

MANCIPIA

January/February 2011

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



This *Mancipia* is dedicated to Father Michael Jarecki, our intrepid chaplain of twenty years, and friend of the Congregation for much longer. While the issue was in production, Father's already frail health took a downturn. On the morning of Friday, January 7, he received Extreme Unction and Holy Viaticum. Although his condition later stabilized, it does not seem that our old chaplain will last much longer in this vale of tears.

Father Jarecki is ninety-three years old. He has manfully served the Church during very difficult years, and has been loyal to the Mass of his ordination. We ask all to pray for his holy death, and that we who care for him will do so in the spirit of the Visitation.

— Brother André Marie, M.I.C.M.

TO FRIENDS OF THE CRUSADE:

TOBIAS AND THE PRIEST'S MOTHER



Br. André Marie, M.I.C.M., Prior

Father Jarecki is our chaplain. At ninety-three years of age he is not yet quite as long-lived as Brother Francis (who died at ninety-six), but he's close. I fear that his hospitalization last year is a sign that he is soon to exit this world. Truth to tell, he wants to do just that, because, as he has told us many times, and even more so now, he wants to go to Heaven soon.

Whether his departure is anon or no, I think a few words in tribute to this heroic *alter Christus* are appropriate now, even while he is still with us.

His name — Yah-RET-skee, with the “r” tipping the roof of the mouth — is a gift of his Polish immigrant father. Yes, our long-lived chaplain is proudly Polish, and has been labeled a “Polish War Horse” by one of his doctors, also a Pole, who is probably referencing the enormous beasts of burden once mounted by the heavily armed winged Polish lancer husars. This equine appellation is a tribute to Father's herculean strength of character as well as his physical robustness. In his youth he hiked every mountain in his native New York State's Adirondack mountain chain. To say that Father Jarecki is tough would be like calling Mathusala old.

I was reminded of Father's Polishness during his hospitalization. When he was awake, but a bit groggy from medications and illness, I asked if he wanted to say another Rosary

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Father Jarecki's minor seminary graduate class of 1940, at Wadhams' Hall Seminary in Ogdensburg, NY

CONVENT CORNER



Sr. Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M.,
Prioress

AN INADEQUATE TRIBUTE

How can I write an adequate tribute to a man who has been a faithful father to me and the other sisters for about a quarter of a century? I pray my brevity will be blessed.

The sisters all love our dear Father for his genuine and tireless love of souls, his simple and inspiring sermons (reminiscent of the parables in the Gos-

pel), and his real love for our Lady. And, I am sure she loves him, too! Father is one of those real men who are faithful to their duty and totally self-sacrificing to the bitter and humiliating end . . . and then glory. He is a hero. His priesthood was never “about Father Jarecki,” but always about the Sacred and Immaculate Hearts and about souls. As he said, concerning showing respect to him, “If you are disrespectful to me, it is good for me, but bad for you.” In one of his last sermons, he called himself “our Lady’s little sheep dog,” which is a beautiful summary of how he practiced his priesthood, never giving a sermon without drawing our attention to his Heavenly Mother and praying his favorite prayer, the Fifteen Decades of the Rosary daily.

Father Jarecki’s favorite poem is “Trees,” by Joyce Kilmer. In conclusion, I present to you a poem, written in tribute to Father, by our high school. It is based on Father’s favorite poem, which I will include first.

Trees

By Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth’s flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Priests

By the IHM High School Class 2010-2011

Dedicated to Father Michael Jarecki upon his retirement at the age
of ninety-three

I think that I shall never see
A priest as child-like as he.

He baptized, married, and confessed
For sixty-six years without a rest.

As promised to our Father* then,
For thirty years our priest he’s been.

Those twenty-seven thousand Masses
Were said to God for our trespasses.

For thirty years he gave us hope
And kept us praying for the Pope.

Remembered long by many persons
Will be his short and Marian sermons.

His love for Mary, as a devoted son,
He shared until his job was done.

In spite of sundry aches and pains,
His perseverance made great gains.

He fed us daily with our Lord;
He taught us math** has its reward.

Through all our laughter and our tears,
He’s been our father for many years.

Poems are made by fools, at least,
But only God can make a priest.

If “old soldiers never die — they just fade away,” what shall we say of the man who faithfully lives the grace of his priesthood — the eternal Priesthood of Christ Himself. “Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedech.” Our dear priest is ready for his reward. Please join us in praying that it will not be delayed when he closes his eyes in death, and celebrates his priesthood eternally.

Email Sister Marie Thérèse at convent@catholicism.org

* Father Leonard Feeney

** Father Jarecki loved math and would occupy his mind with geometry, algebra, and calculus for hours at a time.

FOUNDERS' COLUMN



Father Leonard Feeny

THE POWER OF CHRIST IN A POOR PRIEST

This issue's Founder's Column is thematic. Although Father Jarecki is a secular priest and not a religious bound by the vow of poverty, he lived that beautiful evangelical counsel in a most edifying way. He is a very model of the poor priest Father Feeny describes here.

Imagine Catholic priests being hesitant to come out and thunder to the confused minds in America about salvation in terms of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Father, and the sanctity of the saints!

We priests were not put in Sacrament to take care of the temporal needs of our flocks. Our assignment is to the spiritual welfare of our people. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux wrote: "Christ allowed one of His Apostles to take charge of all the money — the traitorous Apostle — because He wanted to teach prelates readily to entrust the managing of temporal affairs to anyone, but to keep the managing of spiritual things to themselves; though many do the contrary."

The hungry whom we must feed, and the naked whom we must clothe are those who hunger for the Bread of Life and thirst for communion with the Blood of Christ. The Blessed Eucharist is a priest's great gift to man: that Divine Food and Drink which makes him concorporeal with Jesus and induces the Blessed Virgin Mary to take him as her child.

Priests should be poor men.

