

The Wonderful Legacy of FRANK SHEED

by

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When His Eminence Terence Cardinal Cooke conducted funeral services in Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York last November 24 for Frank Sheed, the Cardinal described him as an outstanding Catholic layman of this century.

Only fifteen months earlier Mr. Sheed spoke at the Blue Army's Shrine of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Sensing that this might be a "last interview," we asked questions such as:

"At the present moment, what would be **your most urgent message to the Catholics of today?** Since you were the first one to publish the books of Hans Kung, what do you think of him?"

"What is your opinion about the **Charismatic Renewal?**"

"As a theologian, how do you explain the importance of **the Rosary** and how do you feel about the fact that some in the Church say that the Rosary is no longer relevant?"

Since Frank was 83 years old when we asked him these questions we knew that his answers would be important. So we carefully wrote them down.

As A Memorial...

As a memorial to him (and perhaps as a gift from him to the readers of SOUL) as we pray that he has joined his dear wife in his eternal reward, we print his answers word-for-word as he gave them.

Asked how he had become involved in the Catholic Evidence Guild (which led to the total dedication of his life to the teaching of Catholic truths), Sheed answered:

"It all began when I came out of church one day and bought a concert ticket. The concert was for the benefit of the Catholic Evidence Guild and after the concert I went to a 'lesson' given by the Guild. I was singled out to defend infallibility. The speaker took a 'heckler's point of view.' He wiped up the floor with me! And for the first time I realized how little I **knew** the Faith for which I would have been willing to die.

"We must know the reasons for the Faith within us so that we can defend it against arguments and unbelievers, especially today.

"You won't get anywhere with arguments of the primal cause..."

Chastity

"We don't hear chastity preached from the pulpit. I travel a great deal and perhaps hear more sermons from the different pulpits than the average person. And although we used to hear of the beauty of chastity, it now seems to be ignored. But it should not be. Virginity and purity should be explained from the point of strength. I think this is a special message we should derive from the virginity of Our Lady.

"Our Lord listed adultery and fornication at the top of the things that defile a man. Yet we hear these spoken of as 'enlightening experiences.'"

Maisie was 37 and Frank 29 when they married. She was a widow with two children and had lost five children in miscarriages. She died at age 86. Frank Sheed, at the age of 83, had come to the Shrine of the Immaculate Heart of Mary at the



Above: Frank Sheed speaking at the Shrine of the Immaculate Heart of Mary at the Blue Army National Center only 18 months before his death on November 20, 1981.

Blue Army National Center to speak about Our Lady as the Mother of the Redeemer and to give a second talk about Our Lady as our own Mother. He said:

"Our Lady is coming back to the Protestants, and Scripture is coming back to Catholics."

Charismatics?

Concerning the Charismatic Renewal, Mr. Sheed said:

"There are extremists in every movement. But many whom I have met in the charismatic renewal are beautiful people. I don't belong. I would wonder what the movement could give me other than some special experience of the Holy Spirit. And do I not receive the Holy Spirit constantly through the regular channel of the Sacraments?"

Mr. Sheed commented that the Word of Life charismatic renewal community in Ann Arbor, Michigan had asked him to write a book on the Holy Spirit, Who He is, and what is His action in our lives. He found this a very worthwhile project and said that he wished to undertake it.

The Rosary

At the end of the second lecture, someone asked why so many priests discouraged devotions like the Rosary. In a later comment Mr. Sheed said that this was a very good question and he was glad it was asked and that he was able to close his talk on that note because "it was very important."

"In my latest book, titled **The Instructed Heart**, I remarked that I think that **Splendor of the Rosary** was the **best** book written by my wife Maisie, who wrote **24 books in all** (one of 900 pages in 2 volumes)."

In his own latest book (**The Instructed Heart**) Frank explains the importance and meaning of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. "The Rosary," said this great (perhaps greatest) lay theologian of this century, "is a compendium of theology." He urged that we base our Rosary meditations on Scripture.

"Jesus, who comes to us through Mary and under the protection of St. Joseph, **reveals to us God Himself**," Sheed said.

Use Scripture!

"There was a great Catholic literary revival in the 1920's and 1930's, but almost all from converts. Now we are not making converts.

"Read the Scriptures — the Gospels — with alert minds. God expects us to use our minds. There are too many comatose listeners and readers of Scripture.

"Think of Our Lady as Mother of God. God chose His own Mother and began to give Her gifts even before She was born.

"God gets 'excited' whenever we do something to honor His Mother. For instance, when they proclaimed Her Mother of God at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., in 432 A.D. St. Patrick went to Ireland and the Church has been reaping the benefits ever since. (We could also cite that following the Rosary Crusade of 1571 we had the victory of Lepanto and following the proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, we had the apparition of Our Lady at Lourdes that is still working wonders not only at Lourdes and in France, but in the world.)"

About Modern Theologians

"About half the theologians I know are vain..."

"A doctorate in history does not make a historian. It says a man is capable of teaching history. And the doctorate in theology does not make a theologian.

Asked what he thought of Hans Kung, whose first two books were published by Frank Sheed and began Kung's world fame, Sheed answered:

"Hans Kung is a spoiled son of a rich man. It is difficult for him to accept criticism or contradiction."

Sheed explained that Hans Kung wandered onto the path of defending the Protestant viewpoint.

Concluding Advice

"I never really enjoyed street corner preaching. I would have preferred not to have stood on corners arguing the Faith. But I did for 43 years. It was my life.

"When everything is going smoothly we don't need to be educated. It is enough to have the Mass and the Sacraments. But when things go badly...our Faith suffers as we lose one running argument after the other just because we don't know the reasons for the Faith that is in us."

"If you know less theology than I," Frank once said, "it is not enough!" He stressed the importance of **knowing** the reasons for our Faith...and the power of the Rosary to illumine our hearts in union with the humble and Immaculate Heart of Mary.

PREPARE NOW for MAY 12 - 13, 1982

On December 2, at its last meeting of 1981, the National Executive Committee of the U.S. Blue Army voted unanimously that a **special All-Night Vigil be held on the night of May 12-13 (Wednesday - Thursday), 1982 for the Holy Father, to thank God for this great Pope, and in thanksgiving for the special protection which His Holiness experienced last May 13.**

It has been announced in newspapers in Portugal that **the Holy Father will visit Fatima this coming May 13 to thank Our Lady** (and, like his predecessor Pope Paul VI, to pray for the Church and for peace).

In his first audience after the attempt on his life, the Holy Father re-

marked that the attempt on his life had taken place on the anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady of Fatima, and that throughout that entire day he experienced in an extraordinary manner a sense of a special presence and protection of Our Lady!

"Her protection was stronger than the deadly bullet," said the Pontiff.

Is it not fitting that Blue Army members throughout the world should join with the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who will be at Fatima during the entire night of May 12 and 13, 1982, when it has been announced that His Holiness will go to Fatima to thank Our Lady?

Since the Vigil will come during the week, perhaps some will plan to have the Vigil from about 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. Many, of course, will be able to make the entire night.

It is the hope of the U.S. national leaders of the Blue Army **that this will be one of the greatest Vigils in the history of our nation.** It is also hoped that Blue Army leaders **throughout the world** will join in this act of loving homage and thanksgiving to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary for having given us so great a Pope in these perilous times, and **that he may continue to experience the intimate presence and protection of that Mother** to whom he has totally consecrated himself in a special way.