

Sister Elizabeth Catez to Be Beatified Nov. 25

By Father Robert F. McNamara

Nov. 25, 1984 will be a day of special rejoicing for the Discalced Carmelite Sisters of the Diocese of Rochester. On that Sunday, Pope John Paul II will solemnly beatify a member of their world-wide religious order, Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity.

Elizabeth Catez (1880-1906) was a French Carmelite. A contemporary of the "Little Flower," St. Therese of Lisieux, she was also considerably influenced by her, although they lived in different monasteries.

"Sabeth," as Elizabeth was known by family and friends, was a high-spirited young woman. Although her father, a military officer, died when she was only four, her mother saw to it that she was well educated (she became a prize-winning pianist), and well trained in solid Christianity. As a teenager, Elizabeth gave much of her time to church work and youth work. But she was also very sociable, and attended many a dancing party, always beautifully dressed and with her hair-do just right. The young men were naturally attracted by her vivacious

beauty. Still, they sensed that she stood off somehow from the rest. "She is not for us," they concluded. "Look at her expression!"

As a matter of fact, Sabeth had already decided by then to join the Discalced Carmelites. When only 14, she had taken a private vow of virginity. Having reached the age of 21 in 1901, she made good her plan and entered the Carmelite monastery in Dijon. Her life there as a nun was to last only five years. Nevertheless, in those five years she matured in heroic virtue and became a true mystic.

Out of her own prayer-experiences and suffering, Sister Elizabeth wrote four brief treatises on prayer, along with a number of letters dealing with matters of the spirit. In these writings we can discern her growing discovery of her own special vocation: that of "apostle of the praise of the glory of the Holy Trinity."

Starting with the awareness that God has created us to His image, and then, in Baptism, come to dwell in our hearts, she drew the conclusion that her particular calling was to praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We were all created, of course, to do that in heaven; but she felt destined to do that on earth as well, for "time is eternity begun." She would therefore concentrate on worshipping Him incessantly in the silent temple of her own heart. Did not Mary do much the same when Jesus lay within her womb?

Best known among Sister Elizabeth's writings is her lovely prayer of 1904, "O my God, Trinity whom I adore." Internationally popular by now, this prayer summarizes her own special doctrine. Her other writings reiterate the same theme in profounder terms. Yet her teaching on the worship of the "Trinity within" was not something that only mystics could grasp. She counseled the same approach to lay people. If, she reasoned, every Christian realized that he was a vessel bearing the Trinity, then he would carry the Three Persons devoutly with him whenever he went forth among men. Once, for instance, Elizabeth's married sister told her in a letter that she was scheduled to attend a party, although she preferred not to be there. Sabeth wrote back, "I am very glad that you are going to this party, for at least there will be one there who will love God and keep Him company."

Thus, as "bearers of the Trinity," she held, we who carry God worshipfully with us likewise bring a loving gift to our neighbor.

Pope John Paul II acknowledges that Sister Elizabeth's writings have affected his own spiritual life. Hence he will doubtless consider it a personal privilege to beatify her.



Sister Elizabeth Catez

Interestingly enough, she will be the second Discalced Carmelite he has declared "blessed" within a little over a year. The earlier one was the Palestinian sister, Blessed Mary of Jesus Crucified (1846-1878). Thus two more names are joined to the list of saintly Carmelite nuns. That list includes St. Teresa of Avila, St. Therese of Lisieux, and the 16 Carmelite Beatae of the French Revolution. All this speaks well of the steadfast piety of the Carmelite order.

At a future date, the Rochester Carmel will have a special Mass to commemorate the beatification of Bl. Elizabeth. On that occasion there will be celebrated, for the first time in Rochester, the special Mass of this holy young woman who called herself "A Praise of Glory."

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

From A Reader

"I have been reading your column for three years, and while I confess to disagreeing every once in a while, I have a deep respect for a person so completely sure of his faith. Which brings me to why I write to you. I feel I'll get a direct answer and not a run around the bush one.

"Over the past few years I have become increasingly confused with the Catholic religion. I am born and raised a Catholic but as a daily Bible reader I keep getting tripped up on what the Bible says and what the Church says.

"For example, in your Nov. 7 column you state the word 'Purgatory' is not in the Bible and neither is 'Holy Trinity.' However, I find references to support the Holy Trinity. I have not found any for Purgatory. I can accept the theory and example you gave but can you direct me to some verse? Please do not think I am trying to build mountains out of molehills, but I need to have a firm basis for my faith. I fully intend to look into the Catholic authors you mentioned, and have started Merton's 'Seven Storey Mountain.'

"I am the mother of three young children. Jesus has led me back to the beauty of the Mass and I am rededicating myself to the Catholic faith, but I feel like a baby trying to discover the whys and wherefores. If you have any titles of books that would help a stumbling person get on the right path, please forward them to me."

Response: I have your letter but have lost your address! Please phone me, 265-1616, or write to Holy Trinity Church, Webster, N.Y. 14580. Certain sentences stand out.

1. "I feel I'll get a direct answer." We have fast foods, fast cleaners, but in biblical studies there is often required not a fast, simple answer but careful, thoughtful, prayerful study. Yours is a case and I am pleased you are willing to read some of the authors I recommended, who became Catholics basically because they were convinced that the

Catholic Church is the teacher Christ gave, and the bible is one of the sources of God's revelation.

