



IN KIND LOVE

The Road to Sainthood
Brother Columba O'Neill, CSC
(1848-1923)

Miracle man of Notre Dame lived devoted life

BY: EDWIN DONNELLY, CSC—EDITOR

Dearly devoted of Brother Columba,

Warm greetings and blessings in the two hearts of Jesus and his mother Mary.

Brother Columba's was a life of sanctity that persisted in and through personal hardship and the suffering of others.

Through his devotion to the hearts of Jesus and Mary, Columba faithfully commended others' suffering to



Brother Columba O'Neill at the back of the Community House June, 1923.

these two hearts. He steadfastly trusted that *all will be well* because of Christ's precious blood that descends like rain from his pores while weeping in the garden. It flows from his side as he hangs lifeless upon the cross and sanctifies all who follow him to Calvary. His blood pulses with burning love

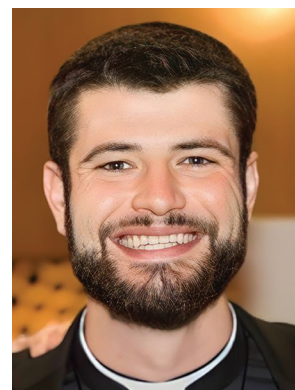
through the Sacred Heart, filling the cup of our salvation.

Brother Columba lived a cruciform life. With his misshapen feet and the rejections he received because of them, he never ceased to press his entire being up against Christ's chest, behind whose flesh and bones beats the heart that offers healing and forgiveness to all.

Because this humble cobbler cooperated so well with the hand of God's providence and followed its direction all the way to Calvary to be with God's only Son, Brother Columba made it his life's work to allow his own heart, which was heroically strong because of its weakness, to beat in time with the heart of our Savior.

Such an imitation of Christ allowed Brother Columba also to know in an intimate way the sorrows of Mary as she stands and weeps at Christ's side.

The cross was the location from which Columba made sense of his own life. As a humble cobbler, Columba created and repaired shoes and ministered to Notre Dame's students and visitors. He poured out his own heart in kind love to those with whom he



Edwin Donnelly, CSC

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He would lead thousands of individuals to experience intimately the healing love of "these Two Hearts: The Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary."



corresponded. He died that November day in 1923 only to rise eternally and forever be at one with the two hearts of Jesus and Mary.

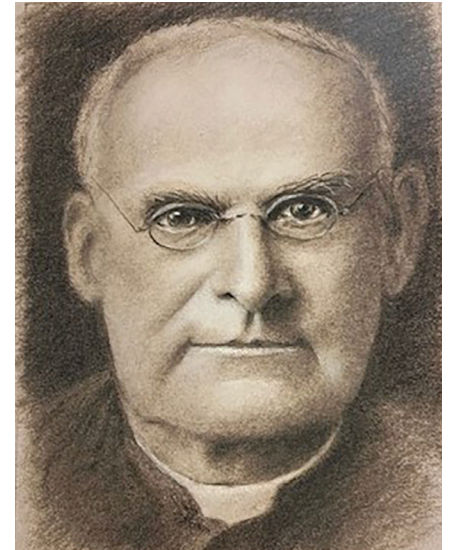
These two hearts were central to Brother Columba's devotional life. As such, Brother Ernest Ryan, CSC, who penned the first vita of Columba, titled his work *These Two Hearts*. Building on this foundation, I completed a more recent biographical sketch of Brother Columba, which I presented as a paper at the 2022 Holy Cross History Conference under the title, "Brother Columba:

"this humble cobbler cooperated so well with the hand of God's providence and followed its direction all the way to Calvary"

Humble Cobbler." In my sketch, I delve into the cobbler's life, his sanctity, and additionally I explore his correspondence with Reverend George Giglinger, a diocesan priest in Iowa, where much of Columba's family lived. This correspondence vividly illustrates countless cures brought about by Brother Columba's unwavering devotion to the hearts of Jesus and Mary. To build on this work, I presented a paper at this year's conference in June on Columba's correspondence with Minnie Schwiete, an "old maid" and a parishioner of Father Giglinger's who likewise attested to many cures. For questions regarding my research or if you would like a copy of either paper, please contact me at edonnelly@holycrossusa.org.

