

In 1670 Jesuits landed on Mackinac Island, situated between the Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas in the Straits of Mackinac. The missionaries, along with members of the Huron tribe, intended to teach the Chippewa and Ottawa Indians the way of the Lord. However, within a year the Jesuits left Mackinac Island and relocated at St. Ignace, named for St. Ignatius Loyola. The island had proved to be agriculturally weak and the land to the north in the Upper Peninsula was perfect for growing corn. From St. Ignace the missionaries traveled to surrounding areas in attempt to spread the Catholic faith.

The Jesuits became the peacekeepers of the region. In the late 1670's French fur traders entered the straits to buy furs from the American Indians. Unfortunately, the French used less than honorable tactics. It came to the attention of the church that the fur traders were selling brandy to the Indians with the intention of taking the furs, without paying, once the Indians got too drunk to understand what was happening. The Jesuits got involved and the injustices came to an end.

The Jesuits constructed the area's first Roman Catholic church in 1742, within the walls of Fort Michilimackinac located today in Mackinaw City, at the top of the Lower Peninsula. In 1761 tempers flared between the American Indians and the British occupying Fort Michilimackinac. This led to the massacre of many British fur traders and members of the British Army. The Jesuits were responsible for establishing a peaceful relationship between the Indians and surviving British just 1 year after the massacre occurred. This provided an opportunity for the British to occupy the fort once again.

The English colony moved from Fort Michilimackinac in 1781 to prepare for any retribution from the American Revolution. Fort Mackinac was built on Mackinac Island in the same location where it stands today. The civilians established a town just below the walls of the fort. The congregation did not want to leave their church behind on the mainland. That winter, when the straits froze, the church was disassembled, the pieces dragged across the ice, and then the church was rebuilt on the island.

The congregation moved their church again 1827 when Madame Magdelaine LaFromboise donated a large piece of land to the Church. Because of the many renovations which have occurred on the building over the years, none of the original structure remains standing. The new building has been renovated to look just like it did in the 1890's. Father Jim Williams, Ste. Anne's current pastor, made numerous beautiful renovations for this tricentennial celebration.

This has been a very exciting year for Ste. Anne. Brother Jim Boynton completed his thesis, through his extensive studies about the history of Ste. Anne's, to earn his master's degree in history. His research has taken him from Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, MA, to Quebec City, Montreal, Paris, and Rome. His research resulted in "Fishers of Men." The book is a chronicle of Catholicism coming into the Straits of Mackinac and the history of Ste. Anne's. Brother Boynton, a native of St. Ignace, will be teaching at the University of Detroit Jesuit High School this fall. Fortunately, he will be able to attend the tricentennial celebration on July 26. Father Jim Williams will begin the celebration

with a Thanksgiving mass in the morning. The afternoon will include an ice cream social, and a pageant will be held in the evening honoring the church's builders and rebuilders.

From primitive beginnings, like the tiny mustard seed in Mark's gospel (Mark 4:30-32), Ste. Anne's has grown great inviting all to find shelter in her branches and comfort in her shade. For over 300 years, Ste. Anne's has welcomed visitors and nurtured Mackinac Island, body and soul.

Mr. Speaker, Ste. Anne's de Michilimackinac has a long, rich, proud history. Brother Boynton has been able to capture the fabulous story of Catholicism in northern Michigan in his book "Fishers of Men." On behalf of northern Michigan, the Catholic Church, and the entire Nation, I would like to congratulate Brother Boynton, Father Jim Williams, and the congregation of Ste. Anne's de Michilimackinac on 301 years of prayer and dedication.

TRIBUTE TO MONSIGNOR ROBERT
BLAIR

HON. STEVE C. LaTOURETTE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 24, 1996

Mr. LaTOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, Monsignor Robert Blair, who passed away last month, was a clergyman in the Cleveland diocese for more than half a century. While many were saddened by his death, so many more were enriched by his warm heart, his full life and his unparalleled devotion to the church.

At his funeral last month, Auxiliary Bishop A. James Quinn delivered a thoughtful, uplifting address that captures the spirit of Monsignor Robert Blair. I wanted to submit it to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD as a lasting tribute to a remarkable man who, in the words of Auxiliary Bishop Quinn, "used well the time God gave him."

