

Item #75 (Persons from the Past)

This is a duplicate of "Persons from the Past" in the above section "About Me".

The present extended presentation is something personal and unapologetically subjective. It will consist of remembrances of persons from my past. The patient reader will pardon the author if at times the persons are well known. This presentation is not intended to be an exercise in occasional name-dropping. The purpose of this extended presentation is to help the author look on the memories of his past through the lens of the present. The past is past and cannot change; but the relevance of the past for the author's present can and has changed as the author changes. I have told many of these stories to a variety of persons on a variety of occasions, and have frequently been urged to make them available to a broader public. This I now do. I shall not always make my present take on these stories explicit—perhaps the reader will have his or her own take. I present my memories as I remember them, in no particular order, as they occur to me. What they mean for me now is between me and God. I am a firm believer in God's Providence—things happen for a purpose, though this purpose is often not clear at the time they happened and only becomes clear later. Perhaps some of these experiences can help the reader acquire a stronger belief in Providence in his or her own life, and thus serve as a stimulus for him or her to search for his or her own persons from the past with a view to their present relevance. The relevance of my experiences seems to grow and deepen for me as my awe at the dignity of the human person grows and deepens despite, or perhaps because of, indiosyncrasies in said persons—and in me. And these experiences help me better to know God.

1) **O**nce upon a time I was in Mumbai/Bombay and visiting a center for poor people founded and supervised by the Missionaries of Charity (the sisters of Mother Teresa of Calcutta). The local superior, an Indian sister, had prepared a crowning event for my visit. She had asked several of the young girls in the sisters' charge to prepare a concert for me. The young girls were about the age of ten and had terribly disfigured faces. A couple were blind. They were mentally retarded, I was told, and physically handicapped in various ways. But they had a marvelous

facility for learning the hymns of India in a variety of languages with impressive accuracy and real beauty. They proceeded to sing a selection of these hymns with obvious pride. I noticed out of the corner of my eye the superior: she was beaming with pride and love. And then it occurred to me with sudden force, that these little girls were secure in the realization that they were surrounded by love. Certainly one of the great treasures in life.

2) **S**ome years ago I was on a train in northwest Italy. The train stopped at Genoa and into the compartment hitherto empty came a mother with her little girl of about 8 years of age. With the mother's consent I struck up a conversation with the little girl. As the conversation progressed the face of the little girl became more and more puzzled. I knew what was puzzling her: she couldn't place my accent. (In Italy at the time, before TV had a leveling effect on local pronunciations, one could often tell where the speaker of Italian was from.) "Am I from Rome?" I asked. "No, you are not from Rome", she replied solemnly. "Am I from Florence?" I asked. (The local dialect of Florence gave birth to Italian as the national language.) "No, you are not from Florence", she replied solemnly. "Am I from Genoa here?" No, you are not from Genoa", came the solemn reply. Then I thought of Bergamo, where John XXIII, the pope at the time we were speaking, was from. (The good people of Bergamo speak a dialect famously incomprehensible to people not raised in Bergamo.) "No, you are not from Bergamo", she solemnly replied, "because up there they speak Italian even worse than you do".

3) **M**uch more recently I was walking through the heart of Amsterdam toward the main train station. I had plenty of time before my train left so I began examining the shops along the way for some suitable post cards. One shop had just what I wanted. I collected a handful and went inside to pay. No sooner had I entered than I realized my mistake: the innocuous post cards were a front for a pornography store. But I was wearing my Roman collar and not about to retreat in the face of the young man smirking at me behind the cash register. I looked down to fish out my wallet from my pocket so as to pay and then looked up at the young man's face. In the split second that I had looked down his face had changed completely. "May I have your blessing?" he

asked. I naturally thought he was being sarcastic. But I looked carefully at his face again. It continued to remain the expression of a person who sincerely meant what he said. "I will be glad to give you my blessing", I said, "but I want you to know that it has nothing to do with this nonsense". "I understand", he replied meekly. I gave him my blessing. Then I said, after paying for my post cards, "Now I want a payment from you for my blessing". He began reaching for his wallet. "I am not interested in your money", I said. "But you are going to have to promise to pray for me, and I promise to pray for you". We shook hands to seal our agreement.

4) Which reminds me of an experience which I had in a small village in central Italy in the midst of the Red Belt. The time was in the 1980s, before the collapse of the Soviet Union.. I was there for Holy Week ministry. The village was on the site of an ancient Etruscan settlement, with the Catholic church and rectory at the top of the hill. I had some free time during the day after my arrival and I resolved to purchase some post cards. On inquiring of the the pastor I was told that post cards were to be purchased at the Catholic cooperative. By no means was I to get them at the Communist cooperative. Detailed instructions were given for arrival at the Catholic cooperative. Since the village had only 600 inhabitants I thought I couldn't go wrong. When I set out the following day I scrupulously followed instructions and arrived at a "*cooperativo*" which was adjacent to the Communist party headquarters. Baffled by what appeared to be my mistake I set out to find the Catholic "*cooperativo*". In a village of 600 it was not difficult to find the second cooperative. But it too had the simple word "*cooperativo*" on it. But I assumed that this was the cooperative I was really looking for. I walked in wearing my "*talare*" (cassock) and immediately sensed that I had made another mistake. Several people were in the store and I found myself right in front of the cashier. The temperature had plummeted instantaneously on my arrival. What should I do? Retreat ignominiously? Not to be considered. I resorted to the ultimate weapon: good humor. I asked the cashier if there were on sale post cards of this "metropolis". The idea of calling this wide spot in the road a "metropolis" was not the kind of remark normally designed to produce amused people. But everyone except myself was quite tense, and the result was an involuntary outburst of genuine laughter. Problem solved. We became united.

I picked out some post cards amid smiles all around, paid my bill (material co-operation in evil was excusable given the circumstances), and I returned to the bright sunlight outside hoping that the political divisions of the village had eased a fraction as a result of my maneuver.

5) **A**s a young Jesuit teaching at Regis High School in Denver, Colorado (this was back in the early 1950s) I spent summers up at a group of cabins outside Fraser, Colorado. At that time the area was relatively undeveloped. At an altitude of 8,500 feet, amid snow-capped mountains and forests, it was a paradise for me. A small group of us Jesuits spent several months there, leading a rather frugal life rich in leisure. We bought groceries from a store in Fraser, a mile or so west and north down the highway which ran in front of our property. One day I was asked by the superior to drive in to the general store in town (called "Carlson's") and buy something which was urgently needed by our cook. It was around 8 a.m. I was inside this general store when the outside door was flung open and a man yelled out with no formal introduction, "Do you have Aunt Jemima's Pancake Flour" in a sing-song fashion. The store owner yelled back in the same sing-song fashion, mimicking the man good-naturedly, "Yes, we have Aunt Jemima's Pancake Flour". The man explained: "It's Ike's turn to fix breakfast and he wants to make pancakes but he won't do so unless he can use Aunt Jemima's Pancake Floor". Elucidation: On a property neighboring ours a friend of President Eisenhower used to have a week-long bachelors' vacation for some of his buddies, no wives allowed. President Eisenhower was one such buddy and apparently enjoyed a week of playing poker with friends away from all the fuss and bother of Washington. This incident is recorded in case any one has a nose for presidential trivia.

6) **T**he summer of 1959 I spent in West Berlin trying to get a grasp of conversational German. (This was two years before "The Wall", and the city was divided into the western sectors under the supervision of France, Great Britain and the United States, and the eastern sector under the supervision of the Soviet Union. It was still a war-ravaged city, especially in the east. Blind persons were everywhere in the western sectors. There was a protocol in force that a blind person could attach himself or herself to a passenger

waiting for a bus or street car by grabbing the person's arm. The person thus singled out would then be obliged to help the blind person board whereupon the conductor would find the person a seat. Despite these and other grim reminders of World War II the good humor of the Berliners was evident. In Germany they were said to be "*Schlagfertig*"—witty. I remember being on one street car, rather crowded, when a woman got aboard with a dog on a leash. A gentleman in the middle of the car, came out with a loud voice speaking to no one in particular and everyone in general, saying "Why is it that women prefer dogs to men?" The woman was equal to the challenge, and retorted to no one in particular and everyone in general, saying "Women prefer dogs to men because dogs age better". The gentleman doffed his hat and bowed acknowledging defeat as the crowd chuckled.