In this issue of *In Kind Love*, you will find material that strives to enlighten our readership of the process for the cause of Servant of God Columba O'Neill, CSC. Serving this aim are the following: a column from the Associate Editor, Brother Liam Johnson, CSC, on the role of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Brother Columba's devotional life; an article from the Consultant, Brother Philip Smith, CSC, outlining how a person becomes a canonized saint in the Roman Catholic Church as well as his column Take Courage and Believe in the Sacred Heart; an article on the history of Sacred Heart devotion by Notre Dame student and

undergraduate seminarian of Holy Cross, Nicholas Tarini; and a reflection on Columba's fidelity to Christ by Rev. Ronald Patrick Raab, CSC. This issue, along with following issues, will include an FAQ section, intercession requests, a list of new favors received



Brother James Kane's rendering of Brother Columba O'Neill.

through devotion to Columba, updates on the progress of his cause, and directions on how to receive photos, short bios, prayer cards, Sacred Heart badges, and more.

We firmly believe that Brother Columba, who healed many through his work as a cobbler despite facing humiliation and hardship due to his own clubbed foot, continues to be a faithful intercessor today. May this new issue of *In Kind Love* be a source of inspiration for you. Please don't hesitate to contact us with your prayer requests so that we may entrust them to Columba.

In kind love,
Edwin V. Donnelly, CSC

- *Edwin V. Donnelly, CSC, is a Holy Cross seminarian from Cranford, NJ. A 2021 graduate of the University of Notre Dame, he studied theology, classics (Greek and Latin), and liturgical music. He is now in his first year of the MDiv at Notre Dame.*

In Kind Love

A bi-monthly newsletter to enlighten readers of the life and spirituality of Brother Columba O'Neill, CSC.

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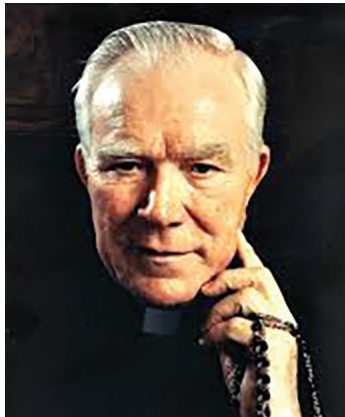
Becoming a canonized saint in the Church

BY: BROTHER PHILIP SMITH, CSC, Ed.D.—CONSULTANT

How does a person become a canonized saint in the Roman Catholic Church? The process begins when a reputation for holiness and signs regarding a particular person spread among the People of God.

Evidence is then collected to review the life of the person and see whether it has the characteristics of a life of heroic virtue. In the case of someone who is a contemporary, one perhaps known throughout the nation or world, acquaintances are asked to provide both oral and written testimony as proof of sanctity.

Venerable Patrick Payton, CSC is a Holy Cross priest whose cause has been championed over the last 25 years. Born in Ireland 1909, he became a Holy Cross priest in 1941, and by the time of his death in 1992, the legendary Rosary Priest had preached to tens of millions around the world. When his cause opened in 2001, there were hundreds of persons who knew him and would offer testimony to his holiness. In 2017, Pope Francis declared Father Peyton Venerable, the second of the four stages to sainthood.



"The family that prays together, stays together,"
— Venerable Rev. Patrick Payton, CSC



Brother Columba standing outside Washington Hall, University of Notre Dame circa 1923.

In the case of Brother Columba, who died in 1923, there is no one living who can offer testimony to a life of heroic virtue. His path toward canonization would be called an ancient case.

Born in 1848, John O'Neill entered the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1874 making his perpetual profession of vows in 1876 as Brother Columba.

In his case what does exist are letters, thousands of them, written between 1907 and 1923, asking the Miracle Man of Notre Dame to intercede to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for relief from their misery.

These letters, along with hundreds of other written accounts of his life, were collected and preserved throughout the 1990s - seventy years after his death! It was not until 2020 that the items were re-discovered in the Midwest Province Archives and shared with the corresponding ecclesial authorities. ✚

Intercession Requests

In all future issues of *In Kind Love* any requests for prayers for persons in need of the grace of the Sacred Heart through the intercession of Brother Columba will be included. You may be as specific as you wish when writing your request for prayer.

For example: For the cure of Mary's poor eyesight; For the cure of John who has been diagnosed with lung cancer; For a return to the Church for my son Tim.

Please send all intentions to Brother Philip Smith psmith@brothersofholycross.com by August 15, 2024 to be included in the second issue for September, 6.



An Exchange of Hearts

By: Rev. Ronald Patrick Raab, CSC

This humble servant walks with us in faith

Brother Columba O’Neill lived a humble life of prayer and service. He prayed with other members of the Congregation of Holy Cross to support his religious life and worked as a cobbler at the University of Notre Dame. However, God invited him into a deeper richness of prayer and service.