Saint Paul tells us that we could give all our goods to the poor and still not have charity (I Cor. 13:3). Unless a priest makes the Blessed

Eucharist his first and foremost charity, how can he say, or ask anyone else to say, what Saint Paul once shouted: "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

Priests should be poor men. Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, insisted that all his sons should be poor. A poor priest is free to talk all the time about man's eternal salvation.

A poor priest can be fearless, and capable of indignation. He can "be angry and sin not," as the Holy Scripture exhorts him to (Eph. 4:26). A priest who is poor does not need to have in his voice the same horrid pleasantries that are heard in the voices of academic preceptors in wealthy universities.

There can be dynamite in a poor priest's sentences. One may see challenge and danger in his eyes. A poor priest is always warning that salvation is not easily achieved, unless we are willing to pay the price.

— Father Feeny, from *Bread of Life*



Our high school class reciting their poem "Priests" to Father Jarecki



The junior high school recited poems written for him.



The 1st and 2nd graders read their spiritual bouquets to Father

TO FRIENDS OF THE CRUSADE: TOBIAS AND THE PRIEST'S MOTHER

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together. He said that he would like, instead, to say another particular prayer to our Lady, but he had trouble remembering its name. I suggested that it might be the *Memorare* he was thinking of, but that wasn't it. He said, "My father taught it to me in Polish. It goes like this..."

Naturally, I did not understand the Slavic verbal outpouring that came my way, but by its rhythmical, repetitive sounds, I discerned that Father was reciting a litany.

"The Litany of Loreto?" I asked.

"Thaaats the prayer!" he enthused, like an excited little boy. We then recited it together. Since that day, one of the brothers would recite the Litany with him after his daily Mass. The Polish War Horse still offered daily Mass until this past November 1, when Father Phillipson arrived.

Father's mother was not Polish. She was a Scots-Irish lady by the name of Black, who professed Presbyterianism and even came from a family of Protestant ministers. She was stalwart in her religion and had no intention of changing it when she went for marriage instruction to a Catholic priest. (And there was *no way* Mr. Jarecki was going to marry outside the Catholic Church!) The first appointment the engaged couple had with the priest saw Miss Black with her Bible under her arm, ready to do battle with the Papist and teach him a thing or two about Holy Writ.

It was something of a surprise to her to find out from the Catholic Reverend that the Bible she cherished was incomplete. To his credit — and probably to his eternal glory — the priest who instructed the future Jareckis in matrimony made it a point to teach them the beauty of marriage, and the chastity to which married couples are called, from the book of Tobias, which he had them both read. This inspired book is one of the "deuterocanonicals," those Old Testament books dismissed by Protestants as "apocryphal." How much today's engaged couples need the advice given by Raphael to the younger Tobias!

Then the angel Raphael said to him: Hear me, and I will shew thee who they are, over whom the devil can prevail. For they who in such manner receive matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power (Tobias 6:16-17).

A tale of an adventurous and dangerous journey, a real-life parable, and a chaste romance all in one, the Book of Tobias has a sweet attraction that I believe only a black heart — no pun intended — could reject.

And thank God, Miss Black didn't reject it. Far from dismissing it as a Romish interpolation, the future Mrs. Jarecki found great beauty and truth in the book of Tobias, which became to her an efficacious channel of grace. Having failed to rout the priest in a Bible argument, the would-be polemicist

desired to embrace that religion which possessed the *whole* Bible, instead of her incomplete one. She became a Catholic, and — as Father Jarecki emphasizes — she became a *real* one. As a convert, she respected her husband's deeply rooted *Catholic sense*, which converts can often take a long time to acquire due to the non-Catholic culture of their upbringing. She was not adverse to incorporating Polish Catholic customs into her family's "table culture," so that her children might have a vital atmosphere for the nurture of their Faith. The Catholic Faith needs a Catholic culture to survive; after all, a culture is an atmosphere conducive to life.

Mr. Jarecki died while his son, the future priest, was yet a teenager. For a time, young Michael Alexander Jarecki had to work at various jobs to help support the family. But, later, when they could afford it, he left to go to seminary: St. Bernard's in Rochester, known affectionately to its inmates as "The Rock."

In the terrible confusion that engulfed the Church in recent decades, Father Jarecki had much to suffer, especially from parishioners and clergy who thought him not sufficiently progressive. Of all things, he was accused of being overly devoted to our Lady, which charge Father considered a compliment, for he was long since totally consecrated to her (and thus was a Slave of Mary before ever being our chaplain). Ever faithful to the traditional Mass, even when people thought it was "outlawed," he still managed to keep his diocesan faculties for all these years while attending to the needs of various groups of traditional faithful, who were perceived by others as "rebellious." We here at Saint Benedict Center, Richmond, have had him these last twenty years, but many other groups and isolated individuals here and there have benefited from his wide-ranging priestly apostolate long before and during his association with our community.

Father Jarecki often recalls his mother's virtues, piety, and practical, homespun advice. Without at all being a "mamma's boy," he still bears a great affection for her.

And, oh yes, he still loves the book of Tobias.

Email Brother André Marie at bam@catholicism.org.

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PREFECT'S COLUMN



Tertiary* Brother John
Marie Vianney

A PRIEST OF JESUS CHRIST AND NOTHING LESS

Personal praise is something abhorred by our chaplain of twenty years, Father Michael Jarecki. Even with all his deep personal humility, I think Father will not object too much, after all, to our holding up for example and emulation his pious practices and sound Catholic principles.

He was born on October 6, 1917, seven days before the Miracle of the Sun, a fitting prelude to his lifelong association with Our Lady of Fatima. But the retired cleric from the Diocese of Ogdensburg, New York, prefers instead to observe the anniversary of his baptismal day, his birth into the Church, on October 21. And he insists all Catholics should do likewise.

