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Seven Men Ordained to the Priesthood

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During the Mass of Ordination to the Priesthood on Saturday, June 3, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne, the seven men becoming priests lay prostrate at the altar to symbolize their unworthiness for the role they are taking and to show their reliance on God and the prayers of the Christian community in their ministry.

This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad" is Psalm 118:24. Rejoicing filled the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne on Saturday, June 3, when more than 1,000 people gathered for the ordination of seven men to the holy priesthood. Conferred by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, families watched their sons and brothers declare their intention to assume the responsibility of the office of the priesthood and promise obedience and respect to Bishop Rhoades and his successors.

"I extend an especially warm welcome to the parents and families of our seven deacons about to be ordained priests. Thank you for all you have done to foster and support the vocation of your sons and brothers. May the Lord bless you with joy this day! And welcome to the priests who are here representing the seminaries where these men received their priestly formation: to Monsignor Michael Heintz, Academic Dean at Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg (who, as you know and I'm proud to say, is a priest of our diocese); to Father

Anthony Brausch, the Rector of the other Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Cincinnati; to Father Joseph Moriarty, Rector of Bishop Simon Brute College Seminary in Indianapolis; and to Monsignor James McNamara, Spiritual Director and Father Michael Romano, Director of Admissions, both from the Pontifical North American College in Rome. We are truly grateful for your presence with us today," said Bishop Rhoades in his opening remarks.

Anne and Theodore Smith were delighted to be present at the ordination ceremony.

For Anne, it was her first time coming. Theodore went to an ordination as a young boy and doesn't remember much. "I was amazed by how many traditions were part of the Mass. The entire ceremony was beautiful, and I teared up many times watching the men dedicate themselves to their faith," noted Anne.

Theodore said, "I don't remember the Knights of Columbus escort happening when I went to an ordination when I was young, and I thought that was a neat

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Pursuit of Cause for Beatification for Holy Cross Brother Columba O'Neill Continues

BY CHRISTOPHER LUSHIS

Nearly one year ago, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend announced that the formal process for sainthood had been opened for Holy Cross Brother Columba O'Neill, a humble cobbler who lived with tremendous devotion to Jesus and Mary.

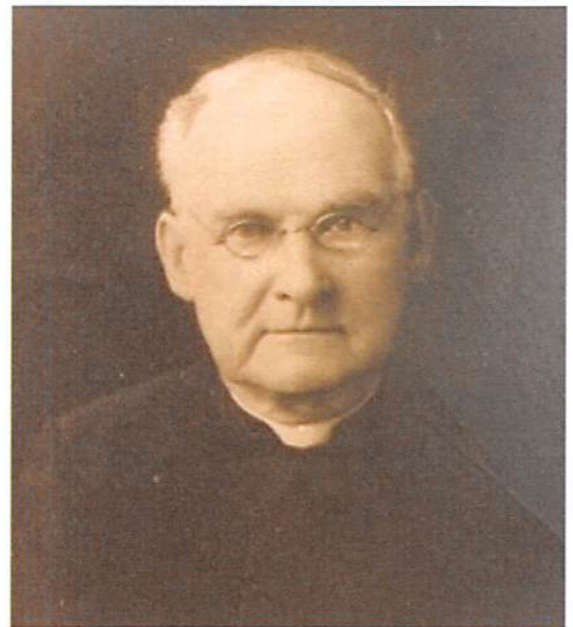
In recent weeks, the bishops of Indiana met to discuss the cause of this man whose simple trust in the providence of God touched thousands of lives. Following their meeting, Bishop Rhoades shared, "I am very happy that the bishops of the Indianapolis Province (the bishops of the five Indiana dioceses) gave their unanimous support to our pursuing the cause of the beatification of Brother Columba O'Neill. My brother bishops were very inspired when they learned about Brother Columba's holy life. I will now be forwarding the summary materials to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints at the Vatican to request their approval for our initiating the diocesan phase of the cause."

Brother O'Neill, born on Nov. 5, 1848, in Mackeesburg, Pennsylvania, received an emergency baptism (*sub conditione*) because, due to a severe foot deformity, he was not initially expected to live. While he carried a noticeable limp throughout his life, he persevered through this difficulty and became a shoe cobbler, repairing and creating specialized shoes for others with foot and ankle problems.

From an early age, he felt a desire to serve God in a religious order. While he was denied entrance into at least one community on account of his foot, he remained resilient and later entered the Congregation of Holy Cross after meeting with Father Edward Sorin, founder of the University of Notre Dame.

Originally given the legal name John, he took the religious name Columba at his final vows in 1874 and was assigned to serve in the St. Joseph Orphan Asylum in Lafayette, Indiana, for nine years before returning to Notre Dame in 1885. He also served as caregiver to Father Sorin beginning in 1891 and remained so until Father Sorin's passing two years later. During much of his religious life, Brother O'Neill continued to serve as a shoe cobbler, while also volunteering at night to serve the sick.

But perhaps what Brother O'Neill became most known



BROTHER COLUMBA O'NEILL

for was distributing badges of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Beginning in around 1890, he crafted more than 10,000 images of Mary and 30,000 images of the Sacred Heart, which he would give away to those he met in his shoe shop and in his travels. The badges included instructions and prayers for a novena. It was not long before he began to learn that miracles were taking place.

The archives of the Midwest Province of Holy Cross Brothers hold nearly 14,000 letters written to Brother O'Neill requesting these badges and asking for his prayers of intercession for spiritual, physical, or psychological healing. Though he had a limited education, he sought to reply to each letter personally. Brother O'Neill recorded in his diary in an entry from 1920 that he had received 1,400 letters testifying to favors received from the Lord.

During his lifetime, Brother O'Neill was known as the "divine healer" and the Miraculous Man of Notre Dame. In 1923, he passed away in the infirmary of the Community House from the effects of Spanish Influenza, which he had contracted in 1918. This building now bears his name, Columba Hall. From 1923 through 1960, there was an active Apostolate of Brother O'Neill and the Sacred Heart. His apostolate and cause for canonization were revived in 2020.

Holy Cross Brother Joe

DeAgostino, C.S.C., shared, "The formal opening of Brother Columba O'Neill's cause points out the very real plausibility of saints living among us in their simple ways without any great fanfare by merely being obedient to their vocation."

The postulator for Brother O'Neill's cause for canonization is Holy Cross Brother Philip Smith, C.S.C. He continues to compile evidence for Brother O'Neill's pathway towards sainthood and invites all who have experienced favors through Brother O'Neill's intercession to share this information as the process continues. He can be reached at psmith@brothersofholycross.com or by calling 574-631-8972.

Those interested in praying for Brother Columba O'Neill's intercession in their need are invited to pray this prayer of private devotion: "O Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, through the intercession of Brother Columba, grant that I, like him, may come to you in my hour of need. Be my buckler and shield. May your will always be accomplished in my life. Let me, like Brother Columba, live completely the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. O Jesus, through your Most Sacred Heart, I plead that you grant my petition ... I plead for this favor. Take it and place it in your open Heart, and when the Eternal Father sees it covered with the mantle of your most Precious Blood, He will not refuse it. It is not my prayer but Yours. Amen."