7) In the year 1975 I was part of a group of Catholics who had a particular interest in the Bible. We were touring Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria to get some impressions of the Middle East. One of the men was from New Zealand. He, like myself, was a priest. His father had given him \$100 to go to the Commonwealth cemetery near El Alamein and offer Mass on the tombstone of the father's brother, who had been killed in battle a few days before that famous World War II battle between Commonwealth troops and Rommel's *Afrikakorps*. We took advantage of a break-day in the tour to take a train from Cairo to Alexandria and then a taxi for the 75-mile ride west to the cemetery. The German cemetery was between the highway and the Mediterranean Sea (which at that point was a bewitching turquoise). The Commonwealth cemetery lay farther inland. My New Zealand friend and I went to the administration office and quickly found the location of his uncle's grave. We found it easily, near the southern boundry of the cemetery. We were warned not to venture outside the fence which marked the boundry of the cemetery for fear of unexploded mines which, in the dryness of the desert sands, can go decades without losing their capacity to explode. We celebrated Mass on the tomb, in the absolute stillness that only deserts seem able to furnish. I thought back to the battle of El Alamein which I had read about as a teen-ager in the security of the United States, and thought of the men on both sides who had died in Germany's deepest penetration into Egypt. The juxtaposition of immense stillness and heroic death made an unforgettable experience.

8) In the fall of 1973 the local superior of Mother Teresa's sisters in Rome asked me to give an eight-day retreat to three or four sisters of the community. I agreed, provided I could come to the convent only in the afternoon. (I had to teach Greek at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in the morning.) She said the sisters could cope. A few days later Mother Teresa herself showed up, and after the morning Mass I said for her and her sisters she came to me and after thanking me for saying the Mass (something she unfailingly did), she said: "Father, I hear you are going to give a retreat to some of my sisters". "Yes, mother. That is correct" I replied. "Father, there is one thing I want you to stress in the retreat". I listened and paused. I don't like mother superiors to tell me what to say in a retreat. If they don't want me to give a retreat, that is their business. But once they ask me to give a retreat what I say is my business. If word got out that the retreat master was the mouthpiece for the superior he would be dead in the water. And rightly so. But I thought that she was going to ask me to stress charity, and I could hardly object to that. And besides, I was in awe of Mother Teresa even then. So I said, "Yes, mother, what should I stress in the retreat?" "Father, you must stress humility, for my sisters are here to serve". Her exact words.

9) In my days as a student of philosophy at Saint Louis University among my memorable professors were Fr. William Wade, S.J., and Dr. James Collins, a layman. Fr. Wade was chairman of the Department of Philosophy. Dr. Collins was a nationally known authority on modern and contemporary philosophy. He was also physically handicapped, the result of polio in his youth. The way he was hired at the Department of Philosophy deserves mention. Dr. Collins, of course, was 4-F during World War II because of his physical disability—he had to use crutches, and even then he walked with difficulty. He was finishing up a doctorate in philosophy at The Catholic University of America and sent out applications to teach at various universities. On one blistering summer day he was scheduled to meet Fr. Wade for an interview. Wade was in a parlor of the administration building, waiting for Collins to appear. He waited some minutes past the time of the appointment and then went to the front door to see if something

had happened, knowing as he did that Collins was severely crippled. He opened the door and saw Collins (whom he had never met) bathed in perspiration, laboriously climbing the steps one by one using his crutches. (It was during World War II and well before elevators became as common as they are now. In any event, Collins wanted to show that he was capable of moving about the university without causing any inconvenience.) Wade took one look at him and said "You're hired". Collins never forgot this. And when later he had become nationally known he refused offers at more prestigious universities. I remember both these teachers to this day with respect and affection.

10) **M**any years ago I made my prescribed third year of novitiate with 21 other Jesuits from 17 provinces in a small village amid the mountains of central Austria. Five of the Jesuits were veterans of service in the *Wehrmacht* during World War II. Their regular refrain was that Germany was defeated in the war because of superior American industrial capacity. This small village was a chilly place, and the medieval bishop's palace in which we lived was especially so. It was still the reconstruction period after the war and Austria was very much a country in reconstruction. Most of the men wore overcoats inside the house. I was fortunate: some cousins of mine were aware of the living conditions in post-war Europe and gave me two pair of insulated long underwear before I left the U.S. As spring came and the cold in the building became less bothersome one of the Germans came to me and said. "It has been so cold this past winter in this building that even we German war veterans wore overcoats. And yet you slender American wore only your cassock. How did you do it?" I answered not a word at first but rolled up my cassock sleeve to show the insulated long underwear and then said, "American industrial capacity wins again". Even my interrogator had to laugh.

11) **I**n my final years in Rome (I spent fifty unforgettable years there) I used to say Mass at 7 a.m. on Christmas morning for Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity in their convent in *Dono di Maria*, a refuge for homeless women that the sisters supervised in the southeast corner of Vatican City. I would walk for forty minutes or so through deserted street. (No public transportation

was functioning.) Before entering the shelter I would pause before the newly assembled giant crib in St. Peter's Square to pray for a few minutes, usually with only security personnel and street cleaners present. One year, in the early part of the present millennium, I was approaching the square when I heard the sound of automobile motors. Nine squad cars of the national military police, the *Carabinieri*, converged on the street facing the square and directly in front of the giant crib, but at a distance of some forty yards, i.e., outside the metal railing that indicates the boundary of Vatican City. The squad cars lined up in two rows, of five and four respectively. There was a pause. Then came a barked order and the doors on either side of each vehicle opened and an officer emerged from each door and stood rigidly at attention, all facing the crib. Another barked command and they all saluted in unison. They stood rigidly at attention for about thirty seconds as they saluted the infant Jesus and Joseph and Mary. Then another barked command and they were back in their respective squad cars, which thereupon darted off in all directions. There were no photographers present. This was no photo-op. This was the genuine thing.

12) In the early nineties I was taking part in a tour of Pauline sites in Turkey. The tour was under the supervision of Franciscan fathers from Parma in Italy, and most of the participants were Italian. The program called for a visit to all sites that figured importantly in the life of St. Paul, beginning in the west of the country and continuing on by plane and bus even to Antioch in the extreme southeast, and then circling back to Istanbul. Our logistics coordinator was a young Turkish woman who was quite capable and spoke excellent Italian. Toward the end of our long visit we were looping back by bus to Istanbul and were scheduled to spend an afternoon and evening at the ruins of Antioch in Pisidia, very close to the modern Turkish city of Yalviç. A day or two before our scheduled visit the Turkish logistics coordinator went to all the Italians in the group (about 33 out of 35) and got them to sign a waiver allowing her to tell the bus driver to skip the ruins of Antioch in Pisidia in order to facilitate subsequent visits. She did not consult me—I heard about her plan only indirectly. As soon as I did I went to the Franciscan friar who was in charge of the religious aspects of the tour and said that the omission of Antioch in Pisidia was a source of much distress to me. (*"Saltare questa*

visita mi fa molta pena”, in Italian.) He remained non-committal. The next morning we were all seated in our bus at 8 a.m. waiting for him to announce the day’s itinerary. He began by reminding the group that almost all of them had voted to skip Antioch in Pisidia. “But since this omission would be a source of great distress to one of the group, we are going to Antioch in Pisidia”. For a moment there was absolute silence, and then the entire group broke out in spontaneous applause. Italians at their best. The Turkish logistics coordinator accordingly brought us to Antioch in Pisidia in mid-afternoon. The Franciscan friar put the group into my hands. I took them to the site of the ruins of a Byzantine basilica from around the fourth century on the northern edge of the ancient city. I then gathered them to the southern side of the ruins, and pointed to the foundations twenty feet below and remarked that these were with great probability the foundations of the synagogue which had stood on the site originally. I then had several of them take turns reading Paul’s address to the Jews in that very synagogue as found in Acts of the Apostles 13,17-51. This moment turned out to be the high point of the entire trip for me and, I am sure, for many others in the group. The Turkish logistics coordinator later apologized for what she had done, but no one held it against her for we realized she was not a Christian. But the incident illustrates how one can still be in surprisingly close contact in biblical lands with the persons of the past.

13) At the end of the sophomore year of the Jesuit high school I attended (Saint Louis University High School) the student had to decide what language in addition to English and Latin he would study during his final two years. Being 15 years of age I devoted practically no time in making a decision. At the interview with my academic advisor, Fr. John R. Kelly, S.J., I solemnly announced that I had chosen Spanish as my third language. “No, James”, was his amiable reply. “You will take Greek”. (This was before the age of non-directive counseling, so I acquiesced with no hesitation.) As it turned out, teaching Greek was my main occupation in life at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, where I taught an introductory New Testament Greek course to incoming students for thirty-six years, and wrote what is perhaps the most detailed text-book on the same ever written. One is never sure at the time what Providence has in mind. Except that He can work in

unexpected ways.

