

EULOGY FOR BROTHER BERNARD LAURINAITIS, S.M.

“THE BEST WAY TO BUILD BRIDGES BETWEEN THE LAND OF THE DEAD AND THE LAND OF THE LIVING IS TO TELL AND RETELL THE STORY OF THOSE WHO ARE GONE” (MIDDLETOWN, AMERICA – GAIL SHEEHY)

AND SO, WE TELL THE STORY, AT LEAST IN ITS BRIEFEST SUMMARY AND OUTLINE FORM, OF BERNARD (BEN) LAURINAITIS.....

BORN IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA, ON MAY 17, 1926, THE SON OF THE LATE JOSEPH AND ANNA LAURINAITIS. HE IS ALSO PRECEDED IN DEATH BY A YOUNGER SISTER ANN LAURINAITIS, WHO DIED AT THE AGE OF 31 IN 1966.....

HE IS SURVIVED BY HIS SISTERS, FRANCES SAFTNER OF EXTON, PA., (HUSBAND RICHARD) AND HELEN HOELLERMAN OF PITTSBURGH (HUSBAND JOHN)

BEN ATTENDED NORTH CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL IN PITTSBURGH AND AS HE STATES IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPICAL STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 60TH JUBILEE AS A MARIANIST “I MET THE MARIANISTS AND WAS IMPRESSED BY THEIR FRIENDLINESS AND FAMILY SPIRIT, WHICH INSPIRED ME TO JOIN THEM.”

HE SPENT ONE YEAR IN THE POSTULATE HERE AT MT. ST. JOHN AND THEN ONE YEAR IN BEACON, N.Y., FOR HIS NOVITIATE, WHERE HE MADE FIRST VOWS ON THE FEAST OF ST. BERNARD ON AUG. 20, 1944.

IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT ON HIS 60TH JUBLIEE HE GOES ON: LOOKING BACK, MY LIFE AS A MARIANIST CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THREE ERAS:

FIRST ERA: TEACHING ERA - FROM 1946 TO 1965, HE WAS A TEACHER AT VARIOUS HIGH SCHOOLS IN OHIO, PUERTO RICO, AND NEW YORK (THOSE SCHOOLS WERE CLEVELAND CATHEDRAL LATIN, PURCELL HIGH SCHOOL IN CINCINNATI, COLEGIO SAN JOSE IN PUERTO RICO AND CHAMINADE MINEOLA IN NEW YORK)

ABOUT HIS TEACHING HE STATES: "I TAUGHT A NUMBER SUBJECTS, INCLUDING ECONOMICS, WHICH I NEVER STUDIED IN COLLEGE! IN THOSE DAYS YOU DID WHATEVER THEY TOLD YOU TO DO!"

THE SECOND ERA: (THIS WAS HIS LIBRARIAN ERA) THIS PERIOD WAS FROM 1965 TO 1977 WHERE HE SERVED AS A LIBRARIAN AT SCHOOLS IN OHIO, AUSTRALIA AND PENNSYLVANIA. (THE SCHOOLS WERE HAMILTON CATHOLIC AND ST. JOSEPH IN CLEVELAND, CINCINNATI PURCELL IN CINCINNATI AND ST. PAUL'S COLLEGE IN AUSTRALIA)

THE THIRD ERA, THIS WAS HIS ARCHIVIST ERA FROM 1977 TO 1998. HE DESCRIBES THIS ERA: "I LIVED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON AND WORKED IN THE MARIANIST ARCHIVES AT ROESCH LIBRARY. THE HISTORY OF OUR ORDER PROVED VERY INTERESTING".

OF COURSE, WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR MORE ABOUT THAT LAST STATEMENT WOULDN'T WE?? BUT BEN WAS A MAN OF FEW WORDS WASN'T HE...

HE DOES GO ON TO DEVELOP ANOTHER TOPIC THOUGH: "MY FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE MARIANISTS WERE CORRECT: THE BROTHERS ARE FRIENDLY AND FILLED WITH A FAMILY SPIRIT, NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO. IN MY TRAVELS TO AND FROM AUSTRALIA, I WAS PRIVILEGED TO VISIT COMMUNITIES ON MANY CONTINENTS AND THE FRATERNAL SPIRIT IN THESE DIFFERENT PLACES WAS ALWAYS THE SAME. I ENJOYED WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE I HAVE MET IN CLASSROOMS AND LIBRARIES IN THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONALLY. IF ANYONE ASKED ME NOW, 'DID YOU MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION IN BECOMING MARIANIST 60 YEARS AGO?' I WOULD RESPOND WITHOUT HESITATION, 'ABSOLUTELY!'"

WE CAN'T ASK FOR ANYTHING MORE IN THIS LIFE!!!!

WE GIVE THANKS FOR BEN'S LIFE AS A MARIANIST...FOR HIS RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL IN HIS LIFE.

WE ALSO THANK THOSE WHO CARED FOR BEN TO THE END....

THE CARING AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF AT MERCY-SIENA....

THE MARIANIST COMMUNITY AT MERCY-SIENA...INCLUDING FR. KEN SOMMER. ESPECIALLY BRO. NICK RUFO WHO WAS WITH BEN WHEN HE PASSED AWAY PEACEFULLY WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON.....

WE THANK JUDY MOEHL, OUR MEDICAL COORDINATOR, AND KIM EVANS, HER ASSOCIATE FOR THEIR CARE OF BEN...

MAY BEN REST IN PEACE AND MAY ALL THE SOULS OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED THROUGH THE MERCY AND COMPASSION OF GOD REST IN PEACE.....