

Father Pedro Arrupe, SJ, left legacy of hope

By Father Richard P. McBrien
Syndicated columnist

Father Pedro Arrupe, SJ, head of the Society of Jesus from 1965 until 1983, died last month after several years of illness and incapacitation.

Many of us outside the Society of Jesus share our brother Jesuits' keen sense of loss at his passing.

I was educated by Jesuits at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome; I taught with Jesuits at Boston College, a major Jesuit university; I have recruited distinguished Jesuit theologians to the Notre Dame faculty; and I count Jesuits

among my closest friends.

In spite of their extraordinary record of service to the church over the past four-and-a-half centuries, the Jesuits have been too often the object of suspicion, criticism, and — on one tragic occasion — outright suppression.

Although the motivation for these attacks has been varied, they were often linked, as in this century, with the order's firm and practical commitment to social justice, human rights and inculturation.

Jesuits were accused of causing confusion among the faithful, of promoting secularizing tendencies, and of displaying

too much independence from papal authority.

Thus, when Father Arrupe submitted his resignation to the Holy Father in 1980, the pope declined it and refused to authorize the election of a successor.

Soon thereafter, Father Arrupe suffered a temporarily paralyzing brain hemorrhage. He had chosen a highly respected American Jesuit, Father Vincent O'Keefe, to serve as vicar general.

Pope John Paul II overrode the choice and assumed governance of the order by naming his own personal delegate to head the society until the election of a new gen-



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eral. For this task the pope selected Father Paolo Dezza, an 80-year-old Jesuit with a strongly conservative reputation.

Father Arrupe accepted the decision without complaint, but many Jesuits were privately distressed by the Holy Father's actions. Contrary to the predictions of some critics, however, there were no public protests nor did any Jesuits leave the order over this issue.

The common expectation at the time was that Father Dezza would see his mandate as one of rooting out the alleged abuses and restoring discipline to the order.

This did not happen: First, because most of the "abuses" had either been manufactured or inflated by forces unsympathetic with Father Arrupe's leadership; and, secondly, because Father Dezza did not regard himself as an avenging angel, with a mission to correct Father Arrupe's mistakes.

Much to the surprise and relief of many people, inside and outside the Society of Jesus, Father Dezza accounted himself honorably as the papal delegate, consistently making a point of his own abiding respect for the ailing father general.

When, at Father Dezza's call, all of the Jesuit provincials came to Rome to discuss the concerns that had been voiced about the order, it became clear that the accusations had not been well-founded.

Indeed, the provincials provided a completely different picture of the order from the one painted by a relatively few disgruntled Jesuits and by politically conservative critics, especially in Latin America.

Following the meeting of the provincials, the Holy Father granted permission for the election of Father Arrupe's successor. The first-ballot choice was Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, a Dutch Jesuit with extensive pastoral experience in the Middle East and, like Father Arrupe, a man committed to the order's linkage of faith and justice.

In an address delivered in Spain in 1973, Father Arrupe insisted that the primary educational objective of the order was to form men and women "who cannot conceive of a love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbors" and who are "completely convinced that a love of God which does not issue in justice is a farce."

Those who knew him best, namely, his brother Jesuits, have said that hope was Father Arrupe's most characteristic strength. He never forgot that the order of grace is more powerful than the order of sin.

This from a man who, as a young missionary in Japan, lived through the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima in 1945 and spent the following days nursing and burying hundreds of victims.

The obituary in *The New York Times* noted that Father Arrupe left "no known survivors."

The *Times* was wrong. He left millions of brothers and sisters in Christ, who give thanks to God for his life and ministry among us.

Raising of Lazarus dispels all doubt in onlookers

By Cindy Bassett
Courier columnist

"Is Lazarus any better?" Mary called softly to her sister as she emerged from the sick man's room.

"No, I'm afraid not," Martha replied. "The doctor said that nothing short of a miracle can save our brother's life. He's done all he can."

"We can't let Lazarus die!" Mary cried. "Where is Jesus preaching?"

"I've heard that he's near Jerusalem, less than two miles from here."

"If Jesus knew that Lazarus was so ill, I'm certain he would do something," Mary suggested. "I'll send one of our servants with a message."

The next day, Martha kept watch by the window facing the road from Jerusalem while her sister stayed with Lazarus.

"He's coming!" Martha shouted late in the day.

"I don't understand it," Mary said as she joined her sister. "Our servant is returning alone."

The servant hadn't even reached the house before Mary had rushed out to meet him on the road. "Where is Jesus? Didn't you tell him how sick his friend Lazarus is?" she said.

"I assure you I did," the servant shook his head sadly, "but he went right on preaching to the crowd."

That night Lazarus died. The family had many friends and a great crowd of



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mourners came to comfort the two sisters.

A few days after the funeral, someone reported that Jesus was approaching down the road. Mary did nothing as Martha went immediately to meet him. She was so grief stricken that she remained in her chair brooding.

"If Jesus had come, Lazarus would have gotten well," Mary said. "He never would have died."

"If Jesus is supposed to be such a good friend, why didn't he help this family?" one of the mourners near Mary muttered.

Others at the house were quick to join in the criticism of Jesus. "Jesus cured the blind and the lame. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?" some were overheard saying.

A short time later, Martha returned alone. "Mary, Jesus is asking for you."

Mary got up and left the house. The mourners thought that she was going to weep at her brother's tomb so they followed close behind.

As soon as she saw Jesus, Mary sobbed, "If only you had come right away, Jesus.

Why?"

Jesus wept. "Take me to the tomb of Lazarus," he said.

When they arrived at the tomb, Jesus said to one of the mourners, "Roll away the stone."

Martha rushed forward and tried to stop them from doing so. "Lord, Lazarus has been dead four days. The body has begun to decay."

Jesus remarked, "Did I not promise that if you believed, you would see a great miracle?"

After the stone had been rolled away, Jesus prayed aloud so that everyone could hear. "Father, I thank you for always listening to my prayer."

Jesus looked at the huge opening of the tomb and shouted, "Lazarus, come forth!"

The crowd was astonished when they saw the once dead man standing alive at the entrance. Lazarus was still bound with linen burial wrappings.

"Unbind him," Jesus instructed.

"I'm sorry for doubting you, Jesus," Mary said. "Thank you for answering my prayer."


Meanwhile, some of the Pharisees who witnessed the great miracle set off immediately for Jerusalem to report the incident to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Scripture reference: John, Chapter 11:1-47.

Meditation: When you pray, do you want God's answers or yours?

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