

(FOR THE CATHOLIC STUDENT AT NOTRE DAME)

Listen to Msgr. Fulton J.
Sheen Sunday night,
Catholic Hour, NBC 7:00

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
January 5, 1944

Thursday is feast of
Epiphany, commemorating
visit of 3 Kings.
Friday is First Friday.

Simon Stylites (born 388 A.D.)

Simon was a sensation in his day. No modern flag pole sitter held out on his perch as long as Simon did on his pillar. Thirty-six years of living atop a column is a record no saint nor stunt man has ever eclipsed. The pillar was a refuge for Simon. Youth needs a refuge from the press of modern activity. In Simon he can find inspiration.

When very young Simon was inspired to pray always and to practice whatever austerities were within his reach. He began to train himself in fasting and going without sleep. Simon tried to enter a monastery where he could serve God by this life of penance. He was too much for the monks. His penances were not common and they made him useless as a member of a community. No one can blame the monks for their opposition to Simon. He nearly died after going foodless for the entire period of Lent. Besides the fast, he would curtail his sleep, standing for parts of the night, sometimes on a wooden ball to keep himself from falling asleep.

Simon wanted solitude. He sought it in the loneliness of a hill where he lived in an enclosure which was open to the elements. He was only twenty-four when he took this refuge.

People came to see this curiosity. And they discovered he possessed a real saintly character. The austerities deepened his influence over souls and awakened sleeping consciences. Crowds flocked to Simon for advice. He dealt privately with the cases at first. But when the numbers grew so large, he was forced to preach from his hut.

Simon needed prayer for himself, spiritual recuperation. The pilgrims left him little time for his own devotions. To hide away was impossible; they would follow him wherever he would go. So Simon took to the air. For four years he stood on a four foot pillar. The more his solitude was disturbed, the more he increased the height of his pillar. Simon spent the last twenty years of his life on a pillar sixty feet high. The top was not covered. A rail surrounded it lest the ascetic fall off. The saint stood all day and all night. He taught himself to sleep on his feet. Ladders were attached to the column and those who sought private counsel would climb to this open air office. Simon died in the place of his refuge standing.

Youth is fast losing its bearings. Prayer alone gives right direction. Ask yourself how much you pray, and you will discover that your goodness and influence on others is in proportion to the time you spend in talking to God and the saints. Prayer requires a refuge. The soldier and sailor can find it on the battlefield by turning his attention to God in his heart. The student will find that he can close off the noise and talk about him as he walks the campus paths and thereby find a solitude for prayer. The perfect hideout and place of spiritual recuperation for youth is before the Blessed Sacrament. Alone with Christ apostles and saints are made. Simon Stylites teaches us that where there is a will to pray, there is a way to find solitude for it. Today is Simon's feast day. Ask of him the spirit of prayer.

PRAYERS: (deceased) Mr. Butler, a friend of Mr. Joseph Hayden, C.S.C. (Moreau Sem); friend of Tom Green (Al); uncle of Jim Lamb (Wal); grandfather of Bob Purcell (Sorin); grandmother of Gasper Garofalo (Al); uncle of Bill Gates (St. Eds); grandmother of Bill (Al) and Dick (Al) Bevington; Patrick Clancy, friend of Brother Boniface, C.S.C.; grandmother of Bill Stapleton (Wal); father of Father John Lynch, C.S.C., former Prefect of Religion. Ill mother of Jim Guihan (Cav.)-serious; John Wallisch (N.D. painter, fractured elbow); Joe Barr, '42, Marine wounded at Tarawa. 3 Thanksgiving. 4 Special Intentions.