

'Happy 70th' to two of church's finest

There are two members of the "class of 1928" who were not mentioned in my last column on the so-called "golden eight": Eugene Kennedy, the psychologist and prolific author, and Joseph Bernardin, the late cardinal-archbishop of Chicago. Kennedy turns 70 on Aug. 28. The cardinal would have been 70 on April 2.

Eugene Kennedy had been a close friend of Cardinal Bernardin since they first met in the 1967 in conjunction with a comprehensive study of American priests, commissioned by the U.S. Catholic bishops. Kennedy was in charge of the psychological portion of the study and Cardinal Bernardin was about to become General Secretary of the bishops' conference, with the responsibility for coordinating the project.

Last fall Kennedy published a book about their longstanding relationship, *My Brother Joseph: The Spirit of a Cardinal and the Story of a Friendship* (St. Martin's Press, \$17.95). Although it is an excellent book about a compelling subject, it has not been reviewed thus far in the Catholic press, nor does it seem to have been aggressively promoted. To be sure, books about famous people rarely do as well as books by famous people, in this instance Cardinal Bernardin's own posthumously published best-seller, *The Gift of Peace*



essays in theology

BY FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

(Loyola University Press).

For many years a Maryknoll priest, Kennedy was professor of psychology at the Catholic University of America, Maryknoll College and Loyola University of Chicago, from 1969 until his retirement in 1995. His wife Sara Charles is a psychiatrist and has co-authored three books with him, *Defendant* (1985), *On Becoming a Counselor* (1990), and *Authority* (1996).

The author of some 40 monographs, including an award-winning profile of the first Mayor Daley of Chicago, Kennedy has published books on counseling, the church, and on his treasured friend, Cardinal Bernardin. He did a biography of the cardinal in 1989, wrote the text for a photographic book, *This Man Bernardin*, in 1996, and then this latest one.

A relatively small volume, *My Brother*

Joseph begins with a moving reflection on Cardinal Bernardin's childhood in Columbia, S.C., and the familial, economic, and regional factors that would shape him for a lifetime. Indeed, the author insists that there is a direct line of continuity between Joseph, the young boy of the South, and the adult and famous Cardinal Bernardin: self-effacing, ever attentive to duty and unfailingly generous in his judgments of other people. ("That's just the way he is," he would often say of a difficult person, rather than disparage him.)

On the day he was consecrated auxiliary bishop of Atlanta, Cardinal Bernardin's mother offered him advice she would repeat when he was installed as the archbishop of Chicago and later when he received the cardinal's red hat from the pope: "Stand up straight and try not to look too pleased with yourself."

Cardinal Bernardin's whole life — as a priest, a bishop and then a leading cardinal of the church — was devoted to bringing people together. It was entirely characteristic of him to have initiated, just before his death, the Common Ground Project to reconcile alienated groups within the church. To the very end he was engaged in the ministry of healing and reconciliation.

The fact that he was more often suc-

cessful than not in this difficult task was probably due to his insistence that agreements should be reached without either side's being shamed or humiliated, an approach, unfortunately, that is not always practiced in today's church. Because of his hard-earned reputation for fairness, he enjoyed enormous credibility among his brother bishops and with the Vatican. Why else would he have been asked so often to clean up messes others had made?

In one of the book's best lines, the cardinal is likened to a person "seeking peace in the midst of the kind of fight only the Irish can have, a brawl between brothers that ends with bloodied heads, no winners, and the unrelieved melancholy that Irish tenors sing of in ballads about young men lost at sea."

His final crisis — the confrontation with cancer — was also his finest hour. No pastor could have preached the message of the Gospel more forcefully and indeed more credibly than Cardinal Bernardin did as he slipped gradually from this life to eternity.

A happy 70th birthday to Eugene Kennedy, and to Cardinal Bernardin, too — a brother to us all.

Father McBrien is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame.