14) **B**ack in the 70s I celebrated Mass in a suburban parish in England. As usual before saying Mass in an unfamiliar place I asked the pastor if I should call for an exchange of the sign of peace at the proper time in the Mass. “Father, please do not. My people are friendly but not familiar”, he replied. A few months later I was about to celebrate Mass in a rural parish in the Sabine Hills north of Rome. I asked the pastor if I should call for an exchange of the sign of peace at the proper time in the Mass. “Father, please do not. Some of the young people get too enthusiastic”.

15) **I** once gave a retreat in Malaysia, arriving and departing by way of Singapore. My departure from Malaysia began from Kuala Lumpur, the capital. I took a public bus from that city to Singapore. The bus halted at roughly mid-point in the journey for a rest-stop. The driver said simply in English, “20 minutes” before he opened the doors for us to alight. Clear enough in the context. After the lapse of 20 minutes he checked to make sure we were all aboard. It developed that two persons were missing—as it turned out two teen-agers of Chinese descent. A middle-aged Chinese woman, presumably their mother, said simply “I know where they are” and she proceeded to march unhesitatingly into a store in the complex where we had stopped. A moment later she emerged with the two culprits. Her face was a bright red with embarrassment as she shepherded the two young ladies into the bus and to their seats. Each carried bulging paper bags and they were obviously out of sorts that their buying spree had been interrupted in such an uncivil way. As far as I could tell the driver and the rest of the passengers were in good humor, smiling with the renewed awareness that teen-aged girls were the same all over the world.

16) **T**he only time I visited Kenya was to give an eight-day retreat to 29 of Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity in Nairobi. I arrived several days early to get acclimated. On one of those days the superior of the sisters thought it would be instructive for me to visit the equator, about 100 miles north of the city. I was mildly

curious as to what I would find. I vaguely imagined a complex of motels and stores alongside the highway with people going to and fro. The reality was more rewarding. We arrived to find a bronze strip embedded in the asphalt with the word "Equator". On the left as we faced the northern hemisphere was forest. On the right, the same, except for a modest clearing covered with roughly-mown grass. Instead of motels and shops and people there were two solitary men. One was selling from an assortment of trinkets. The other had two pots and a pitcher of water. The superior bought a trinket or two from the salesman, obviously out of charity. We then turned our attention to the other gentleman. He said he was going to show us something. He said that we should walk thirty feet to the north of the equator. That we did. Then he placed the two bowls on top of each other. The top was bigger than the bottom pot and had a hole in the center of the bottom. He placed the larger bowl over the smaller so that the hole was in the center of both, and poured water to the brim of the top pot. He then plucked a piece of grass at random from the ground and placed it on the water at the edge of the top pot where the water was silently descending through the hole into the bottom pot. The piece of grass immediately went into motion in a *clockwise* pattern. When he had become satisfied that all in our group agreed that the motion of the grass (and hence of the water) was clockwise, he said that we should now walk thirty feet south of the equator. (We judged our position from the bronze line in the nearby road.) Once we were thirty feet south of the equator he repeated the arrangement of the pots, poured in a fresh supply of water, plucked another piece of grass from the ground, and placed it on the edge of the top pot. The piece of grass immediately began circling in a *counterclockwise* movement. I was stunned, as I realized the enormity of the invisible forces that had caused the disparity between the two movements only sixty feet apart. I expressed my amazement to the gentleman, who said that some people refuse to believe that the forces were really there—they assumed he was relying on some sort of trick. A good way to prepare for a retreat in which consideration of invisible realities are at the heart of one's activity. Invisible realities to which man must adjust, not vice versa.

17) In my younger days as a Jesuit, as remarked above, I spent four summers at the Jesuit camp near Fraser, Colorado. At 8,400

feet and surrounded by snow-capped peaks it was a paradise for anyone like me who loved the outdoors. Once four of us decided to climb Byers Peak, a modestly-sized (12,000 some feet), symmetrical mountain five or six miles to the west of our cabins. We reached there at mid-morning and found the ascent quite easy: there was little snow from the winter (fresh snow on the mountains in our part of the Rockies was rare between July 1 and August 15), and the trail was clearly marked. Once at the summit we signed the piece of paper in the Mason jar there and after enjoying the view began the descent at a leisurely pace. Mid-way in our descent we suddenly came to a wide spot in the narrow trail which was hugging the mountain. And there, in the middle of the wide spot some 12 or 15 feet across, was a baby bird. One of our group had a doctorate in biology with a speciality in animal behavior with a sub-specialization in bird talk. On seeing the baby bird he said out loud, "What a wonderful addition to my collection" and crouched down and began cautiously approaching the tiny creature. The rest of us gazed silently on the proceeding, rooting of course for the tiny bird but not being willing to impede the path of scientific progress. When our hero was only a few feet from his intended victim, a very large bird—presumably the mother—landed some distance from the two protagonists with a great flutter of wings. But no sooner did she land than one wing seemed to break. She began flopping it uselessly. Our hero took a look at the apparently-wounded bird and changed course, saying that the big bird would be much more useful to him. As he cautiously approached the big bird who remained on the edge of the sheer drop the baby bird scooted from the wide spot in the trail onto a nearby narrow ledge where no sane human would walk. Once the mother bird saw that the little bird was safe the mother bird's wing healed miraculously and off she flew into space, leaving our bird expert alone and looking appropriately sheepish. The rest of us of course were laughing so hard that it was all we could do to avoid falling off the mountain. Obviously the mother bird had had a doctorate in human behavior.

18) **O**nce I spent a month in Calcutta teaching a course in Church History for about forty of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity. I was living in a cabin in the sisters' compound, an area of about 12 acres in which they had separate communities for themselves and several of the poor they served. It was the month of January,

and a number of young women were present helping out during their semester break in various universities. Most of them worked in a large building where there were about five hundred handicapped women, most of whom suffered from mental retardation of a relatively mild kind. But there were others. I was out one morning about 10 a.m. taking a breath of fresh air and a brief respite from the work of preparing class. I was walking on one of the main paths when I met a young woman who, it later developed, was from a state university in the United States. She had come as a volunteer to offer what assistance she could. She was in a state of shock, and in a moment I discovered why. She had been asked to escort one of the ladies of the large home for handicapped women so that she could get a bit of fresh air. The handicapped woman appeared to be about thirty years of age. I looked closely at the woman and it was clear what had caused the student volunteer's shock: the woman had no face. Her eyes were still there and she seemed able to see, but below them all was a shapeless mass: no nose, no lips, no chin. Evidently her vocal cords were not functioning for she made unintelligible noises. The college woman told me that the woman's husband had divorced her but had wanted to prevent her from marrying again, so he threw acid in her face.

19) The summer of 1959 I spent three months in West Berlin, working on my conversational German in preparation for my tertianship or third year of novitiate which all Jesuit priests make after ordination. Mine was scheduled to be in a small village in the mountains of central Austria. With me for a time in West Berlin was a fellow Jesuit. We were serving as chaplains in a large Good Shepherd Convent in Marienfelde in the American Sector. One day it occurred to me that it might be instructive to visit a Communist office in West Berlin. My colleague agreed. It was only fourteen years after the end of World War II and Communism was not particularly esteemed in Germany at the time and the future was not looked on with excessive optimism. (The saying was that optimists were studying Russian and pessimists were studying Chinese.) The convent was in the Eleventh Ward or Borough so we sought out the Communist office in that area. We decided to wear our Roman collars in contrast to our usual daily attire outside the convent. The office was on an upper floor of a building, as I recall. It was manned by one official. The furnishings were

spartan, and the bookshelves all but bare. But I do remember sighting the complete works of Lenin and the complete works of Mark Twain, my fellow Missourian. (No Communist he, but something of an iconoclast and an agnostic if not an atheist.) The official seemed bemused by the presence of two Catholic clerics, but treated us politely if not exactly warmly. The only particular point I can recall in our discussion was a dispute about the refugees fleeing from East Germany to West Berlin. (The Wall went up two years later.) The *Notaufnahmehager* or Emergency Reception Camp for these refugees was only a short distance from our convent, and refugees were a frequent sight in the neighborhood, identifiable from the plastic sacks which they carried. The sacks contained all their valuables, the only things which they were permitted to bring with them out of “the Zone”, as the Russian-occupied part of Germany was called. Everything else the “*Flüchtlinge*” had to abandon in their quest to be free. The official argued that the number going from West to East was equal to those fleeing from East to West, but we replied that only about 15% of the number coming west were going east, which I took at the time and still take as being nearer the truth. He argued that those coming to the West were wealthy, I recall replying firmly, “*Nein, ein Durchschnitt*” (“No, a cross-section”). The interview ended amicably enough. We shook hands and the two of us took our leave. I wonder if our interlocutor remained a Communist until he died.

