

Retired Bishop Charles Buswell

The Gadfly Prelate Still Buzzes

Denver (RNS)—Charles Buswell grew up in Oklahoma "where the beer was stronger than the Catholic population," he recalls.

But he was part of that 2 per cent of Oklahomans who were Catholic, and he became a priest even though "I really hadn't ever thought of being a priest."

"My first year of college I went to dances," he said. "My second year I sold tickets to the dances and the third year I decided to enter the seminary."

He also "didn't particularly want to be a bishop," but became one of those, too.

"I got fired from the first honest job I ever had. My dad hired me in his construction business. I was supposed to make some mortar. But it didn't work out. The mortar was too well done. My dad said, 'Why don't you go home to your books?'"

Bishop Buswell, for 20

years head of the Pueblo diocese of the Roman Catholic Church, announced last September he would retire 10 years before the mandatory retirement age for Catholic bishops.

It was just another in a long line of unexpected, maybe unorthodox things for a bishop to do.

But it characterizes the kind of ministry and episcopacy the tall, thin, 66-year-old Oklahoman has had.

Most bishops cling to their jobs until the last moment, unless they are in poor health.

Bishop Buswell isn't in poor health; he just thinks the job needs some new blood.

"I had decided to stay only 10 years in this job. But then there was the (Vietnam) war and the women's thing I decided to stay, because maybe I could make some contribution. The diocese is like a business. It needs change. Its leaders

should be contemporary people for the modern situation. A person has to let go and let someone else do it. You get stale."

For years Bishop Buswell has been in the forefront of "getting the barnacles off the Ship of Peter," as the late Pope John XXIII recommended following the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s.

Though totally committed to the church's teachings against married priests and women in the priesthood, the bishop says, he feels the church "should be open" to discussing both.

In 1978, he was the only bishop in the country to attend a women's ordination conference. His going "wasn't exactly approved by Good Housekeeping," he recalls with a quick smile. "But it would be a shame to say it (women's ordination) is a closed subject."

Several years ago, the priests' senate of the Pueblo diocese voted to petition the pope to allow a married priest to continue his ministry. Bishop Buswell agreed to write the cover letter on that petition.

Few bishops would have written that letter. The request got nowhere, but Bishop Buswell, knowing the ways of his church, considered it a "breakthrough" that the pope's delegate replied, even though the answer was "no."

Another effort of Bishop Buswell's has been ecumenism, or cooperation, among various churches.

He approved the first ecumenical service in the Pueblo diocese, featuring the Colorado Episcopal bishop as speaker at a Knights of Columbus-sponsored Mass. Bishop Buswell recalls "getting a lot of flak" for approving the service, but he considered it "helpful for the community."

He grew up in a community "where Southern Baptists were really Southern Baptists, and Catholics were really Catholics."

"I can remember the arguments between my father's side of the family, who were Protestants, and my mother's who were Catholics. When I was a child there was a woman who lived next door to us who was like a grandmother to me. She was so nice. She was a Protestant. I always wondered how she could be so good and not be a Catholic."

Bishop Buswell developed his interest in ecumenism when he was a "street preacher" in northern Oklahoma, "trying to make the Catholic Church palatable to Protestants."

The "most terrible decision" Bishop Buswell had to make was in 1971 when he closed the Catholic schools in the Pueblo

diocese. The schools were operating at a deficit, and he felt there was no way they could be kept open.

There "was a great hue and cry," including protest marches around the chancery. The controversy drove the bishop to seek professional counseling "to get my head screwed on."

A few weeks later, he spoke at the last commencement exercise of one of the high schools. "It wasn't comfortable," he reflected.

The bishop was one of the first two Catholic bishops in the country to speak out against the Vietnam War long before the hierarchies in the Catholic or Protestant churches in the country decided to "mirror public opinion and oppose it."

"The church people don't have answers to everything. But those in the church who have views ought to speak out. I'm absolutely opposed to nuclear war and the stock piling of weapons. What if there's some failure or some stupid guy, or some megalomaniac?"

Bishop Buswell said his basic philosophy as a prelate is "that I wanted to cultivate a climate of freedom, so our people can respond to the gifts of the spirit without

fear. We can work out the mistakes we make. We've done that here."

Several years ago the bishop was to say a Mass following a meeting in Grand Junction. Before the meeting a small girl came up to him and asked, "What's your name?" "My name's Charlie, what's yours?" Bishop Buswell replied. She said it was Sharon. Later, as the procession made its way to the altar, the bishop passed the little girl sitting on the aisle. She looked up at him and said, "Nice show, Charlie."



Sarah Child

All in the Family

What Ye Sow, Ye Shall Reap

A little of this and some of that...