Born in Turin, New York, a little town in the Tug Hill of the upstate, he placed third among eight children, with five sisters (Catherine, Mary, Elizabeth, Barbara, and Frances) and two brothers (David and John). At age fourteen, in 1931, his father died. His mother, who died in 1971, had been raised a Protestant, but converted during marriage classes after reading the book of Tobias and seeing what the Protestant Bible — and religion — were missing.

He attended the minor seminary at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg, settled in 1749 by French missionaries and trap-pers. (Wadhams Hall closed in June 2002.) He graduated from St. Bernard's, a major seminary in Rochester whose 1893 founder, Bishop Bernard John McQuaid, was an educational pioneer, bold and innovative in his vision of theological education. The motto on the bishop's coat of arms was *Salus animarum lex suprema*. (The salvation of souls is the supreme law.) Father Jarecki delights in relating that, while at the seminary, a series of conferences was given by a visiting priest who left an indelible impression on him — Father Leonard Feeney.

Michael Jarecki was ordained on June 3, 1944, the same year the Third Secret's contents were conveyed in a sealed envelope by Fatima's Sister Lucia to her local bishop. As a parish priest, he served in several parishes of the Ogdensburg diocese. His devotion to the sanctity of human life was publicly exemplified when he was a retired priest at Saint Mary's Church in Brushton, New York. He devoted himself wholeheartedly to the fight against abortion, both morally, by his prayers and presence at pro-life rallies, and financially. Most

of his meager salary went to the support of other apostolates, in addition to pro-life organizations.

Father's charity and selflessness were also illustrated when his six-year-old nephew, Robert Schake, was in danger of death due to a weak kidney. Father came forward and donated one of his kidneys to the boy.

Despite age and physical infirmities, even in his late eighties he often traveled to Constable, New York, to assist Father Nicholas Gruner with the Fatima Crusade. In that regard, we note that our old chaplain is responsible for a pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima, which he purchased in Fatima while on a pilgrimage there some decades ago. The statue was blessed by three bishops.

Father's devotion to Mary is legendary. No matter what the subject of a sermon, he would never fail to make our Lady the focus of his closing thoughts. On the subject, "He who humbles himself," he said: "First, we must empty ourselves of our lazy, slothful ways to get the fullness of grace God wants us to have. Mary was perfectly humble. The Angel did not say to her, 'Hail Mary!' He said, 'Hail, full of grace!'"

Not so long ago, in encouraging the *Three Hail Marys* devotion, Father required that all interested come to the sacristy one by one, and promise to practice the devotion before he would give us the holy card with the information on it. The devotion consists of reciting the Hail Marys morning and evening. Father asked us to offer the first Hail Mary for the intention that we never commit another mortal sin; the second that we never habitually or willfully commit venial sin; finally, the third Hail Mary was for the intention of conforming our will to Mary's in order that we not be like spoiled children who always wish to have their own way!

His great devotion to our Lady began when he was a young boy. When beset by problems and temptations, he would quickly start reciting the Litany of Our Lady of Loreto, which he committed to memory, and just recently asked us all to do the same.

Not unlike Saints Jerome and Padre Pio, our (formerly red-headed) priest had a temper that he had to keep in check. I remember once, when upset by someone failing to pick him

In 1988, when Brother Francis started working toward founding the Center in Richmond, NH, Father Jarecki asked him, "and who is going to be your priest?" Brother Francis replied with child-like simplicity: "You, Father." Father did not disagree.

* Third Orders, whose members are called "tertiaries," are associations of the faithful established by religious orders. Most M.I.C.M. tertiaries are lay folk.

up as had been prearranged, he went off by himself to recite a Rosary to counter his temper.

It was Father Feeney who first asked Father Jarecki to help at Saint Benedict Center in Still River, Massachusetts. After Father Feeney died on January 31, 1978, Father Jarecki was the first priest to offer the Mass for the repose of his soul.

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Father Michael’s sermons were simple, passionate, and enduring. Here are just a few select thoughts from them: “Do you know how our Lord died? Jesus died of a broken Heart!” “Wisdom is seeing things as God sees them. How does He see them? He sees and knows them all at once!” “Be happy when you are corrected.” “One way to abuse a child is not to correct him!” Regarding criticism of the Holy Father, “God will ask, ‘How did you treat my Vicar?’ The answer is to treat him as our Lord and our Lady treated Saint Peter.” At the judgment of many, “God will say: ‘I tried. I gave you what was necessary, but you said you didn’t want it!’”

I especially loved to hear Father leading the Leonine prayers after Mass, which he always began with: For the *real* conversion of Russia. He beckons to his patron when he loudly intones: “Saint Michael the Archangel . . .”. And at the very end, after invoking three times the mercy of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, he never failed to add the ejaculation I would wait for each day, “Most Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us!”

Until his hearing failed, our priest was in the confessional both before and long after Mass. In fact, he was always available to hear a confession — or to minister anywhere to a needy soul — at any time. One night, about seven years ago, someone I know had a mild stroke that lasted about thirty seconds. The person was quite scared when he came to, because he needed to go to confession. He called Father Jarecki at around midnight and, typical of Father, he told him to have someone drive him to the Center right away. Father heard his confession a half hour later with much patience and paternal concern.

While known to be impatient at times in mundane matters, he displayed only the greatest patience, kindness, and care in the performance of his priestly duties — especially in the confessional.

For the last several years, due to macular degeneration, Father has become almost completely blind, and, as of two months ago, he can no longer say Mass. He spends his time praying, receiving visitors, and trying to hear what they have to say. With each day, he says more often than ever, how he longs to “go home” and be with Jesus and His Blessed Mother, Mary, and be happy forever.

I will conclude this tribute with a letter to the editor of *Our Sunday Visitor*, written by Barbara Bersaw, and posted about five years ago in one their issues:

“Father Michael Jarecki, Constable, NY, and Richmond, NH, is an indefatigable warrior for Christ. In his mid-eighties, he travels far and wide to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. People shake their heads in wonder that Father Michael continues at the pace of a much younger man, while at the same time they realize that it is God’s Grace guiding him on his mission.”