Brother Columba found simplicity and serenity in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Brother Columba’s relationship

with Christ was not just devotion or obligation, but true, heartfelt love and profound intimacy. Such surrender changed his life and his mission of service. Brother Columba invited people to ask the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the healing they needed because he had found such love himself.

Brother Columba discovered an exchange of hearts with Jesus Christ. He surrendered his earthly life, his pain and suffering, to the abiding love of Christ. This exchange of his human heart and God’s divine love deepened his prayer and allowed others to find healing and strength. In this surrender, Christ invites Brother Columba to act as a messenger for divine grace and hope.

Columba’s courageous and beautiful act of faith, this surrender to the love of Christ, becomes hope for us all. In this exchange of hearts, we all may know the love of God and our true way of life on earth. Columba’s fidelity to Christ is just the beginning of what we learn from this humble servant, a cobbler who walks with us in faith. ✙



Brother Columba and the Sacred Heart. [artist Rev. Ronald Patrick Raab, CSC]

- Rev. Ronald Patrick Raab, CSC serves as religious superior of Holy Cross House, our retirement and medical facility at Notre Dame, Indiana. He is an award-winning author, blogger and visual artist.

Let us Pray

† for children wandering the streets. May our runaway kin find true home and acceptance. May the heart of Christ shepherd the young and mend our fragile relationships. We pray to the Lord.

† for our elderly poor. May the heart of Christ heal the wounds of those in need of housing and healthcare. We pray to the Lord.

† for the dispirited of heart. We pray to the Lord.

† for discouraged teenagers. May our youth who experience hopelessness discover the true love and acceptance of the heart of Christ. We pray to the Lord.



Our Mother's Heart

By: Brother Liam Johnson, CSC

Devotion to Mary seen in Columba's prayer life

Columba O'Neill believed that the Blessed Virgin Mary guided his footsteps in his response to God's call for him to live the religious life. Brother Columba's devotion to Our Lady came specifically under the title of the Immaculate Heart.



Brother Columba made 25,000 of these badges before he made 30,000 Sacred Heart Badges.

While his devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is widely known, Brother Columba's devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary was deeply held and deeply connected to his devotion to the Sacred Heart.

This intimate connection could be seen in his prayer life and his personal faith in these two hearts, as he often prayed or instructed others to pray to the Immaculate Heart of Mary to intercede to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for relief.

In a letter he wrote to a priest friend in Iowa, Columba noted, "Pray to Mary's Heart. That [is] how I got so many favors. I made 25,000 badges of [the] Immaculate Heart before I did anything with the Sacred Heart."

My goal in this bi-monthly column is to explore Brother Columba's devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, especially what makes this devotion to our Lady's heart so special, both for him and for the rest of the church. This column is offered as an aid to grow in knowledge of and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and Brother Columba O'Neill. ✠

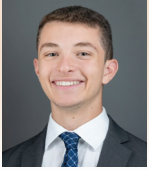
- *Brother Liam Johnson, CSC is a temporarily professed scholastic for the United States Province of Priest and Brothers at Moreau Seminary*

Let us Pray

† for Francis, our Pope, and all who lead us in faith. May the Sacred Heart pour out compassion for our leaders. May the gospel of Christ inspire and direct our leaders in justice and truth. We pray to the Lord.

† for people in need of a healing miracle. May the Sacred Heart hear the needs of people who do not know where to turn for hope and love. We pray to the Lord.

† for hope amid the struggles of daily life. We pray to the Lord.



History and Lore of the Sacred Heart

By: Nick Tarini, University of Notre Dame Collegian.

Columba, a humble servant walks with us in faith

“**T**here is in the Sacred Heart the symbol and express image of the infinite love of Jesus Christ which moves us to love in return” – Pope Leo XIII.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is prevalent worldwide today, and its roots stretch back to the early Church. St. Justin Martyr is the first documented saint to have written on the subject, saying that as Christians, we are carved out of Jesus’ heart. In the eleventh century, the devotion to the wounded heart of Jesus sprung up, with Christians beginning to meditate on the Five Wounds of Christ (nails in his hands and feet and a spear in his heart). Over the following centuries, St. Gertrude the



Saint Marguerite-Marie Alacoque

Great, St. Albert the Great, and St. Catherine of Siena were among the saints who helped further the understanding and devotion to the Sacred Heart.

