

My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 46

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August 8, 2021



"What earlier generations held as sacred, remains sacred and great for us too.... It behooves all of us to preserve the riches which have developed in the Church's faith and prayer, and to give them their proper place"
- Pope Benedict XVI

Sailors who have survived stormy seas and navigated rough waters, exude a quiet confidence born of experience. A depth, steadiness, and peace reside in the being of those trained on the ocean; qualities which can be seen in the posture, felt in the grip of a hand, but mostly shine from the eyes. And there's a reason sailors often fight. They're used to being roughed up, struggle is their natural element. I am convinced True Father trained us on the ocean in order to instill these qualities. Along with MFT, my most precious memories are on big seas in a little boat, being tossed and soaked as waves broke over the bow. Exhilarated, I would turn and see a guest gripping the gunnels of our boat, white knuckled and sick, and have to remind myself that intoxication by rough waters is an acquired taste.

I often thought, as I dealt with professional religious, that they could have used True Father's training on the sea. There's nothing like being a deckhand on a small boat. The hours of discomfort and teamwork, energetic cooperation on vast indifferent waters just to survive, would do much to cure the spiritual ailments of the Catholic Church. Under those conditions, how perspectives will change! The one exception to the generalized spiritual weakness I encountered were the Marian Sisters of Santa Rosa. They were steady sailors.

An order of religious dedicated to the preservation of traditional forms of Catholic life, including the Latin Mass and a regimented community with monastic discipline, the Marian Sisters are a creation of Bishop Vasa and the order's Founderess, Mother Theresa Croghan. In the rough waters of the diocese, Sister Theresa proved to be an experienced sailor, steady on her legs, and confident in her demeanor. When the Marian Sisters first began appearing at Cardinal Newman, many of the faculty, and especially the women, were reluctant to welcome them. The countercultural statement of women in traditional habits deeply offended the feminist sentiments of my colleagues. Moreover, they arrived on the Newman scene as the representatives of a disliked, reactionary bishop. These veiled sailors had entered rough waters. Possibly from my years of education at the feet of nuns, my work with the Daughters of Charity in Vietnam, and my long association with the Trappist monks, I felt drawn to these sisters and comfortable in their presence. I went out of my way to introduce myself and strike up a conversation with them. To me, these nuns felt like our MFT sisters.



And I quickly discovered, they shared the same theology of heart. Their practice of contemplative prayer and a willing embrace of humble service, shaped their apostolate. As I spoke with Sister Theresa, my deepest heart awoke, and I sensed a mutual exchange of God's love. Even now, the memory elicits joy and a smile. Our new friendship felt like an old friendship renewed.

When Sister Theresa began teaching at Newman, the administration assigned her to teach in my classroom for one period a day. This proved providential. During my introductory lectures on Genesis and literature, there on the board would be

my notes on mind/body unity centered on God, with diagrams of the four position foundation, and the Three Blessings. Prominently stated would be words such as "The Kingdom of Heaven Is the World of Heart" and other such bits of True Father's wisdom. We shared the same students, so they would ask Sister Theresa questions based on my lectures, and she came to know and respect the content of my teaching. Sometimes, she would ask me to explain a detail from my notes and I would take that

opportunity to communicate some precious insight of the heart-centered philosophy of Divine Principle. Moreover, she felt the spirit in my room whenever she entered. As the year progressed and I taught Dante and St. Augustine, Sister Theresa came to respect the profound Catholicity of my curriculum.



Thus, when the chaplain and the superintendent came after me, Sister Theresa never abandoned our friendship, and never questioned my methods or classroom meditation practices. She viscerally understood; she experienced the fruit of my efforts in the spirit of my students. Her community prayed for the healing of my relationship with the chaplain and Bishop Vasa, and that generous spirit carried over into our friendship.



In those contentious days, Sister Theresa and I shared the same boat in rough waters and she proved herself to be a steady companion. Eventually, the chaplain's position came to be filled by another priest, Father Moses, who stepped into the shoes of "Father Scold," whose prior ministry had left the students angry, disgruntled, and disrespectful. Father Moses had to win the hearts of the largely alienated faculty and students. After he had gotten to know me and felt comfortable, Moses confided that "J., actually, you're not the Devil!" I can only imagine the manner in which the prior chaplain had portrayed me. I am also certain that Sister Theresa had something to do with the conclusion that Moses ultimately reached.

Father Moses reinstated faculty-led prayer services and sought to calm the waters during school liturgies. I truly empathized with his plight. The faculty felt so gun-shy and theologically

uncertain, that for a period of time, I was the only lay person willing to stand up and deliver a sermon on the day's readings. So much damage had been done, so much spiritual merit had been squandered, the efforts of prayer warriors like the Marian Sisters will be needed for years to come to heal the community wounds of the past. Even then, the outcome remains uncertain. Nonetheless, Sister Theresa has survived stormy seas and navigated rough waters, with her courage, confidence, and poise, she just might be equal to the task.