

Mass of the Resurrection for Frank P. Mullan

Died: February 21, 2007

Funeral: February 26, 2007

Readings:

Job 19: 1, 23-27

Philippians 3: 20-21

Responsorial Psalm Ps. 42 My Soul is Thirsting for the Living God

Gospel: Matt: 5:1-12

My dear Brothers, Frank's brother William, friends,

The great spiritual inspiration for Blessed Chaminade's life was the mystery of the Incarnation, when the Father's great compassion led him to send his message of love in the form of his Son. And this happened through the surprised acceptance by young Mary who gave birth to salvation in Jesus her Son.

We continue to live the mystery of the Incarnation when our union with Christ shows itself in our lives as a visible reflection of his care and zeal, love and commitment. Bro. Frank Mullan is an example of that reflection of his Savior's mission and message..

I met this gentle man Bro. Frank Mullan well over 50 years ago when he was a freshly minted graduate of the University of Dayton, and he came to our high school, Chaminade, in New York. (When he joined the Society of Mary a few years before Stan Musial was making a name for the St. Louis Cardinals and the big song on Broadway was "How are Things in Glocamora" from Finnian's Rainbow. The Marshall Plan was saving a resurrecting Europe. These are Frank's own memories.) He was slight and seemed shy (though he actually loved to talk), and looked like he would be had for lunch by our upper classmen. But he was strong and bright and competent too, so in his quiet gentleness which was accompanied by respectful and friendly relationships with students, he was a very effective teacher and Brother of Mary. He was one of those admirable brothers who make me, a teenager, think very positively of religious life. He was a good Incarnation of Marianist virtues.

Frank has his Job years too – in recent years when like Job, many good gifts were lost, like active ministry, good hearing, strong body, resiliency of spirit, responsive limbs, organs that worked, classes of eager students, sports and jokes – all diminished. But through this, like Job, his good conscience persisted. "I know that my Redeemer lives....and in my flesh I shall see God...." He had a tenacity of faith which held to his God, his brothers, his family and young disadvantage urban student he tutored even when he wasn't at full strength, at Mother Seton Academy.

But his strength and acceptance and perseverance in suffering is not what we remember most about him, it isn't the dominant image of this Brother of Mary. His image is especially that of the gracious and hard-working missionary of Mary for over 30 years in

Kenya, Malawi and Zambia. His life there reflected the Beatitudes, great challenges for any Christian. He gave his all for the faith and the human flourishing of his students, coach of basketball and tennis, bookkeeper of school and community, teacher of religion, math, French, English, bookkeeping and economics. He told me how at Nakata Bay the snake which had swallowed their guard dog ended up chained to the house just the way the dog had been. On the side he played the guitar, loved bridge and was an excellent gardener. He grew an orchard of fruit trees in Lusaka, and made wine.

He loved it when some students slipped up slightly on some religious knowledge questions, as in: What did Vatican II accomplish? It renewed all the mistakes of Vatican I" was one answer. What is the greatest obstacle to man's happiness? Not hatred and killing, but "The greatest obstacle to man's happiness is the commandment, Thou shalt not commit adultery." "God spoke to those who wrote the Bible by means of artificial inspiration." "Jacob was Rebecca's has-been". What did God ask of Abraham? "Get out of town." Divorce is "when a man puts his wife asunder". And Jesus told Peter that "the cock would crow until you deny me three times".

Frank, or Pat as he was called in the missions according to the old Marianist custom of not using the same first name for any two of the community members. They were known by their first names, and duplication would lead to confusion, so Bro. Pat Mullan he was for those decades in the Africa. Pat was poor in spirit and in body – accepting the privation of a very poor country which only got poorer in his years there from corruption and the drop in the price of copper. He was single-hearted in devotion to students who had no advantages but their willingness to study and learn despite great poverty. He was a peacemaker who was a teacher of justice and very sensitive to the machinations of injustice and corruption wherever it showed itself – in Zambia or in the United States. He fostered human dignity by his kindness, humor and generosity. In many a letter Frank would relate the latest trick or comeuppance of a minister of government.

Frank knew that according to our old Constitutions that his true citizenship is in heaven. And he did eagerly await the coming of his Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has taken Frank's lowly and broken body already, and made it according to the pattern of his own glorified body.

Frank would now want me to use the immortal words of Yogi Berra who said at a diner given in his honor: I would like to thank all of you who made this affair necessary", but Frank's words would be "I thank you for being here to pray for me".

Thank you Frank, for being such a Son of Mary and brother to us, in the spirit of Jesus Son of Mary, and such a disciple of Blessed Chaminade. The angels lead you into paradise; may the martyrs come to welcome you and take you to the holy city, the new and eternal Jerusalem.