What follows are the June 11, 1996, remarks by Auxiliary Bishop A. James Quinn.

TRIBUTE TO MONSIGNOR ROBERT BLAIR

We are not here out of sympathy. Another mood prevails.

When someone like Monsignor Robert Blair leaves the rest of us behind to join the Lord in heaven, it leaves me with a sense that something must be said in terms of gratitude about graces that came to us through one of God's very best.

We give thanks to God, therefore, for the life and friendship of Monsignor Robert Blair, in our lives and in the lives of all touched by his priesthood.

The readings Bob chose for his funeral speak eloquently of the spirit of his life and the vision of his priesthood.

His readings reflect a priest who walked by faith, not sight. He faithfully served four bishops, but only one master. From simple things like birds and wildflowers, or coins and horses, he drew lessons of what to run after, with the wisdom of one who trusts in the Lord, knowing he has a dwelling place awaiting him in heaven.

When I was a kid hanging around an old fire house on West 112th Street in Cleveland, I came to understand how pairs of boots became sentimental to firemen. The boots of those lost in the line of duty or curbed by injuries were revered, not wasted or neglected. Firemen's boots, as hand-me-downs, met respect, like numbered jerseys in halls of fame.

They especially respected those who died with their boots on. To die in service, in the line of duty, being what they were trained to be, putting life on the line! Such values involve commitment, faithfulness, loyalty, dedication... and lots of love of who you are and what you do.

Let's "rap" a bit about Monsignor Blair who cherished his priesthood and couldn't quit, not even in retirement, because of who and what he was.

The story of his vocation.

I think of Frost's "The Road Not Taken." "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood."

And sorry I could not travel both."

Bob, and his brother Ted before him, must have wondered what path in life to take, knowing "how way leads on to way" and there is "no coming back."

Two roads diverged in a wood, and Bob took the one less traveled. And that made all the difference! For him, and for us, it made a difference when young Bob Blair chose priesthood.

The Story of every man's vocation?

I venture Bob could have been anything he wanted. He had smarts, personality, wit, enthusiasm . . . even good connections. But Bob chose priesthood . . . more than once because he found himself in several classes due to tuberculosis.

Bob chose priesthood, and, hand to the plow, never looked back. Bob gushed the great grace of conviction that he had chosen well. Actually, it was God who chose Bob. But Bob accepted God's call, thank God.

We all have stories to tell.

Bob Blair added color and fun to life, but never at the cost of responsibility or pastoral care. He spent himself on people and on projects that prospered people. With all his wit Bob was serious minded and had volumes to preach about things of moment, things that make a difference.

In some ways Bob was a visionary, but a realist, too. He knew how not to let a vision sink over someone's "Why bother."

His blend of wit and wisdom kept his visions soluble in reality, so not to curdle into some forsaken sediment of impracticality.

Other higher up might get the credit, but we know Bob made things happen. He made a difference!

Like you, I'll miss Bob because he was a friend, not just one of those acquaintances we make in life, but a friend who understands what is literal in life. He good naturedly absorbed sharp edges and burrs that surface what is me and you.

For all his fun loving ways Bob was a gentleman. Not formal or fussy, not stiff or starched, but a fun-loving gentleman who saw the best in life before he let the worst get him down. A touch of class wrapped in laughter!

Like you, I account it a great grace we met. I thank God. I learned. I laughed. I struck it rich to be included among his friends. And so did you, I suspect.

These days since Wednesday past I skim a book of memories that run deep, and swell my estimation of the value that is friendship, a friendship that I pray is friendship ever more.

I treasure the measure of time we worked together, at the old Archbishop's house, in the Chancery and Cathedral.

I hope future years will not allow this brook of memory to trickle out of speed except to soak deeper into the recesses of gratitude. After all, old friendships are best because they withstand the tests of time and cross currents and counter-currents of life. As surely as the golden sun melts down to night, gold here can never last. But good friendships last forever in resurrection life.

Speaking of friends, by now Bob's paired off with Frank Carney. He liked Frank: the

repartee was always suburb. While different lights led them, both were equipped for friendly mental combat.