*Email Brother John Marie Vianney
at toprefect@catholicism.org.*

“Be happy when
you are corrected.”
“One way to abuse
a child is not to cor-
rect him!”



As a last upgrade to Saint Paul’s house, a lighted emblem of our Lady was installed on the wall

KELLY FORUM



Mr. Brian Kelly

A PASTOR WHO FED HIS LARGE FLOCK IN ALL SEASONS TILL THE CONSUMMATION OF HIS COURSE

About twenty years ago I made an unannounced visit to Saint Benedict Center in Richmond. It was a summer day and I decided to just walk around the grounds without interfering with the daily routine of the brothers, make a visit, say some prayers, and,

then, go and see Brother Francis. No one was around, which was not too unusual in the middle of a summer afternoon. Ah, I spied one of the brothers working on a car. He was lying on his back working underneath. The car wasn't even jacked up.

"Hello, Brother," I said. "Hello, who is that?" he answered back. "Brian Kelly," I replied, thinking the voice didn't sound like that of any of the brothers. And it wasn't. It was Father Michael Jarecki's voice. There he was, in his mid-seventies, lying on a piece of cardboard under his car, doing an oil change.

I first met Father at the monastery in Still River in 1974, soon after I joined the group associated with Brothers Francis and Hugh. Father Jarecki had been visiting Father Feeney at the abbey, the sisters at Saint Ann's house, and the larger community of early Saint Benedict Center brothers at the abbey — which wasn't yet an abbey. Brother Hugh McIsaac and Brother Thomas Augustine, later joined by Brother Francis Maluf, had broken away from the larger community in 1972.

A friend of Saint Benedict Center, Nina Mearls, told me that, at Father Jarecki's request, she and her husband Frank took him for the first time to the Center in Still River, Massachusetts, to visit Father Leonard Feeney. That was in 1974. I do not know how often afterwards Father Jarecki made the trip from his parish of Saint Michael's in Witherbee, upstate New York, to see Father Feeney, but I know that the latter's proverbial love for the Blessed Virgin was a spiritual bond between them. It was when he was a seminarian in Rochester, NY, in the early 1940s, that Michael Jarecki first met Father Feeney. The famous Jesuit writer had been

invited to the Rochester seminary to deliver a series of conferences.

That day in 1974, Father Jarecki humbly knocked on the door of Saint Anthony house and was warmly received by Brother Francis and Brother Hugh. At that time, Father wasn't totally convinced on the issue of the absolute necessity of receiving the sacrament of baptism for salvation, and he was perfectly up front about that. Quite a discussion ensued. I don't remember the details of the conversation, but I do remember being introduced to Father, after which I disappeared somewhere within hearing distance. I was only twenty-two at the time and just learning about the fullness of the Catholic Faith, which, even though I had been a seminarian for three years with another order, I was as intellectually impoverished as a new catechumen.

This was the first time that Father Jarecki met Brother Francis. He would come back to see the community of the then "unreconciled" brothers and sisters many times after that,

He used to say over and over again:
"Speak the truth,"
"Never tell a lie,
because God is
Truth."



The torch-lit procession on the way to the bonfire in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

always offering his priestly service and counsel. He had received permission from his bishop in Ogdensburg, New York, to minister to traditional groups of Catholics in any location. The more Father Michael got to know the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the stronger he became in his unqualified support of the dogma: No salvation outside the Church.

Allow me now to praise Father Michael's virtues. They were many and they seemed to grow, rather than diminish, in his old age. And I knew him best in his old age.

First of all, as with Nathanael, I believe our Lord could say of Father that he was an Israelite without guile. He savored reality and despised lies and dissimulation. He used to say over and over again: "Speak the truth"; "Never tell a lie, because God is Truth." He loved the truth so much that he would deliberately place objections to your most cherished opinions, just to get you to think with your mind rather than your emotions. When it came to theological matters that were *de fide*, however, he would never do that. He was a strong believer in the doctrinal crusade of Saint Benedict Center, which he might not have been, were it not for his respect and admiration for Father Feeney. As to non-defined matters, especially philosophical issues, Father would state his mind without being patronizing. I used to love hearing him and Brother Francis discuss speculative matters. They would go on and on during and after a meal. If they disagreed, neither one of them would concede. I almost always sided with Brother Francis in these stimulating arguments because he was my teacher. But Father Michael would

force you to think, even when he was wrong. Brother Francis, who had a doctorate in philosophy, was a Thomist to the core. He was schooled in Thomistic philosophy and theology, as was Father Feeney. He was very sensitive to any departure from the principles of *philosophia perennis*. Father Jarecki, on the other hand, although he greatly appreciated Saint Thomas, especially the *Summa Theologica*, was more open to other Catholic philosophers. For example, he had a high appreciation for Duns Scotus, who had a better understanding than the Angelic Doctor concerning the uniqueness of our Lady's Immaculate Conception. Too, whereas Saint Thomas insisted with Aristotle that matter was the principle of individuation in man, Scotus believed it was the person. Person, he said, determined the *thisness* of this man or that man. On this question I had the feeling that Brother Francis fully agreed with Father Jarecki, but in his loyalty to Saint Thomas, he would just nod without comment.

He actually worked out a formula to calculate the time it would take for Pluto to orbit the sun. He submitted it to some astronomical society, but never received a response.