20) As part of a visit to Egypt in 1975 with some 24 other priests I visited two Coptic Orthodox monasteries in the Wadi Natrun some 75 miles south of Alexandria. They were walled oases deep in the desert on the west bank of the Nile. When one entered them one entered into a world materially different from the endless waste of sand around them—startlingly different, with rugs and overstuffed chairs and atmospheric chapels. At the end of a visit to one of these monasteries we were all gathered in one of this surreal carpeted rooms and listened to our leader express his thanks to one of the monks who represented the monastery. In reply the monk thanked us for our interest and then said he wanted to read something for us in English. (He knew that most of us were alumni of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.) As he read the first sentence I had a strange sensation as though I had heard the sentence somewhere before. As he read the second

sentence this impression was confirmed—I *had* heard the material before. Finally, as he read the third sentence I remembered where I had had contact with this material—I had written it myself! It was an advertisement for a book published in 1974 by the Biblical Institute, Volume 1 of Zerwick–Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*. He asked if, when we returned to Rome, we might send the monastery some copies, Needless to say, I took care of his request as soon as I returned to the Institute. We sent the monastery five copies as a token of our appreciation for their hospitality. It was an encouraging reminder of how useful our publishing venture in Rome is for persons interested in Scripture. And of how one’s published thoughts can find results in unexpected places.

21) **A** few years ago I taught for a month in Zambia. The students were members of the Neo-catechumenate seminary in Kitwe, far to the north of the capital at Lusaka, on the border with Congo Kinshasa. I was to teach a course on the history of the Church. Arrival in Lusaka was indirect: Rome–Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa–Johannesburg, Johannesburg–Lusaka. (At Lusaka I was to be met by the rector of the seminary, who would drive me the two-hundred or so miles north to Kitwe.) A fellow passenger on the flight was a young woman from Austria who was shepherding a huge consignment of medicine for a Catholic dispensary in Lusaka. The medicine was destined for the poor of Zambia. The big challenge was to get it through customs once we landed. Not to worry. As we disembarked from the plane we were met by a sturdy African sister who was dressed as an official of the airport, work vest and all. Innumerable badges dangled from same. She had all the insignia of authority and acted accordingly. In no time at all the medicine was whisked through customs and the young woman happily waved farewell to me as she departed through the exit with the mountainous shipment safely in tow on a cart. No sooner had the young woman disappeared than the sister turned her attention on me. I was wearing my Roman collar and standing in line behind some dozen fellow passengers, waiting to pay my \$20 to obtain a visa. The figure of authority glared at me and demanded why I was in the line of ordinary passengers and did not report to the V.I.P. window, which had no line before it. I replied that I was in no great hurry and that the line was moving well and I would soon have my visa and exit the terminal. (Behind

my thinking, of course, was my desire not to increase the number of anti-clericals in the world, of whom I deemed the contemporary number more than sufficient, whatever it was.) In vain did I protest. I was unceremoniously guided to the V.I.P. wicket and the young man who was serving both windows was told to take care of me immediately if not sooner. Having learned long ago not to argue with women, and presuming that this was especially true of female authority figures in African airports, I meekly obeyed. There was no visible insurrection among the persons in the queue whom I had so publicly been forced to abandon (they were all male and thus doubtless shared my views of arguing with women). The young man shifted to the V.I.P. window, momentarily abandoning the line of worthy persons among whom I had recently been a member, and efficiently issued my visa. The authority figure had departed, and as soon as possible, so did I, abandoning the scene of my crime. I was soon united with the rector in the heat of a Lusaka noon, and we were on our way north to Kitwe.

22) **T**raveling by rail from West Berlin to Munich in early September of 1959 while on my way to tertianship in Austria I had to pass through a good portion of East Germany, at that time under control of the Soviet Union, and even after the official Soviet departure under a Communist regime until 1989. It was a heady experience for a young, newly ordained Jesuit who had not been outside of the United States until three months before and who was not exactly a master of the German language. I traveled alone, but was given no grief by officials, who had obviously been told not to antagonize anyone with a U.S. passport. The real adventure came with meeting some of my fellow passengers, Germans all. One young woman identified herself as a medical doctor and an atheist. As a reason for the latter she said: "I have dissected the human body in all its parts, and have never discovered anything which could be called a soul". The lady was clearly laboring under a fundamental misapprehension by the nature of the spiritual, but I am afraid my German was inadequate to advance any arguments which could be of help to her. She was not combative, only perplexed. But living under a regime dedicated to atheism did not help her receptivity to the arguments in favor of the non-materiality, i.e., spirituality, of the soul. Then there was the unshaven gentleman who apologized for his appearance by saying

he had received permission to exit “the Zone” only an hour and a half before the train left. He was going to attend the wedding of his mother in Austria. A woman passenger in the same compartment asked how old his mother was. “62” was his reply. “*Also, es geht noch*”—“Well, that’s still doable”, was the woman’s brief comment, good-naturedly made. The gentleman, it turned out, was the manager of a factory in the Zone. I asked him if he was concerned to make a profit. “Why should I?”, he retorted. “It’s not my factory”. I remarked in reply that he sounded like a Republican senator in the U.S., little realizing that one day he would sound like me. The woman doctor and the male factory manager together furnished me with a useful lesson about the lack of religious instruction, the lack of freedom to travel, and the lack of personal responsibility in a Communist-run country.

23) **B**ut not all Communists are without contact with reality. When I was in West Berlin the summer of 1959 the word was going around about an Italian Jesuit named Tondi who had apostasized and fled to East Germany. (He later repented and returned to the Church.) At a meeting of party officials Tondi was reported as having vigorously attacked the Catholic Church at one point. Dr. Ulbricht, at that time president of East Germany, countered simply: “*Herr Tondi, die Sache ist nicht so einfach wie Sie sagen*” (“Mr. Tondi, the matter is not as simple as you say”).

24) **A** recent visit to Vietnam was the occasion of two retreats to two groups of Jesuits there. The first was to five of them at a retreat house in the city of Vung Tau on the South Chinese Sea. Vung Tau was both a resort area and a port for ships carrying cargo containers. Vietnamese sisters were in charge of the retreat house. (A much larger retreat house was a couple of kilometers away, and at that point much closer to the jungle which covered the hills overlooking the town. Retreatants at this latter house had to be cautioned against leaving their suitcases unattended alongside their busses when they arrived or departed, for monkeys would dart out of the woods and snatch one or two and then disappear into the impenetrable forest.) There were not many non-Vietnamese who came to the house where we Jesuits were, and no concessions were made to foreign palates. I adjusted

as best I could. One day a large bowl of eggs was served—eggs in the shell. “Finally”, I thought, “something I can indulge in”. I eagerly snatched an egg and cracked it open. Inside was a fuzzy little chick. I greeted this revelation with obvious surprise and dismay. As for eating it, neither the flesh nor the spirit was willing. My table companions greeted my reaction with suitable smiles amid the retreat silence, and one of them charitably took my egg, chick and all, for a part of his meal.

25) **B**ack in 1959, when I first went to Europe, it was cheaper to go there by ship. (The age of commercial jet flight had not yet begun in earnest.) Accordingly I and several fellow Jesuits booked passage on the Holland-American Lines ship *Ryndam* from Hoboken to Rotterdam. It was the first experience of any of us of life at sea. The *Ryndam* was tiny by trans-Atlantic ship standards (15,000 tons as against 85,000 tons for the *Queen Mary*) and the number of fellow passengers in tourist class was accordingly reduced. (We were about eight hundred as I recall.) The voyage was scheduled for nine or ten days, but was extended a day as a result of an iceberg warning in mid-Atlantic which resulted in a 125-mile detour to the south. (With visions of the *Titanic* in mind we passengers made no objections; the extra day at sea was at the shipping line’s expense; but in any event there was nothing we could do about a decision of the captain who was responsible for our fate while at sea.) Along with us Jesuits were several religious women from various orders. Two were blood sisters and were going to France for their third year of novitiate as were we Jesuits. The two sisters were delightful conversationalists. They were not particularly gifted intellectually nor were they witty nor were they unusually well educated—they were just transparently good persons. Protestants, who constituted a majority of the passengers, were so impressed that they literally formed a queue to talk to them in the lounge. (Most of them had never talked to a sister, of course.) We Jesuits had just finished our theological training and were brimming with information. No queues formed for us. It was an instructive experience.