As you know, Bob enjoyed placing an occasional wager on some nag a tout or two would recommend as fast of hoof. But down the home stretch of Bob's own distance, his pace was slowed by sickness. Bob was thoroughbred fast until the evening of life when strokes struck, sight flexed and diabetes reaped its toll.

It's painful to witness a worker bee in health's gloaming. Disability plays treason to future hopes and dreams. In sickness, life's space became so confined that Bob could scarcely enjoy a view except from a wheelchair.

Bob had to count on family and friends who love him so, good friends like Bob Cronenwett and Maggie Patton and his dear, fond Brigade of Captain's Men, so loyal and true. They'll miss him, sure.

Time takes its toll. Why, what is inland in nature becomes ocean isle, with eddies swirling around what once was mountain peak. Why not time's toll on man?

Time levels snowy peaks to running brooks. No wonder time took its toll on Bob. Ah, but Bob used well the time God gave him. He enjoyed the blessings of today, every day, not wasting the joy of a moment on what was past or could be future.

Perhaps most importantly, Bob didn't entrust to time anything he would need forever. That is to say, he was not only kind but generous. He once said to me when I spoke of his personal generosity that he sometimes thought it scary, how when he gave away, God returned him twice or more. Of course God said it would be so. Bob teaches me, and you, to trust and give more.

Even now Bob's priesthood is not silenced but speaks through the beauty of this Cathedral he loved and served. The Cathedral he embellished marks the site of his priestly ordination and final funeral rite. How very fitting!

His priesthood speaks, too, at the airport chapel, his beloved Regina Caeli.

Looking back, Bob dusted our days with the pollen of cheerful conviction that there is plenty of work to do. He needn't be told "what" because Bob was a self starter who foiled challenges with wit. Challenge was invitation. The impossible intrigued him. And success was his hallmark, be it a parish festival or a million and more in renovation.

Who else would tackle an airport chapel and the ACLU? Others would say: "Why bother?" I think heaven gives a glimpse of vision, don't you, to those who risk the strength of God to do what they can't do?

Labors of love? The cathedral renovation and the airport chapel, while not the most of what he did in ministry, should install him into the diocese's Hall of Fame.

Bob Blair was a modest coin collector who knew how to option short gains into capital investment. His racer's instinct at the mutuals gave him an edge at the bank. Really, God was his broker and the Church was his escrow.

Bob retired, but never retired. He worked on.

Then, like a farmer at planting time, working, came the call that dinner is on the table! A feast and he's expected.

How leave off work with so much to do and time's light dimming? It's not easy to yield to the drift of age or illness, nor to bow and accept the end of labors love.

Yet the planter reluctantly thrusts his hoe into the ground and heads for home, the home from whence he came. The Master calls.

We hate to die. Only in faith do we deny the lie that dead is dead. In faith, the grave that draws the living avows new life beyond.

Then, again, Bob always liked fresh starts. I wonder now what new projects will rise in heaven?

I pray Bob up there continues to remember us whom he served so well in ministry and friendship. We all have projects that could use his vision, wit and wisdom. I pray he will strengthen our resolve and even excite fresh ideas of what can be done with gifts God gives us.

Soon enough, when we break through the pane of time and wade ashore on heaven's side, Bob will meet and greet us. No doubt introduce us to his new visions, this time benefic in size.

Tomorrow has come forever to Bob who breezes with Ted and Frank and even Solomon in all his glory.

Folks, in retirement, and from a wheelchair, Monsignor Robert Blair died with his boots on. Big boots to fill. Empty boots now that challenge us to fill.

When two roads diverge Bob, with wisdom and wit, often took the one less traveled by. That made a difference. He made a difference.

Sympathy aside, today. Quite frankly, we gratefully thank God that Monsignor Robert Blair made a difference in our lives. And now we pray, God rest his soul until we friends come the path he traveled by."

BEETLE ACTIVITY SPREADS, 892,831 ACRES INFESTED IN ONE YEAR

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 24, 1996

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call the attention of my colleagues to an eye-opening article that appeared in the July issue of Resource Review. It details the extent of the ongoing spruce beetle infestation in southcentral Alaska and reports that beetle activity increased 40 percent last year. Over 32,433 acres are infested in the Chugach National Forest alone, with mortality exceeding 60 percent in some stands. The current total for all of southcentral Alaska is a new record—892,831 acres of dead and dying trees. This is not a record we should be proud of.