Both Father and Brother Francis were mathematicians. Father was the better problem solver — he would *do it* for mental exercise — but Brother Francis was the better at *knowing math*, seeing its limited purpose as the study of the accident of quantity. When the two of them would discuss the Arab invention of "zero" and its meaning, I, who had no knowledge of numbers, would be enthralled by the philosophy of it all and the definitions. When I asked Father Jarecki once whether there could be any *thing* beyond the finite material universe, he simply said, "Yes, God, because He is infinite, and the whole universe has its being in Him." Then we'd get into the meaning of infinity. Father believed that our Lady had a quasi-infinite power as the Mediatrix of All Graces to reach all men, even all possible men, in the finite order of creation. Brother Francis would just smile as he listened politely, preferring to deal with what is revealed and defined in such matters, rather than dealing in speculation. I almost forgot to mention one of Father Jarecki's mathematical exercises, which was for him a way of praising God in His creation. He actually worked out a formula to calculate the time it would take for Pluto to orbit the sun. He submitted it to some astronomical society, but never received a response.

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Father Jarecki at the 2000/2001 IHM School graduation

A PASTOR WHO FED HIS LARGE FLOCK IN ALL SEASONS TILL THE CONSUMMATION OF HIS COURSE

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I wish I had spent more time alone with Father Michael. I know that during the turbulent years of the internecine fractures in Still River, in the late seventies and early eighties, he was not around. Other priests came and went. I am certain that Father offered his services as mediator at least once, perhaps twice, but division, short of a miracle, was un-preventable.

I don't think Father Jarecki had more than one black suit. It was a very faded and worn and good enough for any occasion. So was his cassock and surplice. I remember well his surplice. I'm not sure if any bleach job could have gotten that a pure white again.

When Brother Francis told Father Michael that he was taking his community to the state of New Hampshire for a fresh start, Father asked, "And who will be your priest?" Brother Francis answered, "I hope that you will be our priest, Father."

After the religious moved the monastery here to Richmond in 1988, Father Jarecki would spend most of his time serving them and the large lay community here, as more and more Catholic families moved to be near the monastery, go to the Latin Mass, attend lectures, and take advantage of the school. That was when I saw him working on his car. It was 1991 I think. Prior to that he was helping out the

sisters of Saint Ann's house in Still River. It was during that time, late 1984, that my friend, Robert Koenig, took Father to visit a dying man by the name of Robert Welch. Welch, nominally a Unitarian, was the founder of the John Birch Society. The controversial anti-Communist had already been primed for Father's visit by several Catholics who attended Mass at the Center and worked for the JBS. The "visit" didn't last long, as the Welch family did not appreciate a priest coming to pray at the man's deathbed. Father Jarecki did his business quickly, baptizing Mr. Welch a Catholic, after eliciting a strong affirmative to his question, "Do you want to become a Catholic?" What makes this more interesting is that in 1950, when the Center was enduring persecution in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Robert Welch was running for lieutenant governor of the state. Catherine Clarke (later Sister Catherine) once invited members of the Center together to hear Welch on the radio. At the end of his speech she said, "Now there is a man we can all vote for."

It's amazing when I think about it. The two men who

taught me so much about my Faith, Brother Francis and Father, were also the two poorest men I ever knew. They were totally oblivious to the condition of the religious garb that they wore. Brother Francis had two habits, one, which he wore for special occasions, and the other, which he wore all the rest of his waking hours. I don't think Father Jarecki had more than one black suit. It was a very faded and worn and good enough for any occasion. So was his cassock and surplice. I remember well his surplice. I'm not sure if any bleach job could have gotten that a pure white again. Everything Father wore was old: his raincoat, his shoes, and his socks. Let me stop there before I start talking about his car. By the way, Father was wearing his clericals and collar that day when I found him doing an oil change. He had no "work clothes." If you gave Father a gift in the food or clothing department, it just went to someone else. He finally did accept the gift of a decent car, but only because it enabled him to reach his spiritual children more easily.

I drove Father a couple of times from Richmond to the Lake Champlain region of upstate New York, where he'd visit his old pastor, Father Salmon. Then, he'd have me take him further on to visit families and friends and offer the Latin Mass for them. I'd take him on occasion to Still River, too, to visit the sisters, who were very dear to him. I'd take him to my sister's house near Still River; he always loved to visit her family and razzle my sister in his own priestly way. My sister would give him a ton of names of people to pray for. One of those was an old woman in a nearby nursing home, whom my sister had gotten to know from her visits there. This woman, a Catholic, had not been to the sacraments in forty years. Before she died, I took Father to see her. There was really no privacy, but Father handled it so well. They talked about the Faith for some time and then Father asked her if she wanted to go to confession. She said, "Yes." Closing the curtain, I left Father alone with "Adele." He went through the commandments with her, asking her if she had broken any of them, one through ten, and she replied as best she could. He gave her absolution and then he gave her Holy Communion. She died a few weeks later.

"God is so good," he would say time and again. "That's why we should love Him, because He is so good. How could we not love God?"

As he grew older, his sermons became simpler but more passionate. He was a preacher, exhorting everyone to love the Faith and the Holy Family. He knew that his days for preaching were numbered. Before he stepped down from the pulpit, he told us all how grateful he was for allowing him to be our priest. *Yes, he was thanking us.* I will end with this, for I shall never forget it: He thanked his children for giving him the joy of allowing him to feed them the Bread of Life.

Email Brian Kelly at bdk@catholicism.org.

SPECIAL FEATURE

TREASURED MEMORIES OF FATHER MICHAEL JARECKI



Joan Wolfe

First, I must express my gratitude to Father Michael Jarecki for being our priest, taking care of our souls, and providing us with the sacraments all of these years. He has truly given his life for his friends. As my priest, my confessor, and a trusted counselor, Father has had a lasting impact on my life. He has counseled me through many changes in my life. He was a constant moral support and source of

peace and encouragement to me. His priestly guidance and personal prayers have always been most appreciated.

