

EULOGY FOR STAN

Stan, ever the organized Brother, several months ago arranged that Bernie and I would share the eulogy at his funeral. Bernie was supposed to do the "holy" part, and I was supposed to do the "un-holy" part. Bernie told the Brothers the other day, "Thank God I'm not following Michael!" Well, I say "Thank God Stan isn't following me!" So, buckle up for some impressions and stories that made Stan so dear to us.

And who do you know that gets two funerals! Only someone from Omaha! I mean, you didn't know Stan for very long before you found out that Oz, Shangri-la, Narnia, El Dorado, Atlantis, Camelot, and Utopia are merely suburbs of Omaha. If you weren't from there, well...then you were simply from a place called Somewhere Else.

There's no doubt that his home town definitely shaped him and had a life-long influence on him. And since he knew personally every one of its 452,061 citizens, and having taught at least half of them, we're told that he cajoled the city fathers to make a slight addition to the seal of the city. It no longer features a Latin inscription reading *Fortiter In Re* (which means "Courageous in All Things"). No, he wasn't satisfied with that. Instead, it now reads: *Omaha Sit Centrum Mundi*. "Omaha is the Center of the World."

You know, of course, that he had a degree in geography. What you may not know is how he put that degree to use in subtle ways. Only recently did we learn that he had been lobbying with Triple A and the US Geological Survey to *move* Omaha to the center of Nebraska instead of way off on the eastern edge. Triple A will soon publish two maps of Nebraska. Those in the know will find themselves living in New Omaha, and the rest of us dummies will keep trying to find where it is.

You may have read at the beginning of July that the National Park Service began a \$14 million upgrade to Mount Rushmore. You know where this is going.... When Stan read about this, he did what only Stan could do. He picked up the phone and called the Secretary of the Interior. I forget his name. You know... there have been so many of them lately that people like us can't keep track! But you can bet he was one of Stan's students.

But, to get back to Mount Rushmore...so Stan called the Secretary of the Interior to ask a favor. Would he please *move* Mount Rushmore from South Dakota to Nebraska! And he said ok. Oh, now I remember.... that's why the last Secretary got fired! But all is not lost. Apparently, the new fellow, another one of Stan's students, agreed to reallocate the \$14 million. \$1 million has been set aside to fix the roads. The other \$13 million is to carve a new face. You know who!

Well, speaking of famous places (in addition to famous faces), I think it's fair to say that the only city in the country that wasn't a suburb of Omaha was San Francisco. It's just the capital of "Out West." He loved The City. He knew every nook and cranny, and he was famous for his tour of San Francisco. One of the last things he did, by the way, was to turn it over to Uber. [[[Uber-Tours is going to make you all very rich!]]]

Many a visiting Brother, and those of us who live here, were his guests. He took the greatest pleasure in driving us to see things we knew, and showed us sights we

never knew were there. After that, it was off to eat at some off-beat place where the dessert was Pepto-Bismol ice cream – with sprinkles. Actually, it was often the Roosevelt Tamale Parlor in the Outer Mission down on 24th. They had a reserved table for the “Brother Stan Tour.”

But he loved to find dives, trashy restaurants, and off-beat places to eat. He’d try them out, of course, and then come home and tell us about them. And not infrequently he’d take Brothers or friends to these delectable eateries. You knew you were special when you walked into *Nacho Daddy’s* in the Mission, or *Lord of the Wings Chicken House* by the airport, or *The Burger-tory* out by the cemetery in Colma, where they advertise “you can get a helluva burger and a heavenly shake,” or *The Golden Palace Mexican Bistro* in Chinatown, or *Dairy Godmother’s Old Fashioned Ice Cream* down by the zoo or *Smothered in Love Authentic Texas Rib House* way out on Geary, or *The Blind Pig* on Filmore, or, finally *Mamma Baby’s Sweet Cheeks* in the Castro. If you haven’t been to one of these places, you owe yourself an adventure to honor Stan’s memory.

I have to say, however, he was a good cook, and he could put together a tasty meal in no time. And if you followed your nose into the kitchen, you got put to work!

As much as he loved finding crazy places to eat, he loved to go shopping. In recent years, he’d throw a couple of oxygen tanks in the back seat of his car, and off he’d go. He’d always knew where the sales and bargains were. Sweaters, shirts, slacks, you name it Macy’s triple discount, Penny’s 2 for 1...whatever....and it was really good stuff... And then he’d come home and tell us about the treasures he found and ask if anyone wanted something. If yes, he’d be your personal shopper and fashion consultant, and off he’d go.

And he was the Prince of Coupons. You name it, he had a coupon for it. We frequently had ice cream for dessert because he knew from that morning’s newspaper which stores were having sales. After dinner he’d often go out to the freezer and bring back ice cream he’d gotten that afternoon. On a particular evening he boasted that the Dollar Store was having a 3 for 1 sale, and we were treated to generous scoops of Licorice Mango Swirl, Macadamia Mint Mocha, and Lime Chocolate with M&Ms and Coconut Chips. No wonder they were 3 for 1!!!