— At least half of the fun of having a garden are the surprises we get at harvest time. One year one of the kids spilled some unidentified seeds outside the door and we ended up with 20 pumpkins. This year a box of seedlings marked "crook neck squash," which came from my dad's small but prolific greenhouse, produced not the longish, yellow vegetable we expected but the most beautiful melons we've ever grown.

— Birthday cakes may be traditional, but at our house the sweet that gets the candles is usually something else. Our son who is marking his 13th wants Toll House bars, please. His father marked his latest with chocolate cream pie and the youngest, who celebrates on Dec. 19, usually winds up with Christmas cookies.

Deaths

Anna Casey

Seneca Falls — Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Aug. 7 at St. Patrick's Church for Agnes M. Casey of Chapin Street, who died Aug. 5, 1980, at the age of 96, following an extended illness.

At the time of her death, she was the eldest living employee of Goulds Pumps, Inc. She was also the eldest parishioner of St. Patrick's Parish.

Miss Casey was a graduate

— The oldest, a responsible 15-year-old, we decided was old enough to travel alone via Amtrak to her Cousin Annie's Sweet Sixteen Party in New York.

At least two of the six hours sped by, she reported. A gentleman in his 70s took the vacant seat next to her and proceeded to enlighten her upon a number of diverse subjects.

Included: first oil wells drilled in Bradford, Pa.; how a chain was fastened across the Hudson during the Revolution to keep the British vessels from going up it; the Vatican and some of its popes; West Point; the grandeur of Switzerland; and the joy of gardening.

When he learned she was getting off near Nyack, he said he'd made many a visit there — to see Helen Hayes. They'd worked together, he said, on stage.

No, said our daughter, indifferently, she hadn't asked him his name... another of our children obviously not headed for the Fourth Estate.

of St. Patrick's School and Mynderse Academy. She also attended the Rochester Business Institute. She was the daughter of Thomas and Mary Durmin Casey, pioneer residents of Seneca Falls and the earliest members of the Catholic community.

She is survived by several nieces and many great nieces and nephews, with one great, great, great nephew. Her survivors also include Helen Durmin of Rochester and Gertrude Casey of Batavia, first cousins.

Braille Classes Start in September

According to a news release from the Rochester Volunteer Brailleists organization, there are only 75 certified music brailleists in the country, including two newly certified from the Rochester area; Mrs. Kathy Wise of Spencerport and Mrs. Ellie Florack of Webster.

A love for music and a devotion to helping the visually impaired interested in learning to play a musical instrument led Mrs. Florack to become a certified music brailleist for the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Her interest in helping the blind dates back to 1976 when she joined a class in literary braille transcription. In addition to the two hour weekly class, she spent two hours each day in home study and practice. This prepared her for the ultimate test of her ability — the submission of a brailled manuscript to the Library of Congress in order to receive her certification as a volunteer literary brailleist.

Braille is the method employed by the sighted of reading with their fingertips. All letters, words, numerals and punctuation are formed by different combinations of six raised dots. Students begin by using a slate and stylus, then progress to the Perkins Braille, a six-key machine.

For those who would like to pursue a fulfilling community service, non-sectarian day-time classes in braille transcription will begin in September at the following



MRS. ELLIE FLORACK

locations: Temple B'rith Kodesh, 2131 Elmwood Ave., Wednesday, Sept. 17, 10 a.m., contact Mrs. Rose Mason, 586-9484; First Baptist Church, 175 Allens Creek Rd., Thursday, Sept. 25, 9:30 a.m., contact Mrs. Tina Conti, 586-8845; Temple Beth El, 139 Winton Road So., Tuesday, Sept. 23, 12:45 p.m., contact Mrs. Marcia Yaroslow, 473-2342; First Presbyterian Church, East Ave., E. Rochester, Wednesday, Sept. 24, contact Mrs. Joan Brown, 586-6825; White Church, 55 Church St., Spencerport, Thursday, Sept. 25, 10 a.m., contact Mrs. Barbara Verdone, 392-6128.

Deadline

The deadline for submitting news to the Courier-Journal is noon on Thursday preceding the following Wednesday's publication.

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LED BY: Judith Ann Kollar

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Plan to attend the Chairpersons Training Workshop:

Workshop Held	Date	Place	Time
#1	Sept. 13	St. Patrick's, Elmira	1-3 p.m.
#2	Sept. 2	St. Mary's, Canandaigua	2-4 p.m.
#3	Sept. 17	St. Charles Borromeo, Rochester	7:30-9:30

Register at your parish or \$2.00 at the door

Fee \$2.00 Per Person