

Saint John Neumann ... A Life in a Pocket

The afternoon Bishop John Neumann died on Vine Street in Philadelphia, they found in his coat pocket a brass key, a freight receipt for a package shipped that day to Bellefonte, Pa., a rosary, and some peppermint bullseyes.

The items make a good index to the life of the man.

The key was for his house on Race Street. It was a superfluous article. His residence was never locked — the door always open to the transient priest, to the hungry immigrant. For the priest there was lodging, and for the poor there was clothing or money.

The freight receipt offers another insight on the man who, this June, will be proclaimed a saint.

Up in Bellefonte, a priest needed a chalice for his little church in the mountains. Any of Bishop Neumann's assistants could have taken care of the matter, but Neumann made

it a personal errand. Ailing as he was, that last afternoon of his life, the bishop walked to the Reading freight depot on Callowhill Street with the package to make sure it was safely dispatched to the rural pastor.

The rosary! Like any lover of Our Lady, Neumann had it ever near his hands. He had been in Rome on the glorious morning in 1854 when Pius IX declared the Immaculate Conception a dogma of the Catholic Faith.

Tradition has it, that on that occasion Neumann held the book from which the Vicar of Christ read the epic pronouncement in St. Peter's.

One year later, at the 8th Provincial Council in Baltimore, it was Neumann who first proposed that Dec. 8 should be observed as a holy day of obligation in the United States.

But what about the candy?

The peppermints were something he always carried. He loved children. For them he wrote catechisms and a Bible History. For them he built schools, from Williamsville, N.Y., in 1836, to Philadelphia where he established the first system of parochial schools in America, in 1852.

For the children he invited a number of teaching orders of nuns and brothers to the Philadelphia diocese. Children never feared to clutch his hand as he walked down the streets of his see city. With the guiltless guile of childhood they knew that if they could prattle their prayers and their catechism, there were peppermints for them in his pocket.

Something else was found on John Neumann's person as he lay in death—a belt of pointed wires imbedded in his waist. Somehow, that was no surprise to those who knew the saint intimately. To their way of thinking, he was a very holy man.



Notre Dame Festival

The Notre Dame High School Parents Association festival takes place this Saturday, May 14. Above, committee members display the lay out for the many booths and game areas on the festival site located south of the school. The members are, from left, front: Janice Zelko and Sue Gamer; back: Howard Lapple, Father Richard Murphy and Sister Mary Joachim.



Pat Costa

AS I SEE IT
Just as grand opera has always been a reflection of the changing society of its time so, too, does soap opera mirror the present day world. Granted the latter does not have the magnificence of the former's music to divert the mind from the banalities inherent in the form but the similarities are there nevertheless... in more than one respect

Puccini's Bohemians, for example, are reduced to throwing furniture on the fire to keep their garret

room warm, a situation that could be duplicated in America where consumers are coming face to face with the reality of decreasing sources of energy. And while the same Bohemian group is forced to pool their money to go to the cafe for wine, the considerably wealthier characters of American soap opera are boycotting coffee.

Leading characters in more than one soaper have been viewed in fairly accurate reflection of the national scene sitting around with several layers of sweaters making pointed remarks about the beverage they are not drinking.

I don't know if anyone has ever counted the number of cups of coffee that indefatigable homemaker and hostess Nancy Hughes has poured in her 20 years on "As the World Turns" but it has to be in the tens of thousands. Nancy isn't pouring coffee any more.

"How about a cup of tea?" Nancy says to her former daughter-in-law Lisa.

"Tea?" shrieks Lisa in unalloyed ecstasy. "I love it, love it." This small tableau in varied form, takes place at least three times a week.

Over on "All My Children" where Mrs. Kate holds forth in her kitchen the dialogue is only a little different. "How about a cup of tea?" says the grand lady to a gentleman caller. "Well, sure," says the guest "but what happened to the coffee?"

"I keep it in the safe," snaps the dear old soul.

Is the ploy on the part of the scriptwriters working? It may help. Newspapers and TV last week reported for the first time that coffee sales are down. A little more proselytizing on the part of the soapers and who knows what may happen to the coffee market.

Insights in Liturgy

The Communion of Saints

By FATHER BENEDICT EHMANN

The articles of Christian faith in the Apostles' Creed are stated in an orderly sequence. God the Father sent his Son among us. The Son became man, suffered, died, rose from the dead and returned to the Father. The Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit upon the Church. In the Church, believers share in the Communion of Saints, and

receive the forgiveness of sins. The goal of it all is the resurrection of the body and everlasting life.

In this Creed we have a precious precis of the basics of our Christian faith. It is crystal clear in what it tells us, even though it is enveloped in the mystery of God and his way with us.