I think his favorite place was Costco. He was in charge of kitchen supplies and snacks, and he’d stock up on all kinds of stuff we’d need in the Community. Chips, crackers, peanuts, snacks, candy, and especially Zip-Lok bags to put our left-overs in after dinner. As a matter of fact, as he was driving off the day he moved here to Mont La Salle, it was reported that Bro. Michael Avila was seen running after the car shouting: “Come back! We’re out of Zip-Lok bags!” As a matter of fact, I happen to have the last one right here! This is a sacred relic!!!

If you knew Stan, you also knew that he had more sources and correspondents than CNN! As a matter of fact, they used to call him. One on-line source he used to enjoy especially was called “Whispers in the Loggia.” There you can find out all kinds of churchy stuff, sometimes before the Church finds out. And it’s all legit. He loved to come in to breakfast and regale us with the latest who’s who of bishops, or what the Pope has up his sleeve, or what’s going on in a particular diocese. And speaking of the

Pope, a highlight of his life was going to Mass celebrated by Pope John Paul II in his private chapel in the Vatican. And then, of course, chatting with him for a few moments afterward in Polish. And he did the same with Pope Francis...but not in Polish!

And staying with the “religious” theme for a moment... To use an old-fashioned religious order term, Stan was what would have been known back in those days as a “*regular*” Brother. Now “regular” had nothing to do with your looks, or your opinions, or whether you wore dark clothes. And being “regular” was certainly NOT the opposite of constipation. And even if you were – constipated, that is – you could still be “regular.” Being “regular” meant that you attended all the prayers and the liturgy and the rosary in the chapel, and that you were on time.

Stan was definitely “regular.” He was generally always there for prayers in the morning and for liturgy in the late afternoon. And in these later years when he got heavy into oxygen, he had his favorite chair where he could park himself and his oxygen wheelie – far enough from the candles on the altar so he wouldn’t blow us all up in case he sprang a leak! One thing, though, on feasts of the Virgin Mary – and there are several of them throughout the year – he’d always remember his mom, whose name was Mary, and all the sisters who taught him who had Mary as part of their names.

Perhaps it was for this very holiness and piety that he was made the President at the School of Applied Theology in Berkeley (I doubt it!). You know that picker-upper high energy drink – Red Bull? Well, SAT was sort of a spiritual version of Red Bull for people in religious orders who were on sabbatical for six months or a whole year – people who needed a spiritual pick-up. The program offered various courses and workshops for the participants, taught by a variety of instructors who were contracted for this or that course every semester or every year, etc. Bro. Michael and I used to tease him about why he didn’t use us once in a while. “Gee,” we’d tell him, “we both have doctorates in theology. And we’re cheap! What could possibly go wrong?” And he’d reply, “That’s what I’m worried about!”

So, to show him what a mistake he was making, we made up our own curriculum. We created a list of several hundred of the craziest spiritual courses and workshops you could imagine. When we showed him what we’d created, he laughed his head off and, of course, he wanted a copy so he could send it to people and show them the kind of program he was running! ...And that’s why it’s no longer in operation!

And finally, every Brothers’ community has a Director and many, often depending on the number of Brothers in the community, also have a Sub-Director – a kind of “Assistant Director.” Our community was different. We had a Director and a Registrar. And you can guess who was the self-appointed Registrar! And his office was the dining room table. Depending on a series of variables that he controlled, he gave us academic credits for different topics of conversation.

You can probably imagine the scene with a table full of college professors. Our conversations go all over the place – and most of the time nowhere because we end up laughing and having a lot of fun. Nevertheless, a conversation about the high price of hotdogs at a recent Giant’s game might get diverted into “The electro-chemical properties of hydrogenated oil in the salad dressing.” Stan might give 1 credit for that.

When we heard the recent news about the beatification of one of our Brothers, a theological side topic like "The epiphanic theophanation of Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah," might get 1.25 credits. But, if he determined that a particular topic lacked substance or was too silly, like "Whether or not the ellipsis in the slang of Egyptian dockworkers is influenced by the insertion of Arabic pronouns," well, we were lucky to get .25! I mean, that subject is very important to those guys!

Truth be told, most of our dinner conversations are crazy and noisy, and definitely not professorial. Stan being as crazy as the rest of us. On many nights, he'd just have to put away his grade book.

But you know, everyone in this Chapel has a diploma, not from the University, but the Universe of Stan. He was a grand person to know and live with, and his generous heart was as grand as his universe. May he continue to make us laugh - at him, but more at ourselves! And may you NOT rest in peace, Stan, because we're not finished with you!