

**Funeral Homily for Fr. Martinus**

**November 27, 2019**

***Only in our doing can we grasp you.***

***Only with our hands can we illumine you.***

***The mind is but a visitor;***

***it thinks us out of our world.***

***Each mind fabricates itself.***

***We sense its limits, for we have made them.***

***And just when we would flee them, you come***

***and make of yourself an offering.***

***I don't want to think a place for you.***

***Speak to me from everywhere.***

***Your Gospel can be comprehended***

***without looking for its source.***

***When I go toward you***

***it is with my whole life.***

This untitled poem, written by one of the most influential poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Rainer Marie Rilke, was discovered in a collection of poems he entitled "***The Book of Monastic Life***": inspired, we are told, by a pilgrimage to Russia as a very young man.

***At that time Jesus answered:***

***“I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven & earth,  
for although you have hidden these things  
from the wise and the learned  
you have revealed them to the childlike.”***

It is a quality of vision, of seeing, that Jesus calls us to in this Gospel – To get free of our acquired “life- wisdom,” often the result of our scar tissue & self- consciousness, and to see with the open eyes of a child.

My brothers & sisters, most of the time we see only with our “adult vision”. The product of our life-wounds & defenses, in short- the inability to accept our own poverty. What Jesus referred to as ***the beam in your own eye.***

Jesus calls us to freedom of personal vision, as Rilke puts it:

***I don't want to think a place for you.***

***Speak to me from everywhere.***

Our beloved Fr. Martinus, over many years in community, grew into an extremely kind and generous monk who would befriend everyone & anyone he encountered either in person or in distant correspondence. God spoke to him from everywhere!

He also had a deep love for the early literature around Our Lady of Guadalupe & our early Cistercian nuns & monks & our own local history. He spent countless hours researching & writing his (personally interpreted) historical tracts.

And he was also one of the most unique – one could say eccentric – personalities I have ever encountered. Whether it was his work habits, or his work clothes, or his work hours, or his very own way of speaking /

of inflecting \the English language, it was impossible for him to – as we say in community life - “blend in”. This brought him to a level of aloneness – of loneliness – which he directed into his prayer & his deepening growth in Surrender. I can remember as if it were yesterday when his recycling ministry grew so detailed & intense that it began to overwhelm his own ageing energy as well as his community’s patience. As we sat together in the abbot’s office & I delivered the painful news that he was retiring from recycling it took him only one long moment: he looked down & some quiet tears flowed silently & then he looked at me with those clear & childlike eyes & I knew he was free, free to surrender.

Fr. Martinus was a monk from the tip of his toes to the top of his head – All of him! A monk with the eyes of a child. All his works were for prayer. He agreed completely (totally) with Rilke:

***Only in our doing can we grasp you.***

***Only with our hands can we illumine you.***

He was intensely focused on the most everyday things (that we choose to ignore) what we call “garbage”. Fr. Martinus spent easily half of his monastic life in the garbage! In his eyes, as in Jesus’ eyes, there was no such thing as “trash”. Everything (yes, Everyone) was Recyclable! I can attest from my own experience that his devotion to this vision of reality was anchored deep in his heart. As I was reminded recently by an Abbot of one of our senior Houses; Martinus’ Spirituality of Recycling became legendary throughout our Order. A woman friend of his for many years wrote us this last week: “In him I found a kindred spirit. He embodied the motto: reduce, reuse, recycle – walking as lightly as possible on this earth.”

My Brothers & friends, this morning we bury yet another unique pillar of our community life. We recycle his mortal body – planting it into the earth he loved as a fertile seed for our hope in the future. Let us remember the ancient chant of Job, from our first reading, another prophet who spent his formative – Soul – season in the garbage.

***But as for me, I know that my Vindicator lives,  
and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust;  
Whom I myself shall see:  
my own eyes, not another's, shall behold him;  
And from my flesh I shall see God;  
my inmost being is consumed with longing.***