

(Eulogy delivered by the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President, University of Notre Dame, at the Funeral Mass for Mr. I. A. O'Shaughnessy, St. Paul, Minnesota, November 26, 1973)

We are all here today to pay a last tribute to Ignatius Aloysius O'Shaughnessy and to pray for the repose of his soul. The good Lord once said that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a wealthy man to save his soul. I would have to say that I. A. made that needle's eye passage look easy, although I know it was not easy for him. Making it look easy was part of his virtue, like the great artist who makes the creation of beauty look easy, or the great athlete who seems to make graceful performance look easy.

There are many ways of testing a man's life: how well he does in reaching his goals, presuming them to be both high and noble; how he affects other people for good or evil; how faithful he is to his basic principles; how high his hopes; how loving his heart; what good works he leaves behind; how happy his memory. By whatever calculus you judge a man, these tests or other ones, including the simple Christian test of loving God and one's neighbor, I. A. O'Shaughnessy was a good man who lived a good and a long life and died a good death in the Lord.

I should like to memorialize I. A. O'Shaughnessy today according to another test, equally simple and yet quite profound. One of the greatest theologians of all times, St. Thomas Aquinas, said that a good man is one who knows the right things to have faith in, the right things to hope for, and the right things to love. How did I. A. O'Shaughnessy meet this test?

He basically had faith in God and in all that he judged to flow from God as from its source: His truth -- the Christian message, not selective parts of it, but all of it, however difficult at times. He had faith in God's Church and he did faithfully, even generously, whatever the Church demanded of him, and was more than generous with whatever he judged to be the Church's works -- especially the needy ones. He believed in Christian education to the extent that two of its better known institutions, St. Thomas here in St. Paul and Notre Dame in Indiana, found in him their greatest among many great benefactors. He believed in God's special servants, priests and brothers and nuns -- and he loved to be with them, to help them, to kid them, to laugh with them. He had faith in people, especially people in trouble, and God alone knows how many of them he helped in a thousand different ways. He had faith in his family, especially enjoying their joys and shouldering their sorrows which he made his own. He had faith in his friends, and they were without number, over many years and in many different lands and throughout our land -- and they never needed him or his friendship in vain - he was there. He had great faith in God's Providence which saw him through almost ninety years of vicissitudes without end, some good and some bad, but all deepening the inner strength and solidity of his character, as granite is given ever more clearly the definition of the sculptor by each mark of the chisel. When God is doing the sculpturing, as I. A. believed to be the case in life, the result is both Godlike and goodly. Thus was his faith.

What did I. A. O'Shaughnessy hope for? I know he always wanted what was good for his wife and children and their children, and he always put this above and beyond what he hoped for himself. Like all of us, he hoped for success in life, but his hopes went far beyond material prosperity, although he had plenty of that. He hoped to be able to do good for others and dedicated his material success to that end, more than anyone I have ever known. I know he hoped for heaven, too, and was willing to pay the price to get there -- suffering more than most people knew, without ever complaining about the personal and physical pains that came his way in regular abundance. His hopes were both good and elevating.

It is not difficult, if you knew him well, to see clearly what he loved. First, God and the service of God as it was given to him to serve. He loved all of God's creation, too -- good people who delighted him, especially women and children and youngsters with bright eyes and high hopes. Somehow he was always young with the young, never really old and stuffy. He loved life and laughter, a good game and a good joke, a good day with a brisk wind on the sunlit Florida waters or a moonlit night of sailing on the great lakes. He loved being with his family and friends, loved giving away most of his income each year, loved getting others to give when they really did not want to, loved surprising those in need with a sudden solution to their seemingly impossible problems. He loved to vacation for a few days with his priest friends, and he attended each of their Masses in turn during the pre-concelebration days. I never spent a single

day with him that he did not serve my Mass and receive Holy Communion with sincere devotion. When his eyesight failed, he used to ask me to read my breviary out loud so that he could ponder and enjoy this prayer of the Church. As I was away from the University, I did not know that he was dying the day he died, but that morning as I was offering Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, it suddenly occurred to me out of the blue that it might be nice to offer Mass for I. A. that day and I did. I have to believe that this good inspiration came from the good Lord I. A. had served so well and so long, as a way of speeding him on his way home, as he began his last day on earth. As we live, so shall we die.