2. "I am born and raised a Catholic but as a daily Bible reader I keep getting tripped up on what the Bible says and what the Church says." I read the bible every day and quite happily stay on my feet because the Church is the teacher. Witnesses of Jehovah, Mormons, Baptists, Presbyterians, Reformed Christians -- you name them -- all claim "The Bible says" and they get tripped up on what the Bible does say. Vatican II says: "The Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic." The Unity: in faith, in doctrine, in sacraments, in government is the envy of all Christian sects who contend among themselves, tripping over biblical misinterpretations.

3. "If you have any titles of books that would help a stumbling person get on the right path, please forward them to me." Alexander Jones, the editor of the Jerusalem Bible, wrote "Unless Some One Show Me." The title applies to your problem. It is from Acts 8:27 -- "Philip...heard him (the eunuch) reading Isaiah. And he said: 'Do you understand what you read?' Who said: 'How can I understand, unless some one show me.'" I just phoned Trant's Book Store and they say it is out of print. I phoned Msgr. Frank Burns, and he will loan me his copy to share with you. Do you have a cassette machine? One of the best talks on Purgatory is given by Jesuit Father Bernard Basset, the final talk of his retreat entitled "A Weekend with Cardinal Newman." I will be glad to send it to you. There is a highly recommended "Scripture Studies" put out by the Diocese of Little Rock, Ark., for groups. You might connect with one. And when I get your address I will give you a list of books and tapes which may be of help. Thank you for writing. Just imagine your sending your two children to school, with a book, and saying: "Here. Fend for yourself. You need no teacher. It's all in the book."

Parish Network Reopens Shelter

The Parish Network for Homeless Persons reopened its temporary shelter in the basement of Blessed Sacrament Church last week.

Throughout the winter months, the shelter will house 15 homeless persons, seven evenings a week, and will provide two light meals.

Blessed Sacrament parishioners, under the direction of John and Ann Byrne, have formed a committee of ten to oversee the shelter operation this winter.

According to Peg Starry, coordinator of the Parish Network, more than 10,000 nights of shelter have been provided to "persons who have adopted homelessness as a means of survival" during the past two years.

"Although during the past two years the traditional providers of emergency shelter have augmented their capacity, it is believed that there is a small core of homeless who will still re-

quire our parish emergency shelter service," she said.

diocesan Catholic Charities, 546-4897.

The Parish Network will open shelters at St. Bridget and St. Augustine churches only if demand exceeds capacity at Blessed Sacrament, she noted.

At present there is a call for volunteers from other parish in the city and county to help staff the Blessed Sacrament shelter.

Anyone seeking further information, wishing to make a donation or wishing volunteer for the effort, is asked to contact Ms. Starry, 328-6400, or Maurice Tierney, executive director of

Hispanic Outreach Legal Aid Set Up

The Legal Aid society, in cooperation with the Ibero-American Action League, has established an Hispanic Civil-Legal Services Outreach Program. Funded by the United Way and the City of Rochester, its office is at 938 Clifford Ave. in the Human Service Institute of the Ibero-American Action League.

The program's purposes are to inform the Hispanic community of the civil-legal services available to them through the Legal Aid Society and to bridge the language and cultural gap that may deter members of the community from exercising their legal rights.

To this end, the program will provide a bilingual staff person to be available to the community on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Ibero-American Action League, set up a network of referral agencies for services the Legal Aid Society cannot provide, conduct four family law seminars for the purpose of educating the community and set up an advisory committee consisting of members of the community.

The Legal Aid Society provides consultation and legal representation to indigent and near-indigent

people in three major areas -- family law, landlord-tenant law and defense in certain debtor-consumer cases. The society helps people with divorce, separation, annulment, domestic violence, maintenance and/or child support, custody and visitation, paternity, adoption, guardianship, housing problems, landlord-tenant, consumer and debtors' rights and representation in civil cases when the applicant is being sued for damages and is unable to retain a defense attorney.

Acceptance of a case is based on income eligibility; consultation and/or referral is not. Any person may seek legal advice. If the person does not qualify for service or cannot be represented by the Legal Aid Society, he or she will be referred to the appropriate agency for further assistance. A \$2 application fee will be charged.

Hours of the Hispanic outreach program are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Tuesdays, and 1 to 5 p.m., Thursdays. Applicants may stop in or telephone for an appointment at 544-0450.

Any further questions about the program should be directed to the Legal Aid Society, 232-4090.

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THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER



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How can I help a young widow who has children?

The young widow has a great deal of responsibility in addition to her grief. She must deal not only with her own feelings but also help her children manage their sorrow. Friends can help out by taking care of some household responsibilities while the young widow gets her affairs in order, goes to school, seeks employment or begins a new social life. It is helpful to avoid rushing a widow into a new lifestyle before she has a chance to assesses the impact of the death of her spouse. She and her children will have to handle many new responsibilities and pressures while respecting each other's needs.

SCHAUMAN FUNERAL HOME
 2100 St. Paul St. 342-3400