One of the most vivid memories I have of Father was in the Saint Benedict Center cemetery, a place we often visited to chat or pray, or both. I was thirty-something and unmarried at the time and had consulted Father about my future. One Saturday, after Mass, we walked down to the cemetery together to pray for the dead. After praying for the poor souls, Father explained that, after some consideration, he would allow me to take a certain vow. Father offered to have me recite after him the words of the vow or I could choose to make the vow in my own words. I chose the latter. I looked up at Father who in his sort of gruff and impatient manner replied, "Well, don't look at me; you're making the vow to God!" Father then blessed me

He has counseled me through many changes in my life. He was a constant moral support and source of peace and encouragement to me.

and smiled and said a prayer of thanks that I should be given this holy desire. Father always thanked God for the good in our lives, giving credit to God for any good that we might do. It was a happy occasion. Providentially, that particular vow was replaced by a marriage vow that I took within a year's time.

I often would meet up with Father in St. Joseph's hall and there I would find him walking around the room, and reciting a chaplet

of "Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine."

Many of us remember Father's popular saying, "big God, little me." In my own personal case, I remember him greeting me once with the question, "What's troubling your little mind?" Then, again, another time, he asked, "What's on your

big mind?" He seemed to know when I was well and resting in the peace of big God versus when I was in need of a little or big adjustment in my own thinking. Father could say a lot with few words.

One time when my husband Bob and I were driving Father to upstate New York, after praying a Rosary, Bob suggested that we sing the Salve Regina instead of reciting it. Father joined right in and sang the whole hymn. It's the only time I ever remember singing with Father.

About four years ago, my husband and I were expressing to Father that we were going to be hosting Bob's children and grandchildren for a large Thanksgiving week reunion. We were concerned that none of those attending were practicing Catholics and that there was already tension in the air with some family members regarding some past doctrinal confrontations. Father advised humility. "Why don't you treat your relatives like royalty," he said, "and forget about the rest while they are here." So, that's what we did.

We focused on making our family comfortable during their visit and it made for a much more relaxed and enjoyable time for all of us.

I have had the pleasure of being able to spend some time taking Father on afternoon drives. We have a bit of a ritual. First, Father carefully descends the flight of stairs of Saint Joseph's Hall, then, before exiting the building, he asks if there is any rain. Next, Father carefully, but independently, gets into the passenger side of the vehicle, moving the seat back as far as it can go for his long legs. Then, he moves the back setting, reclining a notch or two. Next, he gets his rosary out of his front pocket before buckling up the seat belt and saying the driving prayer. Father always asks the purpose of the trip. On occasion we visit a sick friend, or we go pray a Rosary at a friend's house, but for the most part we are praying Rosaries while traveling to a nearby market. Father always asks what I'll be shopping for that day and when I return to the car and get settled back into the driver seat he asks me if I got my "bread" or my "grapes" or, "Is the gas tank full now?" Father was always one to exercise his memory and I think he's still practicing that discipline. The first time I mentioned that I was getting bread, he said that bread is one of the most important foods in the world because it becomes our Lord's Body. I usually ask Father before I go into the market if there is anything

...I would find him walking around the room, and reciting a chaplet of "Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine."

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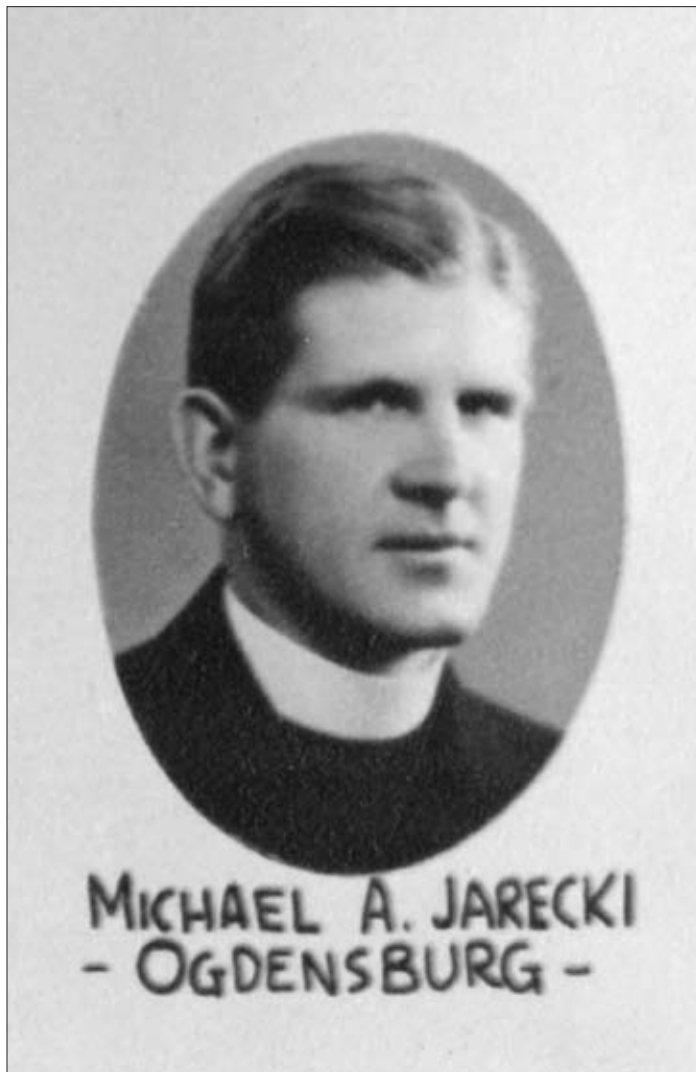
SPECIAL FEATURE

TREASURED MEMORIES OF FATHER MICHAEL JARECKI

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he needs; he usually declines. One time, when we were parked in front of the local store in Richmond, I asked Father if he needed anything and he said, “a little hate.” I said, “What was that, Father?” He said, “a little love,” with a smile. I didn’t question him any further right then, but that evening when I was reading a chapter from Saint John Eude’s *Admirable Heart of Mary*, it explained how the Immaculate Heart was so completely united with the Sacred Heart that she loved what He loved and hated what He hated. The last sentence in the chapter reads, “Make us sharers, O Mary, in this love and hatred so that we may love our Creator and Saviour as thou hast loved Him, and that we may hate sin as thou hast hated it.” I took that for my explanation.