26) **S**ome time ago the Society of New Testament Studies had its annual convention in Durham, in the north of England. I flew in

from New York to London to attend. I arrived in the morning at Heath Row. (The flight from J.F.K. was eased considerably by my being unexpectedly bumped up from tourist class to business, probably on the strength of my Roman collar. The agent said that they had over-booked tourist. In talking with the gentleman next to me, a financial expert from Wall Street going to London to discuss a business translation, I discovered that he was paying \$3,400 for the flight, while I was paying \$340. But, of course, if he could save his firm a million dollars or more because he arrived in London well rested the price they paid for business was well worth it.) Once arrived at Heath Row and safely through passport control and customs I descended to the lower levels and headed to the British Rail booth to see what underground station I would have to go to to get a train for Durham. The young woman who waited on me was clearly of Indian descent, but spoke impeccable English. When I said the word "Durham" she assumed an exaggeratedly puzzled air and said "Durham ... Durham ... ah, you must mean Darum". Her two colleagues, not engaged with business at the moment, had been listening discreetly and both broke out in broad grins at the dumb Yank who couldn't even pronounce the mother tongue correctly. (It would have been counterproductive to say "Durham as in Duke University".) So I stammered, "Well then, Darum". "You must take an underground to King's Cross—all underground trains from Heath Row go to King's Cross—and there catch your train for Darum". After departure for Darum from King's Cross I had an agreeable ride through the English countryside. While still a stop or two before Darum, into the car came a gentleman who was reading a book on dendrology and was fascinated by my perusal of the New Testament in Greek. It turned out he was an atheist and a citizen of the neighborhood. As the train began to proceed with unexpected slowness he explained that we were going over unused coalmines and if the velocity was too great there was increased danger of the entire ensemble plunging into the depths below. (I immediately resigned myself to the lack of velocity, having no desire to end my life at the moment somewhere in an unused coalmine in the north of England.) I told him about my adventures a few hours before at Heath Row as regards the city of Darum. "Of course the pronunciation is Durham, not Darum", he remarked sympathetically. "Those people down in London don't know a thing".

27) **D**uring a meeting in Hong Kong I was asked to be the secretary of a small group of participants. A number of such groups had been created to thrash through some topic. At the end of the discussion period each secretary had to summarize what the results of his or her group were. My turn came and I made my report in three sentences. As I walked away from the microphone I was rewarded with tumultuous applause. I was perplexed at the applause, because no other report had been rewarded in this way. When I asked one observer why the ovation he said simply, "Because you were brief". It was Shakespeare, was it not, who observed, "Brevity is the soul of wit"? I prefer the scholastic adage: "*Forma dat esse*".

28) **I**n 1976 our Mid-East caravan of 25 Scripture persons was in Iraq. In July. At one point we went south to Ur, in the middle of the desert. There, according to one view, was Ur of the Chaldaeans, at the southern end of the famous Fertile Crescent and possibly the homeland of Abraham. We arrived in mid-morning and found the place easily, mainly because of the impressive ziggurat which was its main architectural feature. The place was bone dry, with the dust inches deep. Pottery sherds in the millions littered the ground. A solitary guard was on duty to protect the site, and he was obviously lonely. An Iraqi air force base was a few miles away, he solemnly told us, and photographs in that direction were forbidden. Since there was limited visibility all around because of dust particles in the air, the warning was pointless. But it satisfied his obligations and once he had made it and sensed that our preoccupations lay elsewhere he became quite friendly and helped us explore the site. I moved around the site for an hour or so and then began to notice the heat. I accordingly sought the shelter of our bus, which was air-conditioned. The Iraqi driver opened the door for me and I climbed inside. It felt refreshingly cool in comparison with the heat outside. I looked at the thermometer to see what the temperature in the air-conditioned bus was. It read 106 degrees.

29) **I**n the summer of 2002 I spent several days at Mother

Teresa's sisters' shelter for homeless men in the south Bronx. I had been there a number of times before and was somewhat familiar with the place. The sisters have a house with a dormitory for about 20 homeless men, with rooms for a priest and for two or three volunteer men who supervise the homeless guests. These volunteers are responsible for preparing breakfast. They begin preparations around 5 a.m., for at 6:45 a.m. the house must be empty so that anyone who wishes can attend Mass with the sisters in their convent a few steps away, across a small garden. One day I was helping prepare breakfast by setting the table. In the kitchen I spotted a new face. I went up and introduced myself. The gentleman replied affably by giving his name. He went on: "I suppose I should say a bit more about myself, for this is my first time here. I am a fireman by profession. I work in south Manhattan. There are three squads of us firemen assigned there. Each squad is 36 hours on duty and 72 hours off. The morning of 9/11 my squad was not on duty, but of the squad that was on duty, not one man survived. I have no idea why my squad was spared and the other squad was not, but I am thankful to God for sparing my life for myself and my family. To show my gratitude I thought that the least I could do was give a few hours to Mother Teresa."

30) In the summer of 1961 I was spending some weeks at a Jesuit novitiate in northwestern France. In Laval, to be precise. I was trying to move my command of spoken French from worse to merely bad. Every morning I would walk several blocks to a local hospital run by a diocesan congregation of sisters to offer Mass. The chapel had three wings for the faithful. Looking at the altar, the wing to the left was for the sisters, who worked as nurses and supervisors. The wing in the center was for the laymen associated with the hospital (doctors, nurses, orderlies, etc.). The wing on the right was not being used. The sacristy was behind the wall to the back of the altar. At that time the priest said Mass facing the altar, of course, i.e., facing this wall from the other side. The entrance to the church from the sacristy was into the sisters' wing. One morning I vested, picked up the chalice with veil and burse, bowed to the crucifix overlooking the vesting table, and opened the door to the sisters' wing. I looked down as I crossed the threshold to avoid stumbling, and then looked up. There, twenty feet or so distant, was the corpse of a sister, propped up in a

coffin. Her glittering blue eyes seemed to be looking right at me. I gulped, involuntarily bowed, and proceeded to the altar as usual. I later learned that when one of the sisters died she was dressed in her best habit, placed in her coffin, wheeled into the church, and the coffin was propped up so that the dead sister could “see” the altar and thus participate in one last Mass with the community. This is all very edifying, but I wish they would notify the chaplain ahead of time.

31) In the Gaza Strip Mother Teresa’s Missionary of Charity sisters have a house for local children who are born deformed or mentally handicapped and whose families do not want to take care of them. It is part of the local Catholic parish complex. I have visited this house twice. Each time there were about twenty children there, all small children under five. As soon as I appeared the children went wild—obviously visiting males were not part of their ordinary experience. They crawled or toddled to me from all parts of the large room and embraced my feet. They looked up at me, pleading to be tossed in the air. I would love to have been able to do so. But once I did this for one child, I would have had to do it for all. My heart said “Yes”, but my back said “No”.

32) Some years back I was walking in Rome toward my home in the Pontifical Biblical Institute when I came to the Piazza Dodici Apostoli, right next door to where I lived. There I met quite by accident Fr. Reginald Foster, the justly famed Carmelite master and teacher of the Latin language. He was fuming. “Reggie, what’s the matter?”, I asked. “It’s the people in the Vatican”, he fumed. (Reggie was usually fuming about something or other good naturedly. That was one of the reasons why he was so much loved.) “There is a new encyclical coming out and they want to call it “*Fides et Ratio*”. I think that is a stupid title”. And he proceeded to rattle off a longish title in magnificent, classical Latin composed from a number of the opening words of the document. His concern was quite in order in the sense that he was an official translator of Vatican documents into Latin, for centuries the official language of the Latin Rite Catholic Church. I had not heard of the document, but I immediately thought that the title “*Fides et Ratio*” brilliant in its simplicity—just the kind of title that John Paul II would want to

have for one of his important documents. "Reggie", I replied, "I think you are going to lose this one". And he did.

33) Many a day I spent in the Bodleian Library at Oxford poring over hundreds of books and articles while grinding out a D.Phil. degree. Arduous but invaluable. There were dozens of us in the main reading room, each poring over literature related to his or her dissertation. One day the clerk delivered to my desk a couple of large volumes with reproductions of frescoes in the Christian catacombs. As I sat there mulling over them a whisper came from the desk facing mine. It was a young man whose curiosity had obviously been picqued. "What are you looking at?", he asked. "Pictures of the sacrifice of Isaac in the catacombs", I whispered back. "How about you?" "I am researching Mexican revolutionary pamphlets from between 1820 and 1830", he said. I was ultimately successful in my pursuit of an Oxford degree. I hope that my interlocutor of that day was as well.

