

# COLUMNISTS

## Father Louis Putz pioneered lay movement

One of the great men of the church died on June 24 at age 89. Father Louis Putz, CSC, was a pioneer in championing the rights and responsibilities of lay Catholics, an innovator in seminary formation, the founder of a Catholic publishing house, the author of several books of his own, the founder of the Young Christian Students (YCS), and a co-founder of the Christian Family Movement (CFM). Later in life he founded Harvest House, a parish-based social center for retirees, and the Forever Learning Institute, an educational program, also for retirees, both located in South Bend, Ind.

"My life," he told a local reporter five years ago, "has been really building groups to be apostolic ... to take care of other people. I've worked with students, families, seniors and seminarians."

One of his contemporaries in the Congregation of Holy Cross pointed out at the time that Louis Putz was "always by instinct on the cutting edge of what is going to happen next in the Church." And so he was.

Born in Bavaria (in a small town near the birthplace of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger), Louis Putz came to the United States at age 14 to study at Holy Cross Seminary on the campus of the University of Notre Dame. The arrangements had



essays in theology

BY FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

been made for him by an aunt who was a member of the Holy Cross sisters, based at St. Mary's College. Speaking only his native German, young Louis arrived at Ellis Island with a tag attached to his clothing: "Deliver me to South Bend, Indiana." While at Notre Dame he would occasionally baby-sit for the children of Knute Rockne.

His initial encounter with the progressive theology and pastoral approaches that would later be endorsed and adopted by the Second Vatican Council occurred during his studies in France in the early 1930s. There he was introduced to the Catholic Action movement with its heavy emphasis on lay involvement in the church, and also to the work of Canon Joseph Cardijn, a Belgian priest (later a cardinal) who founded the Young Christ-

ian Workers (known popularly as the Jockists).

He returned to the University of Notre Dame when war broke out in 1939. It was at Notre Dame, in 1940, that he launched the Young Christian Student movement and then, in 1947, co-founded the Christian Family Movement. A year later, with an initial donation of \$500, he established Fides Publishing House to bring the best of the new thinking from Europe to Catholics in the United States. Through Fides he published translations of some of the greatest scholars and pastoral leaders in France, Germany, and Belgium, including Yves Congar, Joseph Jungmann, Cardinal Joseph Suenens, and Cardinal Emmanuel Suhard.

And he was himself a productive writer. Among his published works were "Theology of the Apostolate" (1958); "The Sacraments: Magic or Mystery?" (1961); "The Modern Apostle" (1964); and a book of meditations on the church year entitled, "The Lord's Day" (1963).

In 1966, a year after another of his books "Seminary Education in a Time of Change" appeared, he was presented with the challenge of putting his ideas into practice. He was appointed religious superior of Moreau Seminary on the Notre Dame campus. Inspired by the council's

mandate for change in seminary formation, he transformed the program from one of strict regimentation to one that emphasized personal freedom and responsibility. Taking a leaf out of Canon Cardijn's book, he encouraged faculty and students to meet regularly in small groups for prayer, discussion, and problem-solving.

In doing so, he provided his seminarians not only with a new vision of the priesthood but of the church itself. For Louis Putz, as for the council, the church was the whole People of God — laity as well as clergy and religious — and the priesthood was not so much a state in life as a ministry of service to those in need, both inside and outside the church.

He held fast to those theological convictions throughout the remainder of his long life. In an interview given a few years before his death, he insisted: "The Church is a new church today. The big emphasis up to now was clerical, but now the Church needs to be run by the laity."

Every pastorally involved Catholic lay person today owes to him and to pioneers like him the opportunities they have had for ministerial service in the church.

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

## Stop stressing, start focusing on Jesus

**Sunday's Readings:** (R3) Luke 10:38-42; (R1) Genesis 18:1-10; (R2) Colossians 1:24-28.

People are different. Even within the same family. Take Mary and Martha in Sunday's Gospel. They were sisters, but as different as day and night.

Martha was a doer. The mother hen. You can see her, can't you? Wiping her hands on her apron and brushing the hair back out of her eyes as she hurries about making sure that everyone is taken care of. And then there's Mary. A dreamer more than a doer. While Martha hurries about getting the house in order, Mary positions herself at the feet of the Rabbi in rapt attention. She has never met anyone like Jesus before. Such wisdom, such power. Mary is swept up by Christ's words.

Martha wishes Mary were swept up with the chores that have to be done. All her life Martha has been doing while her sister has been dreaming. Oh, Martha loved Mary; she just wished she would do her share. In fact she complained about it to the Master. "Lord, are you not concerned that my sister has left me all alone? Tell her to help me."

Jesus loved and admired both of these women. With an understanding smile he said, "Martha you are anxious and upset about many things; one thing only is re-



a word for sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

quired." "You are anxious and upset about many things" — that certainly is a phrase for our time. We are a restless people obsessed with many things and anxious about these many things. Hans Selye has coined a term for this condition: stress. Stress is the response to life under tension.

Stress may be killing more people than AIDS. Stress is frequently found as the major cause for respiratory infections, arthritis, colitis, asthma, uneven heart rhythms, circulatory problems and even cancer. The doctors of the American Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine believe that 75 to 90 percent of all reported diseases are due in part to stress. Three best-selling prescription drugs in America are Valium for relaxation, Inderal for high blood pressure, and Tagamet for ul-

cers. Stress takes a heavy toll on us.

We are anxious and upset about many things. But Jesus said, "One thing only is required." Martha wanted to be the perfect hostess, and that is well and good. But the Master was in her home. He only had a short time to spend there. Martha had the opportunity to soak up words that would enrich her life immeasurably. Certainly the needs of her guests were important, but this was not the time. How foolish we can be when we do not keep life in its proper perspective.

If we are anxious about many things, it may be that our priorities are out of order. There is one priority that will make the others easier: Spend some time each day with Jesus. Learn from Mary's example. Take time to sit at the feet of Jesus. That can be done by reading the Scriptures each day, by prayer and meditation. Moments in his company will help you sort out the rest of your priorities. When life gets hard, time with him is essential.

Have you ever been in a hurry and buttoned up a long overcoat with lots of buttons and when you were done, found out that the coat was uneven? What went wrong? I'll tell you. You didn't get the first button in the right hole, and all the rest of the buttons were out of sequence as a result. That's a parable about life. Jesus

said it this way in the Sermon on the Mount: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides" (Mt 6:33).

If the Lord God is not the high priority in your life, then, like the overcoat, so many other things in life will be out of whack as well.

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

### Daily Readings

- Monday, July 20**  
Micah 6:1-4, 6-8; Matthew 12:38-42
- Tuesday, July 21**  
Micah 7:14-15, 18-20; Matthew 12:46-50
- Wednesday, July 22**  
Jeremiah 1:1, 4-10; John 20:1-2, 11-18
- Thursday, July 23**  
Jeremiah 2:1-3, 7-8, 12-13; Matthew 13:10-17
- Friday, July 24**  
Jeremiah 3:14-17; Matthew 13:18-23
- Saturday, July 25**  
2 Corinthians 4:7-15; Matthew 20:20-28

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