One day, Father observed that the clouds were particularly beautiful, but quickly added that the only problem with clouds is that sometimes water falls from them.



His 1944 graduation picture, from St. Bernard's Seminary — “The Rock”

On another day this summer, we drove down Old Troy Road to join a group of Center folks and my husband who were preparing for the Auriesville Pilgrimage by doing a long walk. Sure enough, we met up with the walkers just past Rhododendron State Park right near a bunch of ducks sitting on the sun-warmed pavement. Now Father’s vision is quite handicapped due to his macular degeneration, but he could see the people, and he could see the group of sitting ducks. He gave the people and the ducks a blessing and we drove on.

A year ago, when my father was in his last illness, he asked to see Father Michael. I called Brother Louis Marie and explained that my father had already received the last sacraments in the traditional

rite from another priest, but would it be possible for Father Michael to come for a short visit. Within an hour or two, Brother Louis Marie was at my father’s door with Father Jarecki. It was such a blessing, and so appreciated by my father. I don’t recall him speaking during the visit, although he was quite coherent. Brother Louis Marie led us in some prayers and then we sang *Adoramus te Christe*, which made my father cry. Father sat by Dad’s bedside and, when it was time to go, my father reached out for Father’s hand. Dad was truly grateful for the visit and so were we.

Recently, we have made a few visits to another friend to visit and pray the Rosary by the bed of her elderly mother who is in her last illness. On one of those occasions, when we first arrived in the room, Father Michael, whose hearing is almost as bad as his vision, approached the woman’s bed and announced confidently to her, “It’s ok, we are going to pray now; your priest is here, don’t be afraid.” On another occasion, an old friend happened to be there at the same house, and she reminded Father that he had baptized her several years back when she was received into the Church at the Richmond monastery.

Father said to me on one of our drives, “I’m a priest and will always be a priest. A priest is trained to help the people and a priest never gives up on the people.” Father said he would be happy if he were able to help people until the end. In earlier years, the way Father explained this to me was that he wanted to die with his boots on.

Father said to me on one of our drives, “I’m a priest and will always be a priest. A priest is trained to help the people and a priest never gives up on the people.” Father said he would be happy if he were able to help people until the end.

It certainly is and has been an honor for me to know Father Michael. He has fought the good fight with heroic resilience, unshakable loyalty, and undying perseverance, all sustained by a deep love for God and our Lady.



Eleonore Villarrubia

Will There Be Jelly Beans in Heaven?

Eleonore Villarrubia

As our dear Father Jarcecki's health has diminished over the past couple of years, the good brothers have asked for visitors to spend time with him to keep his mind occupied with conversation, prayer, or reading aloud to him. My husband, Will, and I visited on Thursday afternoons until recently when my own health

required extensive back surgery.

Father always more easily heard my penetrating "library voice" over my husband's voice. (I was a high school librarian for many years and often had to ask one hundred "gentlemen" in our library to speak more quietly.) So it was usually I who did the selected reading and asked the questions to keep Father talking. When Father wanted to pray the Rosary, it was Will who sat close to his left ear – the good one – to lead us in prayer. The humility of the good old priest asking a lay visitor to lead the Rosary was very touching.

It is sweet to hear him reminisce about his parents and siblings, especially his sister, Barb, who was somewhat retarded and who enjoyed it when he took her out for car rides. They were a devoted Catholic couple, he — the tough Polish immigrant who worked the coal mines, she — the convert from Protestantism who fell head over heels in love with the Faith.

the Faith. Father's memories of his family life are very dear ones.

One Thursday afternoon Father Michael was feeling particularly weak and could not even get out of bed, so Will and

I went into his bedroom to visit him there. After a bit of small talk, he looked up at me and asked, "Didn't you give me some jelly beans for Christmas last year? I sure would like a few of those now!" I replied in the affirmative. I also knew where they were usually kept in his apartment; so I got up to look for them, but they were nowhere in sight. Returning to his room empty-handed, I had to tell him the bad news. He looked up again at me and said, "Well, I am going to Heaven soon and, you know, there aren't jelly beans in Heaven." My reply was, "For you, Father, there will be jelly beans in Heaven." It was a funny yet poignant moment that we shared — a sweet story that I have told to our mutual friends.

As Father began to get stronger, he would sit and wait in the living room of his apartment for his visitors. Many times his companion was the brothers' very bouncy little dog, Huan, a high-energy Jack Russell who loves people, especially those who bring him treats. Father would put on his gruff face and voice and say what an aggravation "that little creature" is. In truth, however, Huan was very good for Father because he made him laugh out loud when he jumped on his lap and crawled up to his shoulders. If Father needed to be guided back to his room before we left, he might occasionally "make a stop" at his closet for a nip of wine from the flask that he kept there.

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One of Father's daily visitors, Huan.

SPECIAL FEATURE

TREASURED MEMORIES OF FATHER MICHAEL JARECKI

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One of the most beautiful prayers that I have ever heard — and one that I say often — was taught to us by Father. It is short and can be said many times daily; it invokes the Holy Family. “Heart of Jesus, I adore Thee. Heart of Mary I implore thee. Heart of Joseph, good and just: In these three Hearts I place my trust.” What greater friends can we Catholics have than Jesus, Mary, and Joseph? They guided Father through his long priestly life. May they help the rest of us emulate him in his love for the Holy Family and for the holy Catholic Faith!



Christine Bryan

Visiting Father Jarecki, His Gift to Me

Christine Bryan

It is characteristic of Father Jarecki that he begins each of our weekly visits with the question: “How can I help you?” or “Do you have a question for me?”