34) In 1989 I had an opportunity of spending a number of days visiting Greek islands. One of my principal goals was to inspect Delos, one of the richest Mediterranean sites from the standpoint of archeological ruins. One has to spend the night in neighboring Mykonos and then catch a morning ferry for Delos to get maximum time looking at the ruins. Mykonos, of course, is comfortably visited only by the deep of pocket. Fortunately a kindly proprietor looked with mercy on my Roman collar and let me stay the night at his lodging for a modest fee. A supermarket had enough low-priced items to assure fending off starvation. The next day, there was more anxiety as a wind from the north was raising white caps and the captain of the ferry was mulling over the advisability of not venturing out from Mykonos at all. But fortunately the wind died down and off we went for the short ride to the fabled, tiny isle. My principal goal on Delos was a synagogue at the other end of the islet from the ferry dock. I had a diagram of the confusing pathways to the synagogue and was following what seemed to be the right route when I suddenly and unexpectedly found myself in the middle of a pen of goats. It was a toss-up who was more confused, the goats or myself. But I eventually extricated myself and found the synagogue. The usual opinion

about it is that it is the oldest known synagogue in existence, dating from roughly the middle of the second century B.C. (Recent conjecture has cast doubts on this evaluation, judging it to be not a synagogue at all. But to my inexperienced eye it seemed to fit perfectly into a synagogue setting, with a rose-red marble chair of Moses in the center with its back to a wall.) It was right on the water's edge, and if indeed it was a synagogue, must have provided a spectacular setting for listening to passages from the Old Testament. Such ruins invite one, perhaps more even now in retrospect, to mull over the persons who encountered God's word in faith on the before side of the Incarnation.

35) **O**nce, when I was teaching in a seminary in western Romania, I happened to meet a representative of a Catholic German charitable organization which was giving financial help to the diocese. The woman was obviously a dedicated, intelligent person sent by the organization to check with the authorities of the diocese to see that the money was being used wisely. At dinner one evening I thought I would bring up the topic of home-schooling, which had been figuring in the news at the time as regards Germany (Germany after the unification). The position of the Catholic Church is well known in the matter—parents have the primary right and duty to educate their children. The German government was taking the opposite position—that it is the state that controls the education of its young people. (I was not aware at the time that this was not a position peculiar to Germany—other European countries also share it, and act on it.) I thought it would be instructive to hear the views of an intelligent, dedicated Catholic in the matter. To my intense surprise she immediately came to the defense of the German government, asserting that the parents had no say in the matter. Not wanting to engage in an argument in which I was obviously not too well informed I changed the subject as soon as I could. But the incident altered my whole perspective on Germany and its recent history, rightly or wrongly.

36) **D**uring the spring of my third year of novitiate in a small village in the mountains of central Austria one of the local maidens became infatuated with one of the tertian fathers,

through no fault of his own. He had been all through World War II as a parachutist in the German army, and emerged so weakened by wounds that it took thirty major operations to keep him alive in the post-war years. The master of tertians, a kindly old Dutchman, let it be known that the young woman was not to be ridiculed in any way, and that we tertian fathers (22 men from 17 Jesuit provinces on 3 continents) should do our best to keep her separated from the object of her attentions. After the ex-paratrooper celebrated Mass on an altar in the local parish church, for example, several of us would engage her in conversation at the front door while the ex-paratrooper escaped by a side entrance and walked the quarter of a mile back to our rooms. And so it went for weeks, until the young woman's interest eventually flagged. I considered it then, and still consider it, as an example of wise, Christian conduct in all particulars carried out flawlessly by many men who understood the basic dignity of the human person.

37) **O**n a number of occasions in the 90s I gave talks to communities of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity Manhattan, in Brooklyn, in the Bronx, and in various parts of New Jersey. I was driven to many of these places by volunteer co-workers, wonderful people. (In my decades of working with the sisters on five continents this is one of the many bonuses—getting to meet these splendid men and women.) In the area mentioned above I recall Mr. Ralph Dyer. He was in his seventies when I met him. A widower, retired from his work, a resident of South Orange, New Jersey. He would drive me hither and yon to various convents of the sisters, and then patiently wait while I gave a forty-five minute talk, before driving me back to my residence at a house for homeless men in the South Bronx. Occasionally he would meet me at J.F.K. airport on Long Island when I arrived on a flight from Europe. This often involved a long period of uncertainty and waiting. He was always patient with other drivers. In the area where he took me there were literally millions of drivers, not all of equal skill. One of his favorite tactics would be to wait while a driver seemed to be biding his time, saying out loud for the benefit of no one in particular (certainly not of the driver concerned, who was out of hearshot), "Fellow American, do whatever you want. BUT DO IT!" And then he would laugh. He belonged to a League of Courteous Drivers dedicated to the Sacred

Heart. A wonderful, large-hearted person. R.I.P.

38) **M**y first visit to Israel began on July 4, 1962, with the arrival of a Jesuit colleague and me at Haifa, the main seaport of the country. We quickly cleared passport control and customs and found a long-range taxi ("*Sheroot*") to drive us and six or eight fellow passengers, to Jerusalem. We arrived at the Pontifical Biblical Institute there and were shown to our rooms by the Jesuit superior. We would be in Israel for the better part of three months to study modern Hebrew with Jewish immigrants and to pronounce our final vows in the Society of Jesus. I was unpacking my things about 3:00 p.m. when I heard what sounded to me like machine-gun fire. I was judging from movies, for I had never heard a machine gun fired in real life. Not imagining any reason why a machine gun would be fired in Jerusalem at the time (though the city was divided between Israel and Jordanian forces), I dismissed it as my imagination. Only later did I learn that the Jordanian soldiers on the walls of the Old City (visible quite clearly from my window in the Biblical Institute on high ground in the New City near the King David Hotel) had decided to celebrate Algerian Independence Day by killing three Israel soldiers. The Jordanians had an informal understanding with the Israeli army which permitted the Israelis to patrol the no-man's land between the walls of the Old City and the area where the Israelis lived and traveled. But on this day the Jordanians decided to violate the agreement without notifying the Israelis, and picked off the last soldiers on an Israeli patrol.

39) **A**t age 20 I was introduced to the Greek historian Thucydides. The introduction became a revelation. For some reason, as I read the speeches which make Thucydides famous, I suddenly realized that these words were about real persons, not just names on a piece of paper. This rather obvious insight had a transforming effect on my views not only of the past but of the present and of the future. Why this insight occurred when it did I have no idea. But I do think it was associated with reading the Latin and Greek classics, for they are written in a way which invites insight into the human situation, as any real classic piece of literature will do.

40) **N**ot too many years ago I was offered the possibility of teaching for a month at the Catholic seminary on Guam. I leapt at the chance, for it offered the possibility of tasting life in the sixth continent of my travels and the chance to become familiar with the human person in a quite different setting from any I had heretofore experienced. To get to Guam from my home in Rome I was given a ticket Rome–Amsterdam, Amsterdam–Tokyo, Tokyo–Guam. All in one uninterrupted journey. By the time I reached Guam and the room assigned me in the seminary building (which had been built as a luxury hotel by a Japanese businessman and then purchased at a vastly reduced price by the local archbishop when the venture proved unable to attract guests) I was, of course, exhausted. The picture window in my room looked out into inky darkness. I knew nothing of what was beyond the glass. But I was so tired I didn't pull the curtains before I retired. I woke up to bright sunlight pouring in through said glass. And I saw that my concern for privacy was quite unnecessary. Some two-hundred feet below my window, and a hundred yards distant, was the blue Pacific stretching out to the horizon. If it had not been for the earth's curvature and the trifling matter of many thousands of miles I could have seen San Francisco. The Japanese business man had chosen a site with a spectacular view, but unfortunately his building was separated from the other hotels where Japanese gathered, farther north on the eastern coast of the Island.

41) **D**uring my long (36 years) term of teaching the introductory course on New Testament Greek at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome I dealt with thousands of students—for the most part, students gifted in a variety of ways. As is the happy lot of any university professor, this meant a constant learning experience. Once a Spanish priest tested out of my course (something I always advised, if possible) with a grade in the nineties—an impressive performance. I asked him how he managed to be so well prepared. He said not a word but pulled out a picture of himself dressed in the uniform of the Spanish army. He was seated on a slope, and behind him was the familiar silhouette of the Rock of Gibraltar. He was clearly absorbed in reading something. “What were you

reading?”, I queried. “Your photocopied class notes”, he answered. I was impressed and determined on the spot to write a textbook. I canceled a trip to India for the summer and devoted all my time during the summer holidays to writing the book. Which, I have learned from reading a review of it on the web, is the most detailed pedagogic grammar of New Testament Greek ever written. Whether this is true or not I am in no position to say, since I do not consider myself a grammarian of New Testament Greek. All I did was write a grammar which a student could use to prepare himself/herself for testing out of the preparatory Greek course at the Biblical Institute and so take the Institute’s advanced course his or her first year as a student. Three cheers for the Rock of Gibraltar.