The infested areas of southcentral Alaska are now far too large to permit wildfires to burn naturally. With so much dead wood lying on the forest floor a fire could burn hot enough to sterilize the soil and threaten the health of some of Alaska's priceless salmon stocks. Such a fire is a disaster waiting to happen. Unfortunately, waiting for disasters instead of preventing them seems to be the preferred policy of the current Secretary of Agriculture.

Every day the beetle infests more and more timber while those entrusted with our National Forests do less and less about it. Rather than taking necessary action under existing law, the Secretary of Agriculture has put up roadblocks every step of the way. He recently directed managers on the Chugach National Forest to cancel the few salvage operations they had planned. Some of these sales, it was reported to me, were in the planning process for years. Canceling them may be sound politics but it is irresponsible forestry. Playing politics with National Forests is playing with fire—I do not want to see Alaskans get burned.

Even without major fires Alaskans are suffering the effects of the beetle infestation:

property values are declining as the insect spreads from Federal to private lands; the visitor industry is losing business as once beautiful viewsheds turn brown and decay; and local residents are forced to sit by and watch their favorite recreation and hunting areas become wastelands. All this as Washington bureaucrats bicker and pass the buck.

Through responsible application of salvage logging the spreading sickness in southcentral Alaska can be cured, averting the risk of fire and creating jobs and a healthy forest to pass on to our children. I encourage my colleagues to read the article, the text of which follows my remarks, and hope that it will inspire them to join me in supporting sound forest management under the emergency timber salvage law as well as other long-term initiatives promoting forest health.

BEETLE ACTIVITY SPREADS, 892,831 ACRES INFESTED IN ONE YEAR

While Alaskans continue to debate the merits of cutting dead, beetle-killed timber across private and public lands in Southcentral Alaska, spruce beetle activity increased 40 percent in 1995 over the devastating levels detected the previous year.

Approximately 892,831 acres of on-going and newly infested areas were detected last year, the highest level of activity on record. The most extensive areas of beetle infestations are in Southcentral Alaska (683,281 acres) and the Cooper River basin (170,767 acres). More than 25 million spruce trees have been infested.

The Forest Service's 1995 Forest Health Management Report revealed that beetle activity in the Chugach National Forest doubled in 1995 to more than 32,433 acres. It noted that beetle activity is increasing throughout the Turnagain Arm area, including Girdwood, Twenty Mile, Ingram Creek, Sixmile River drainage and Hope. The Forest Service also noted the beetle infestation is intense throughout many areas of the Kenai Peninsula, including Kachemak Bay. From Tustumena Lake to Homer, beetle activity is extreme. More than 400,000 acres of spruce are infested with many stands having more than 60% mortality.

A significant increase in beetle-killed timber was found on the west side of Cook Inlet and the infestation more than doubled in the Anchorage Bowl where more than 8,000 acres of spruce were hit. Areas in Anchorage with the heaviest activity are Hillside, Fire Island, Kincaid Park, and the Eagle River and Eklutna River drainages.

With a dry, warm summer at hand, foresters believe severe outbreaks of beetle activity will continue throughout the summer. While there is ongoing debate on the fire danger posed by standing, beetle-killed timber compared to green timber, foresters agree that fire danger over the long term is heightened considerably once the dead trees fall over on top of each other and fill the floor of the forest.

Three salvage logging proposals have been proposed for the Chugach National Forest to harvest beetle-killed timber, but the Forest Service—in the face of intense pressure from environmental groups—has scrapped one plan, severely reduced the scope of another and is considering new public comment on a third.

Under the salvage law passed by Congress last year, the Forest Service had initially identified about 1,300 acres of 12,000 heavily-infested forested acres in the Sixmile area for logging. That proposal has now been reduced to a mere 182 acres—2% of the infested trees in the Sixmile area. A logging plan for the heavily-infested Seattle Creek drainage has been discarded, but the Forest Service is