At ninety-three, he has distilled spiritual truths into concise potent statements:

“Everything good that we do,

God is right there. He gets the credit.”

“Everyone should love being a Catholic.”

I had not anticipated that these visits with Father would be such a blessing. I have been privileged to be briefly near a soul so devoted to our Lady, so resigned in his earthly trials, and so anxious to bestow his priestly blessing.

“May God bless you and our Lady watch over you and keep you and help you to be good and happy.”



Gene DeLalla

Our Lady's Peacemaker

Gene DeLalla

Some time back, I asked if I could visit and read to Father Michael Jarecki during the morning hours before I head for the salt mines (work!), which, for me, starts in the late afternoon and continues until the job is completed, sort of a split shift.

I gathered some materials, mostly articles, but a good deal of the reading came from small books and periodicals that I thought would be interesting for our dear priest.

One of the things that folks kept telling me is that Father Michael likes my voice! Why, I don't know, but I guess it's because it is “deep” and “penetrating,” and easier for Father to hear — as his ability to hear is not very good, I'm afraid.

During some of our sessions, I would read some things that sparked memories of years gone by in Father's very interesting life and times.

I remember one particular morning, our conversation led into the time he worked in a defense plant during World War II.

All during his time at the plant, he was attending the seminary studying for the priesthood. So, at the same time, not only was he serving his country in time of war, but also learning to serve our Lord in the august role of priest!

He relayed to me that the foreman of the plant, or at least of his department, was a Catholic, and he liked the future Father Michael, helping him along with encouragement and assistance in the work when needed. The seminarian was thankful, for it was a real challenge, at times, to work with some of his fellow defense plant workers.

But no matter what the topic of my reading or what di-



Father Jarecki and his Pilgrim Virgin statue

rection our conversation led to, he would always — always — revert back to his parents, who instilled in him the love of God and of the holy Catholic Faith. Sometimes, I would feel saddened because his voice would often break-up somewhat, and he would nearly come to tears when describing his mother and father. After each of the sessions I would tell Brother André about how things went with Father and whether he was alert and talkative, or basically silent and dozing off.

“Everything good that we do, God is right there. He gets the credit.”

I would like to relate one incident that showcased Father’s determination to bring “warring” parties back together into the sphere of friendship, and, at the same time, taught me a lesson in humility. It occurred when Father was still able to drive himself to his own appointments.

At the invitation of my wife, Kathy, a family of four, including an active duty Army officer, came to the Center to attend the Latin Mass and hear our good Father Michael dispense his usual wisdom during his sermon after the Gospel.

As time went on, we became fairly good friends, but as sometimes happens, even good friends can have a disagreement or two, which can cause friction and angst.

The occasion of Father’s peacemaking intervention occurred, as Providence would have it, when the DeLalla household was the beneficiary host of the traveling statue of Our

Lady of Fatima, which belonged to Father. On one of the days that we had the statue, I got a call from him. He simply asked if I would take our Lady’s statue over to the home of our estranged friends to say the Rosary together with them.

There was some hesitation in my voice, which, I would guess, lasted about two seconds. At that point, Father’s voice got just a little firmer and raising it slightly, he asked again: “Well, are you going to do it!?”!

I said, “Yes.” And so we all met, set the statue in a central location, and started the Rosary. As Father had hoped, it didn’t take long before the dispute faded away into nothingness soon after the Rosary. Whatever anger there was had disappeared and a few of our voices became noticeably broken with emotion!

Wounds healed; a friendship saved, thanks to Father Michael — and our Lady!



For the feast of the Epiphany: a Solemn High Mass in Keene, NH



L to R: Fr. David Phillipson, Fr. Daniel Lamothe, Br. André Marie



In addition to the servers, there were six Knights of Columbus assisting

PRAYERS FOR THE HOLY FATHER

V. Let us pray for our Pontiff, Pope Benedict.

R. The Lord preserve him, and give him life, and make him to be blessed upon the earth, and deliver him not up to the will of his enemies. (Roman Breviary)

Our Father. Hail Mary.

V. Let us pray.

R. Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy upon Thy servant, Benedict, our Supreme Pontiff, and direct him, according to Thy loving kindness, in the way of eternal salvation; that, of thy gift, he may ever desire that which is pleasing unto Thee and may accomplish it with all his might. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. (Roman Ritual)

EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

Ex Cathedra: “We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” (Pope Boniface VIII, the Bull *Unam Sanctam*, 1302.)

CALENDAR NOTES:

- The Novena of Grace is March 4 through March 12. See the SAI Syllabus, visit our website: www.catholicism.org, or contact us for the novena prayers.
- The 2011 Saint Benedict Center conference will be Friday and Saturday, October 7 & 8. Mark your calendars and plan on coming to this event.
- The 16th annual Pilgrimage for Restoration is now planned for Friday through Sunday, September 23 to 25, 2011. See pilgrimage.stblogs.com for details.

OUR CRUSADE:

The propagation and defense of Catholic dogma — especially *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* — and the conversion of America to the one, true Church.

For more information:

Our congregation website:
www.catholicism.org

Our bookstore website:
www.store.catholicism.org

And our conference website:
www.SbcConference.com

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Help Support the Slaves

One important way you can assist the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is by becoming part of our ongoing giving program, the Queen's Tribute. It was instituted over twenty years ago and has helped us erect our buildings, purchase equipment used for evangelization, and produce our publications.

Widows' mites are welcome, and all donations are tax-deductible. For your convenience, we can arrange automatic monthly donations via credit card or e-check, giving you one less thing to remember.

The funds help us recruit and form religious brothers and sisters, support the heroic priests who assist us sacramentally, and maintain and expand our operation in Richmond, New Hampshire.

We are looking to increase the Queen's Tribute members during these difficult financial times. Thank you!

Call our bookkeeper, Russell LaPlume, at (603) 239-6485, or email him at rlp@catholicism.org to join or for more information.