The article, Communion of Saints, proposes more, however than most Christians probably think of, when they profess it. During this Easter time, when our thoughts are magnetized by the Risen Lord and the great gifts of God we have received through Him, it will enlarge our faith and strengthen our praising of God to reflect more deeply upon what is meant by the Communion of Saints.

First of all, what Saints? In the centuries when the Creed was being formulated out of the Scripture data, there were no canonized saints, officially declared as such in the way the Church now does. In the age of the Apostles, all Christians were called "saints." This usage occurs quite often in St. Paul's letters. The baptized were all regarded as "a holy people," consecrated as a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, the Saints in the article of the Creed refer to all the baptized, those who are now pilgrims on earth, those who have died and are undergoing purification, and those who are beatified in heavenly glory. Even the unbaptized, as long as they are of good will, pertain somehow to this community of the holy ones: "God is kind and merciful." He does not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax" (Matt. 12:20).

Secondly, what Communion? Most Catholics probably restrict that word to the Holy Communion in which they receive the eucharistic food and drink. But while this word in the article of the Creed does indeed include Holy Communion, it extends much farther. It includes all

the gifts and privileges, all the ordinances and blessings which the Father bestows upon us in Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, which are shared by the entire Christian community, on earth, in purgatory and in heaven, and which in turn are shared among them in a reciprocal communication of prayer and service.

Such is our Christian estate. We are more than millionaires. Jesus belongs to us, and in him we have the Father and the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We all belong to one another, to share each other's strengths and bear each other's burdens. The sacraments belong to us. The Mass belongs to us, and the intercession which Jesus is constantly making for us (cf. Heb. 7:25). The Scriptures belong to us, and the un-failing riches of the Word of God always being proclaimed among us.

Jesus' mother Mary belongs to us, for we are her children by His Calvary gift to us. The heavenly Saints belong to us, in all their colorful diversity of grace and personality, praying for us, concerned about us, their shining example encouraging us forward on our pilgrim journey. The long history of the Church, often sad and troubled, but just as often glorious and buoyant, all belongs to us.

This is our Christian community and commonwealth, our Communion of Saints. It is for us firmly to profess it, joyfully to revel in it, even as we draw strength from it in times of adversity and struggle. It is for this that the Good News is daily preached, as St. John wrote, "that you may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father, and with the Son, Jesus Christ" (1 Jn. 1:3). We have the urging of St. Paul' always so full of enthusiasm for the Church and the Communion of Saints, that we should always "give thanks to the Father for having made (us) worthy to share the lot of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12).

Make Today Count Meeting

The Monroe County Chapter of Make Today Count, the organization for cancer patients, others suffering from a serious illness, their families and health professionals will hold a group discussion meeting Tuesday, May 17, at 7:30 p.m., at the Monroe Developmental Center, 620 Westfall Road.

Through these small group discussions, many have been helped through difficult times, gotten a better understanding of how to become an "informed" patient, or simply gained better empathy for the family member or friend who has an incurable disease.

Cancer Seminar Set for Clergy

A seminar on Cancer Care and the Clergy will be held tomorrow in the Kearney Education Building at St. Mary's Hospital, under the auspices of the hospital's Pastoral Services Department and the Monroe County unit of the American Cancer Society.

Scheduled to speak are Dr. William Africano, the Rev. Lewis Bigler and Dr. Wilbour Eddy Saunders, president emeritus of Colgate Rochester Divinity School. Bishop Dennis W. Hickey will open the meeting and the Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Shankle of the First Church of Redeeming Love will offer the closing prayer.

ST. JOHN NEUMANN



"This is the day which the Lord has made, Let us rejoice and be glad therein".

On June 19, 1977, before all the world, Pope Paul VI will solemnly declare Bishop John Neumann, a saint of the Church, For us in Rochester it should be a most memorable day, one rich in copious blessings and, indeed, a cause for unbounded joy. Yes, a saint has actually visited and labored in our city. It must be assumed he will be mindful of our part of his early ministry.

To prepare ourselves prayerfully and joyfully for this momentous occasion, Trant's Inc. is making available various and sundry articles of devotion. Each item is intended to foster devotion to this beloved servant of God and to petition him for great blessings on our diocese.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

June will be St. John Neumann month at TRANT'S. We are pleased to announce that we will have on display during this month the very beautiful picture of the Saint that hung in St. Joseph's Church and which, by the grace of God, we were instrumental in rescuing from the fire. We are grateful to the Rev. Bernard J. Power, C.S.S.B. for his kind permission to display this picture.

Here are a few of the many items we will have for sale: Medals and holy cards which contain a piece of cloth touched to the remains of St. John Neumann. Statues, plaques and pictures. Paperback biographies of the Saint as well as novena prayers.

TRANT'S

96 CLINTON AVE. N.
115 FRANKLIN ST.,
Phone 454-1818

Open six days 9 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.
(Closed Saturdays during July and August)