42) **O**nce, when in Heraklion on the island of Crete, I decided to take a walk through a residential section of the city instead of a more scenic walk along the seafront. I had not gone far when I encountered on a deserted street an elderly gentleman. I had become a bit disoriented and in my primitive Greek tried to ask for directions. Once he learned I was from the U.S. he became quite friendly and we began chatting. Or rather, he began telling me about his experiences during World War II, then almost fifty years in the past, when he was a guerilla in the opposition against the German occupation. He was one of a number of Greeks who hid themselves in the mountains and launched nuisance attacks against the persons they considered occupiers. He spoke in Greek, but I could get the general drift of what he said. He was eager to tell a non-Greek about all he had experienced as a young man in defense of his country. A memorable encounter.

43) **O**ne of my two stays in India ended with a flight from Mumbai (Bombay) to Europe. Many flights leave the airport at about 3 a.m. in order to arrive at the beginning of a new day. And so it was that I arrived for my international flight at about 1 a.m. at the terminal. I went to check-in area and was appalled. Mass confusion. I was unable even to make out the check-in lines so great was the crowd milling around. Just as I was on the point of diving into the mob scene a young man in his twenties, neatly dressed and with the air of courtesy which often seems so natural to the citizens of his

country, asked me simply, "Sir, may I help you?" He was like an angel from heaven. He exuded trustworthiness and knowledge of the local scene so I immediately surrendered my ticket and check-through bag to his care and watched him plunge into the sea of humanity before my eyes, somewhat below the vantage point of the entrance. I saw him navigate toward an official behind a counter and get instant service. Within ten minutes he was back at my side with my boarding pass and bag receipt. "Now, sir, I will take you to the proper gate." Which he did. The gate number corresponded to the information on the boarding-pass. I double-checked the bag receipt. All was in order. He stood respectfully before me, waiting for his tip. I pulled out a fifty rupee note from my pocket and gave it to him. He looked at it with disbelief clearly written on his face. I expected him to say that the sum was too little. Instead he said, "Sir, this is too much". I was, of course taken aback. And embarrassed. When traveling I do my best to avoid playing the part of the rich American. It is not my fault that my country is rich, and in this case it was not his fault that his country is not. So I said simply, "This is the smallest bill that I have. (Which was true.) I am sorry, but you will have to accept it. I assure you that what you just did for me was well worth fifty rupees". Fifty rupees at the time was roughly worth one American dollar. It was probably equal to an entire day's wages for him. He was judging by this, and I was judging by the value of what he had done for me, which was worth ten times as much in U.S. terms. When I think of honest persons, I often think of him.

44) **T**he memory of what happened the day in September of 1932 when my father took me to my first day of kindergarten is fresh in my mind. He parked the car on the street, took me by the hand (I was four and a half years old) and led me to the front door of Holy Redeemer Grade School in Webster Groves, Missouri. I distinctly remember looking up at the door and then saying to my father, "I am not going in". My father was a man of the mildest of dispositions. He asked me to go in. He pleaded with me to go in. He urged me to go in. I would not budge. Finally, in disgust, he drove me back home. My mother (I can still hear her voice) said anxiously, "What happened?" My father said in his most resigned tones, "He wouldn't go in". After my father left for work my mother and I had a heart-to-heart talk. The next day my father took me again to the door, and I walked meekly in. So began my

academic career.

45) **A**t one point in my two-week “caravan stop” in Egypt our group had to wait on the west bank of the Nile River for a motor boat to take us across to visit the site of El Amarna. (It was the law that foreigners were not allowed to be entrusted to sailing vessels, which were in greater abundance than motorized craft.) The whole area, as it turned out, was rather primitive even by the then Egyptian tourist standards. We were on a trailer being pulled by a tractor. Along with us was a gentleman with a huge bandolier of cartridges slung diagonally down his chest. He had rifle in hand. Dodge City in the 1880s. We were waiting so long that a small group of natives gathered around us, very well behaved, and eerily silent. Foreigners were obviously a novelty. I pulled out my Arabic phrase book and began practicing words out loud, watching the reaction of the elderly gentleman next to me. When I said the Arabic word for “moon”, for example, he looked up at the sliver of moon, silver in the early morning sky. I could communicate! (Something which always thrills me when trying to speak in a tongue not my own.) Next to him was a boy about ten years old. He looked hungry. In my coat pocket I had half a piece of sliced bread, left over from our frugal breakfast. (Our leader had warned us on the train the night before to help ourselves to bread when we were eating the decent railway supper because in the station we were going to we would get only tea for breakfast. Which turned out to be true.) I had eaten enough and had this scrap left over. I gave it to the boy, expecting him to consume it on the spot. Instead he stared at it appreciatively for a few seconds and then took a fold of his tunic, placed it carefully on the dirty cloth, and wrapped it up. He then turned and walked away. He was clearly going home to give it to his mother for the family. I was stunned. I had never experienced such poverty. Or such loyalty to kith and kin.

46) **I**n the spring of 1990 I was traveling from Sofia in Bulgaria to Saloniki in Greece. At first the compartment was empty. But at an early stop out of Sofia a young woman entered the compartment. It was chilly April day but she was clad only in a rather cheap-looking dress that must have given her little warmth. We searched

around for a language to communicate in, and finally settled on French as the only tongue possible. We were both speakers of that language of minimal ability, but we were able to understand each other! She didn't seem a bit put off by my Roman collar. After a while she pulled out a wad of American dollars and asked me if I thought \$135 was sufficient to pass several days in Saloniki. She had obviously been saving the dollars for years. (Under Communist rule the dollar was king in Eastern Europe, or so it seemed from my occasional contacts with people from there.) Sofia had recently opened up travel to the West, and she wanted to see how people there really lived. We parted at the train station in Saloniki. I wished her well.

47) **W**hen traveling in Syria in the summer of 1975 our group traveled mainly by bus. We went to some out-of-the-way places and, to get to them went through a lot of other out-of-the way places. Once we were deposited on the outskirts of Damascus and urged to walk around to get the feel of the place. My companion and I were walking up a hill (one of the hills which rim parts of the city) and came to a tank imbedded in the ground up to the turret. My friend whipped out his camera to take a picture. I succeeded in convincing him that a picture of such a scene might result in certain inconveniences should it be discovered on his film. But more memorable still was a scene which appeared in a moment, like a flash, as we were passing on our bus a country lane which branched off at a right angle from our highway. I looked down the country lane and there, some hundred yards away, was a woman, back turned to us, with a huge jar (presumably of water) on her head, which she balanced with a raised hand. I thought of all the other women who daily walked who knows how many miles to fetch water for their families. And I thought of all the women at wells in the Old Testament and in the New.

48) **T**he last time I worked during Holy Week in Sicily I was the guest of one of my former students from the Pontifical Biblical Institute. After all the Holy Week and Easter ministry at a shrine at Syracuse he drove me up to Venetico Marina, a fishing village in the Archdiocese of Messina to visit an old friend, the sister of a deceased diocesan priest of the local parish. On our way back to

Syracuse we were driving on the coastal highway heading south. Taormina was nearby, Mount Etna was in the distance, spewing volcanic smoke as usual. The spring sun was bright. Sensationally beautiful even for Italy. My friend, a young priest, asked if I would mind his putting one of his favorite DVDs on his player next to his steering wheel. “No problem”, I replied, of course. Immediately, to my surprise, I heard Glen Miller playing jazz from World War II. “I adore Glen Miller”, my young friend said. I do too, and I told him so. (Infinitely superior to contemporary Rock.) “Do you understand the lyrics?”, I asked. “Not really,” he replied. So I immediately began explaining “Chattanooga Choo-Choo” to him in Italian. Not too difficult. Well, much less difficult than explaining the comic strip “Peanuts” to one of my German friends. The latter task I regard as the ultimate hermeneutical challenge.

49) In the spring of 1990 I gave some conferences in the Latin Rite seminary at Iasi in northeast Romania. Before I left the area one of the Scripture professors (a former student of mine in Rome) took me on afternoon trip about forty miles to the west where there were a number of Latin Rite churches. We stopped at one church for a visit. My host told me to notice the bell tower. It was extraordinarily high. I observed that it reminded me of the “*campanilismo*” rivalry in northern Italy, where parishes would vie with each other in trying to erect the highest bell tower in the area. He said that was not the case here in Romania. The parishes were built by the parishioners themselves under Communist rule, and they expressed their disdain for this rule by making the bell towers as high as possible: they were making a statement with architecture. While we were talking one of the local priests came by with a guitar strapped over his shoulder. He had just given a guitar lesson to some of his young parishioners. We chatted a bit (in Italian—my Romanian was and is non-existent). Then he excused himself, saying he had to teach catechism to some of the local children. I asked him what text he followed. He replied the Roman Catechism. (That is, a text from centuries before. I am sure he would use the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* today.) I asked him how many children were in the class. “About 950”, he replied. I was taken aback. “950! How do you keep order?” “No problem”, he answered. “They are always very well behaved and paying attention to everything I say”! Hear, O catechists of the West, and despair.