In the 1670s, the

devotion to the Sacred Heart began as we know it today. In France, the first feast of the Sacred Heart was celebrated and St. Margaret Mary Alacoque had visions of Jesus. Devotion increased, and Pope Pius IX officially

approved it on May 8, 1873. Just 26 years later, Pope Leo XIII urged that all bishops observe this feast in their dioceses. During this time in the late 19th and into the 20th centuries, Brother Columba O’Neill, CSC, fully entrusted himself to this devotion of the Sacred Heart. Through the Sacred Heart, Brother Columba performed hundreds of documented miracles, and Holy Cross’ devotion to the Sacred Heart remains strong to this day. ✠

Lord Jesus, let my heart never rest until it finds You, who are its center, its love, and its happiness. By the wound in Your heart, pardon the sins that I have committed, whether out of malice or out of evil desires. Place my weak heart in your own divine heart, continually under your protection and guidance, so that I may persevere in doing good and in fleeing evil until my last breath. Amen. —St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

- *Nick Tarini is a sophomore in Old College studying at Notre Dame pursuing a double major in psychology and philosophy.*

Sources:

- Sacred Heart of Jesus | EWTN
- Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Act of Reparation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus - Dominican Nuns, AL.
- Where Did Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Come From?

Let us Pray

† to rely on the heart of Christ Jesus. May forgiveness and peace be known in every heart and in every land. We pray to the Lord.

† for the well-being of family life. We pray to the Lord.



Take Courage and Believe in the Sacred Heart

By: Brother Philip Smith, CSC, Ed.D.

Early 20th century nun credits healing to prayer

In June of 1923, Brother Columba instantaneously cured Benedictine Sister Lioba “of a hopeless heart condition.” Sister Lioba writes in 1929:

“For the glory of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus and in grateful memory of the Saintly Brother Columba, I herewith write this account. From 1918 – 1923, I suffered frequent attacks of heart trouble. These attacks were very severe. I would lose breath, my face and fingernails would assume a purple color, my limbs grow stiff, and I could neither move nor speak. My Sisters, and once or twice, our Reverend Pastor [Father J. B. Reiter] would be frightened, fearing I should die. I was never able to walk fast, to lift anything heavy, to stay in a crowd or in a close room, to exert myself in any way, as any such thing would bring on an attack. Many times, I would have to sit up at night and struggle for a long time to get breath. The physician, after a thorough examination stated that it was a case of leaking and enlarged heart and that I would never be cured.”

In the Spring of 1923, despite Sister Lioba’s hopeless condition, she received permission from the prioress to attend summer school at Notre Dame. Her physician told the prioress to “Let her go. She can die just as happy a death at Notre Dame as [here]. Of course, she must take

things easy.” The day before she left, she had a severe attack, yet arrived at Notre Dame alive but quite tired. The same evening, she was taken to see Brother Columba.

“I shall never forget the incident. Brother Columba said, ‘Have courage, Sister. If you can trust in the Sacred Heart, the Sacred Heart will cure you.’ Then he made the sign of the cross with a Sacred Heart badge over my heart, praying, ‘Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in Thee.’ From that moment until now I have never had another attack.” ✠



Sister Lioba, OSB

- Brother Philip is the archivist for the Midwest Province of Brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross. After 50 years in secondary education, he became archivist in 2019. In 2020, he began his work in the archives on the materials related to Brother Columba.

To come in next issue: Meet the Many Friends of Brother Columba



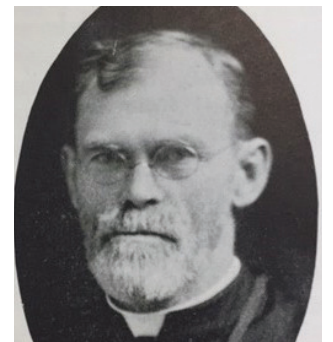
Br. Columbanus Murphy



Br. Isadore Alderton



Br. Sabinas Herbert



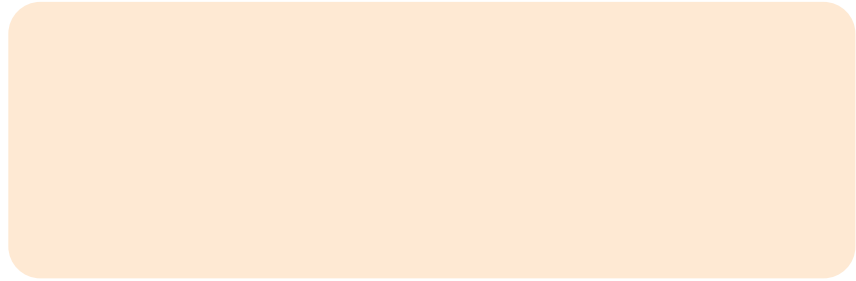
Br. Paul the Hermit McIntyre



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Brother Columba is buried at Notre Dame in the community cemetery.

*Learn more about
the Miracle Man
of Notre Dame in
the coming issues.*