory, "even though it is only a first draft." Poor naive negativist that I am, I thought the committee circulated a quarter of a million copies to get criticism. But you are being negative, I guess, when you offer criticism that has been sought. The committee could have had my opinion in private had they wanted it. They didn't ask, so I gave it to them in the public domain. Some would think that is nothing more than an exercise of freedom of speech. But when you're such a good friend of the hierarchy as Father Al, you can't help but be offended by any exercise of freedom of speech that is directed their way. The bishop knows best, and the rest of us should shut up — save for Father Al when he tells the bishops what a fine job they are doing.

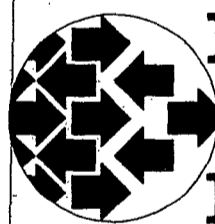
Presumably we should also shut up when the bishops' Washington staff sells them the soft-core romantic socialism of the early bicentennial program. Only a negativist would object to celebrating the anniversary of our republic by launching a "hate America" campaign.

Look, Al, I like bishops. Some of my best friends (but I wouldn't want my sister . . .). I spend part of my vacation with bishops. I admire and respect them. I believe that they are adults. And you treat people like adults by telling them what you think is the truth. In human organizations made up of adults you carry on public debate about policies and you criticize decisions with which you disagree. Such criticism is a sign of mature loyalty and essential for the health of an organization. Without it, an organization withers.

The phony little altar boy who goes around, candle in hand, murmuring, "Yes, my Lord" to everything a hierarch says and does is not a loyal adult but a timid, childish sycophant. Father Al should hold his breath until I start living that way.

He is offended because I would like to add some weekend parish work to my other responsibilities. I am hard put to understand why one priest would resent another's desire to engage in more work — especially pastoral ministry.

But Father Al is still technically a member of a missionary community. It might be a very good thing for him if he combined his homilies from the office of "The Sunday Visitor" with real work in the mission. Then he might know how bad things are in the Church and how traitorous silence is in the midst of disaster.



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- _____ shared sponsorship.

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James Maloney
50 Chestnut St.
Rochester 14604