How did I. A. come to be a man of such faith, and hope, and love? Maybe it began when he looked at the Christian spirit of his father and mother of whom he was the thirteenth child. He saw his father caring for the poor of his native Stillwater with very modest means, quietly, effectively, and secretly. He saw him go through rigorous Wintry lents with strict fasting and penance. He laughed inwardly as he saw his mother spike the punch for his father and all his father's teetotaller friends at their annual outing. Life was difficult, but it could be humorous, too. He never lost his simple faith, his ready laughter, his basic balance and integrity.

Because he was always simply himself, he had no awe of others, however high and mighty they might be. I have heard him tell the Holy Father to get moving on a good project before it was too late and to quit worrying about how it would get done. I have heard him

ask the President of the United States a blunt and meaningful question that no one else would have dared to ask. When the oil industry needed a tough spokesman, they knew they could count on him to be blunt and honest and effective, so it was he they chose in a time of trouble.

He had no hunger for honors, although he received them in abundance during his long and fruitful life. The Holy Father made him a Papal Count -- the only one in the United States -- but he never used the title except to joke about it occasionally. He wore his various honor uniforms and medals only once, for a photograph to please his wife, and then promptly gave them all away. I have never known anyone who did more for others without looking for any recognition or special gratitude in return. Almost every great project that he undertook cost him much more than was originally planned, but he never took it amiss, just joked he was being done in, and then gave twice as much as he had originally promised.

He once told me that money was only a trust from God, a means of doing good to others. "If an angel came to me tonight", he once said, "and told me that my youngest grandchild was ill and the price of her getting well was giving up everything I own, I would not hesitate to give it all up without a moment's thought".

I. A., despite his playful temperament, was a man of great vision whenever something serious was involved. When others would hold back, calculate and play it safe, he would follow his inner

instinct and say with his typical directness, "It's a great and good idea; let's do it and do it now".

On the highest hill between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, called Tantur, there is a beautiful building that seems to grow out of the hilltop, surrounded with pines and olive trees. Protestant, Orthodox, and Catholic Christian theologians come there from the Far East, Africa, South America, the United States, Canada, Europe, even from behind the Iron Curtain, to work at theology, to pray, to live together as they try to be one in Christ, as He Himself prayed they might be, in that same city, the night before He died. For centuries, nothing like this had happened because in a very real sense, it could only happen there in Jerusalem -- the City of Peace where Christianity began. It is happening there this day and in recent years because in all of Christendom only one person shared the Holy Father's vision of Christian unity and made it happen. Many shared the vision, of course, but only one person really made it happen because he did not believe in allowing a great vision to go by default just because it cost a good deal, or there was a war in progress, or because it was difficult, almost impossible to realize and no one had yet done it for centuries of shameful Christian disunity.

When I. A. walked that holy ground a year and a half ago, prayed at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, at the tomb in Jerusalem, but, more especially, prayed and visited with the scholars at his Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Studies at Tantur, it occurred to me that it was a long path from Stillwater,

Minnesota, where his life began more than four score years ago. But such was his whole life, his faith, his hope, his love, that for many years to come great things will be happening in the world, at Jerusalem, at universities and colleges, at hospitals, orphanages, and old folks homes, in the lives of young and old transformed by one man's generosity and vision. All of us can be very proud that he was a dear part of our lives, too. While we will all miss him greatly -- those twinkling eyes, that spontaneous smile, that great heart -- both we, and our lives and our institutions have been enriched by his presence and his great spirit, and we will long be reminded that he passed this way on his path to heaven and eternal life. May he rest in eternal peace with God, and may we all rejoin him there one day.