Peace comes with forgiveness

Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 14:23-29. (R1) Acts 15:1-2, 22-29. (R2) Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23.

True peace is difficult to find in this world. Yet Jesus said that he is the source of peace. In his farewell address to his own, he said, "My peace is my gift to you."

One of the ways Jesus brings peace into our lives is by the sacrament of reconciliation — his Easter gift to us. Since the decline in confession, there has been an astronomical rise in the sale of tranquilizers and in visits to psychiatrists.

So many people toss and turn at night because of guilt over past actions. Sin destroyed Lady Macbeth's sleep. Night-walking, she would wring her hands, to wipe away imaginary drops of blood, saying, "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!" A physician called in to observe her said, "More needs she the divine than the physician. God, God forgive us all!" Her problem, he diagnosed, was not physical, but spiritual.

Brendan Behan, the Irish playwright, virtually drank himself to death because of an unrelenting sense of guilt. Behan was sent by the IRA to England on a mission. One day he planted a bomb that killed an innocent woman and her baby. Behan tried to drown the memory of this deed in a bottle, but without success.



a word for sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

Guilt is a terrible thing. So many try to deny it, or sweep it under the rug, or rationalize that everybody does it. But there is God's way of getting rid of guilt — confession. Catholics don't have to live with guilt. They know that in the sacrament of mercy God forgives sins. What accompanies forgiveness is peace!

God gives us peace through forgiveness; we too ought to give peace to others by forgiving them their faults.

A pastor one morning found a dead donkey in his front yard. He didn't know how it got there. He called the Sanitation Department, the Health Department and other agencies, but no one seemed able to help. In desperation he called the mayor, who answered testily, "Why bother me with your problem? You're a clergyman."

It's your job to bury the dead."

The pastor lost his cool and snapped back, "Well, I just thought I'd better notify the next of kin." We can relate to his feelings of frustration.

Still God wants us to have peace, the peace that comes from forgiveness — of the sins committed against God and the sins others have committed against us.

The third peace that Christ wants us to have comes from the realization that God is with us. "Anyone who loves me ... my Father will love him; and we will come to him and make our dwelling place with him always."

When pastor Martin Niemoller was arrested by Hitler in 1937 for not cooperating with the Nazis, he was placed in solitary confinement. He was overcome with terror and loneliness. As he was being brought to trial, the guard leading him to the courtroom whispered in his ear the words of Proverbs 18:10: "The Lord is a strong tower; the just man runs to it and is safe."

Those words caused Niemoller's fears to vanish, and their power sustained him through his trial and his years in Nazi concentration camps. We are not alone!

Our Lord promised he would not leave us orphans. He has a double dwelling

place on earth: in our hearts and in the Blessed Sacrament. That should give us the peace the world cannot give.

When the priest at Mass says, "The Lord be with you," that is more than a prayer; it is a statement of fact that the Lord is with us. And if the Lord is with us, who can be against us? Who cannot not have peace?

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, May 18
Acts 16:11-15; John 15:26-16:4

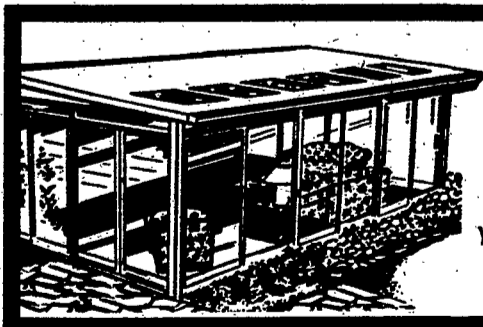
Tuesday, May 19
Acts 16:22-34; John 16:5-11

Wednesday, May 20
Acts 17:15, 22-18:1; John 16:12-15

Thursday, May 21
Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:17-23 or Hebrews 9:24-28, 10:19-23; Luke 24:46-53

Friday, May 22
Acts 18:9-18; John 16:20-23

Saturday, May 23
Acts 18:23-28; John 16:23-28



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