

EUGLOGY FOR DON SENIOR

I have to begin, as Don always did, with “**Dear Friends**” ... and, with that invocation, hope to evoke in this place what we have all experienced in Don’s presence -- his extraordinary warmth and kindness – and hope to allow us to be embraced once again in his prodigious goodwill and simple goodness.

When I think of Don, the first thing I think of is his **iconic smile** – and all that it embodied. Here you have this world-renowned scholar, this confidant of Cardinals, Popes and Captains of industry, this brilliant administrator ... and what you first encounter is this disarming smile. No stern countenance here. Rather a suggestion of the dry wit, humor and potential for mischief that lay within. Sometimes the twinkle in the eye signaled an “OK. What’s going on here?” wariness ... but the smile always exuded warmth and a sense that he was sincerely willing good for everyone he encountered.

Let me touch on a few things.

On his Fundamental humility. Not an iota of arrogance or entitlement or clericalism ... not a scintilla of selfishness or pride or gamesmanship. His mission was spreading the good news of God’s love for us, and he spread that good news in every action he took and every idea he espoused. And he joyfully, joyfully wanted us to share in his innate enthusiasm for the good news at every step -- in his many trips to the Holy Land, in the classroom, in his writings, in the inter-religious dialogue he fostered and in his astute leadership. At every step, he led with the good news.

On his leadership. He has been an integral part of CTU since he came to us in the 70s, first as faculty member, then – for 23 years – as our president. Then as our chancellor. And ever as CTU’s ebullient tour guide to the Holy Land. The image of Fr. Don is inextricably and happily woven into the image of CTU. In a very real sense, the corporate culture, the ethos of CTU is made in his image and we are forever indebted to him for that. And the great partnerships he cultivated there – with Sr. Barbara Reid, with Colleen Kennedy and with so many others -- are legend.

On his Scholarship. Pick up any of his written works -- Composing Sacred Scripture ... Jesus: A Gospel Portrait ... his biography of Raymond Brown ... or any of his pieces in The Catholic Study Bible (of which he was an editor) -- and you will be dazzled not only with the profound erudition that lies within but also with how accessible he makes scripture ... how accessible he makes historical-critical methodology.... How accessible he makes the backstory of the theologians and others who contribute to our better understanding of scripture. One of his many legacies will be providing us and future generations a powerful means to gain access through his scholarship to scripture in a profound way.

On his Encyclopedic grasp of the Bible. I had the privilege of attending an early session of CTU’s Forward in Faith capital campaign and witnessed how effortlessly and nonchalantly he alluded – without any notes in hand -- to story after story of charitable acts that appeared in the Gospels and elsewhere in the New Testament And the stories kept coming and coming and coming. And just as you think there cannot possibly be another relevant passage in any part of the New Testament, he whips out Second Corinthians: **Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver....** Now Picture that iconic

smile re-emerging. We were worn down and the checkbooks came out.

A cheerful giver: that is the essence of Don to me ... utterly selfless when it came to sharing time and talent with anyone in need. Time and again, you would see Don, in a preternaturally patient manner, explaining a Biblical passage or providing counsel on an issue personal, spiritual or public, or giving directions to a lost pilgrim in Jerusalem. Always the cheerful giver.

Love of Family and Community. Don has two wonderful families. He loved, loved, loved his trips to Kentucky for baptisms or weddings or other events with the extended Senior Family Clan and he was devoted to his Passionists. When the topic of either family came up, that iconic smile took on a distinctly happy glow. You knew immediately that those families are endearing and enduring sources of comfort and support to him. These were his “peeps” and he loved them. And they were certainly with him on his final, so very difficult journey these past few weeks.

A dynamic force. CTU Graduation 2022. Weather frustrated his efforts to return to Chicago by air. His flight was canceled. This man who was so invested in celebrating the success of CTU – particularly this pandemic-postponed graduation for two classes -- he was not about to miss graduation for such a slight inconvenience. He rented a car and drove from the east coast to Chicago, arriving in Chicago shortly before the ceremony. He drove directly to the venue. A reception at CTU followed. ... Everyone wanted to chat with Don... everyone wanted to shake his hand ... everyone wanted a selfie with Don ... Everyone wanted one last bit of Don’s wisdom before being launched into the world .. By the end of this long day, I was worn out. When I asked where he planned to collapse after all this activity, he tells me he is

returning the rental car to O'Hare that evening and would think about relaxing later. Where do you get that kind of energy? And then memories of seeing him trod up to Masada in 90-degree heat reminded me he is a dynamic force. A man powered not by batteries but by his Mission.

Fr. Don Senior: Singular individual. Internationally renowned Scholar. Humble to the core. Fun to be with. A dynamic force. A cheerful, selfless giver. Great friend to all.

Maestro, I hope you had some sense -- when you were with us -- how much you were loved.