50) **O**n our 25-man caravan visit to Egypt in the summer of 1975 the southernmost site which we visited was Abu Simbel on the border with the Sudan. The last eighty miles we traveled by air, since the road for that distance was unpaved. Abu Simbel is the site of two ancient temples dating from the 13th century B.C. They were constructed under the pharaoh Ramesses. Originally they were well below their present level, perched as they now are high over the waters of Lake Nasser. As the Aswan Dam was being constructed it was clear that the temples would be submerged at their original site as the waters behind the dam deepened. So UNESCO raised them at considerable expense and with considerable skill up to their present height. After our leader had given us a thorough inspection of the temples he suggested that we spend a half-hour in silence, enjoying the scenery. It was a wise move. We all fell into a deep silence. (There were no other visitors there at the time, as I recall.) I sat down looking over the immense wilderness before my eyes. As I looked east I could see miles into the distance. I doubt if there was a bit of flora in the whole region. Majestic buttes rose hundreds of feet from distant valleys. Never before or since have I experienced such absolute silence. It was intoxicating. After this experience I began to understand why the desert fathers were willing to live in solitude in the Egyptian desert, devoting their time to prayer. The silence has to be experienced to be appreciated.

51) **O**nce, when in England, I signed up for a week-end of supply at a parish on the Thames southeast of London. I boarded a train at Waterloo Station and an hour later got off at the village indicated and trudged up to the high street. I passed the Church of England vicarage, with its front yard unkempt and obviously untended—no vicar dwelt therein—but soon found the Catholic presbytery. The parish priest came to the door. We introduced ourselves to each other. He said that some of the men of the parish were in a front room counting the results of the weekly football (i.e., soccer) poll, and it would be a good occasion to meet them. So I went in and walked from man to man, saying a few words to each. I came to one rather short man who introduced himself as “Paddy McCarthy”. “Oh, Paddy, you must be Irish” (profound observation). “Not exactly, Faather”. “Well then, Paddy, you must

be a Brit". "Not exactly, Faather. I was born on the Auld Sod, but I came here to England early on. After a number of years I sez to meself, 'Paddy, these Brits have been good to you. So the least you can do is become an English citizen'. Well, to become an English citizen you've gotta go to a jidge. So I goes to a jidge and I knocks on the door. And a voice says 'Come in' so I goes in. And there was this jidge. And the jidge looks at me and sez 'What do you want?' I sez 'I want to become an English citizen, Your Lordship'. "What is your name?' he sez. 'Paddy McCarthy', I sez. He sez 'My name is O'Leary. Get out of here and never daarken this door again'."

52) **O**n another occasion in London I was giving a retreat in a convent in Finchly and living in the chaplain's quarters and enjoying the use of his small library. I read Chesterton's autobiography in my spare time and inasmuch as I had a few days free before my next retreat decided I would devote one of them to tracking down spots where Chesterton lived. In the morning of the free day I accordingly went to Kensington and was immediately encouraged by the signs all over saying that a firm with the name "Chesterton" in it was ready to handle my real estate needs. In his book Chesterton remarks that he was baptized in a Church of England church right across from a water tower looming up like a snake (the water tower has since been destroyed). I kept looking as I walked around for a looming, snake-like water tower and sure enough, I found one. And sure enough, it was right across the street from a Church of England church. I entered the church and asked the vicar if Chesterton had been baptized there. "Yes, indeed", he replied, and pointed to the font where the baptism had taken place. We chatted a bit and then he admitted that he knew little else about Chesterton in Kensington, but that if I would go to a nearby Carmelite monastery I would probably meet someone who knew everything on the subject. I found the monastery and found a Carmelite priest who indeed knew much about Chesterton in Kensington. At the end of our conversation he suggested that I go to a nearby bus line and take a bus for Beaconsfield, the suburb where Chesterton and his wife lived for many years. This I did. I went to the house where the Chestertons lived and to the Church where the Chestertons worshipped. (There is a stained-glass window there which they donated to the parish.) I met someone there who, when informed about my interest in Chesterton, suggested that I go visit his secretary, Dorothy Collins, who lived

in a modest house in a row of other modest houses not far away. I found the house and, unannounced, rang the bell. Dorothy herself came to the door and was graciousness itself once she saw my Roman collar and learned that I was a Chesterton fan. We were chatting in her living room and she asked where I was from. "St. Louis, Missouri", I replied. "Oh, do you know Fr. Walter Ong?" she queried. "Indeed I do", I replied, "Walter is a friend of mine". "Oh, Father, please stay for tea". With that she excused herself and disappeared, reappearing a short time later with the original text (in pencil) of "The Ballad of the White Horse" and a small shoe-box in her hands with a diorama created by Chesterton as a boy. Needless to say I was in Chestertonian heaven. After much additional chatting and tea I took my leave. On the way back to the bus stop I prayed at the Chestertons' grave at the local cemetery. A day to remember.

53) **W**orking in parishes in Italy during Holy Week can be instructive in a variety of ways. Once I was working in a country parish in central Italy. On Holy Saturday the young assistant invited me to visit the farm house of a family he knew well. We arrived in mid-morning. The farm house was in the middle of extensive fields, solitary but dignified. We knocked on the door but there was no answer. However, my clerical companion said he was close enough to the family to open the unlocked door and enter with no further ado. There, immediately in front of us in the small vestibule, was a modest shrine, with three pictures before each of which was a lighted votive candle. On the left was a picture of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, with its candle. On the right was a picture of the Sacred Heart, with its candle. And in the center was a picture of the current secretary of the Communist Party, with its candle. Such a mixture would have been extremely improbable if not impossible in the north or south of the country. But here in the center, in the area of the former Papal States (Italy's Red Belt), anti-clericalism was not uncommon. But often, as this farmhouse indicated, united with a fervent Catholic piety.

54) **I**n the 1960s I preached a retreat in Florence in English to a community of English-speaking sisters. The sisters at the time had a girls' school close to the center of the city. If I had any free time

in the afternoon I would saunter down to visit some historic or artistic site, of which central Florence has an abundance. I was still in the midst of my program to visit all the sites of the ecumenical councils, and the site of the Council of Florence (1439) was right in the heart of the city. It was adjacent to the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella, and was being used at the time as an officers' training school for the national military police force called the "*Carabinieri*". (The central train station is also adjacent to Santa Maria Novella, and in fact, known simply as "Santa Maria Novella".) I walked to the entrance of the officers' training school toward 6:00 p.m. A single guard was on duty. I struck up a conversation and worked my way to the point where I asked permission to visit the interior of the building. He politely refused and kept to this reply despite my repeated entreaties. I saw I was getting nowhere so I decided to take a whole new approach. I paused for a moment and then changed my tone completely. "I am a serious student of the Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church, and this building was the site of one of the Councils. This is an historic monument. You have no right to refuse my request." The young guard became flustered and I saw he was weakening. I kept boring in. My Roman collar did not hurt. Finally he blurted out, "Wait here and I'll ask my superior". Three minutes later he returned smiling and announced that the superior had granted me fifteen minutes for a quick tour with the guard as my guide. I thanked him and immediately charged past him. "Not so quick", he pleaded. "During this assignment I am off duty." With that he paused to light a cigarette. Then, together, we ambled off. By this time it was getting close to the hour of *cena* (supper), and the cadets were gathering in small groups to await the summons of the bell. They looked at us curiously as we passed by. We went through a number of very large rooms, sparsely furnished. It was in these rooms that the sessions of the Council must have been held. At the end of the fifteen minutes I thanked him and walked back to the sisters' convent. And then mentally scratched off the Council of Florence 1439 from my "to do" list.

55) In the summer of 1975, after returning from the Pontifical Biblical Institute caravan to Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, I took a train from Rome to Munich for two months of pastoral work in a German-speaking milieu. Once I arrived at the Jesuit provincial's office I waited to be informed of the place which I had

been told needed a temporary chaplain. The assistant provincial came to meet me and apologized. It seemed that the parish in Munich had acquired such a chaplain and my services were no longer required. But, he informed me, the office had received another request in the meantime, from a convent deep in the Bavarian countryside, and that if I were game he would drive me there forthwith. This unexpected switch turned out to be one of the great gifts of Divine Providence in my life. I said I was game and off we went in the office's orange Volkswagen. It took us an hour or more to emerge from the traffic of Munich and through the beautiful countryside of Bavaria south and a bit west to Beuerberg. In history the monastery about which Beuerberg was eventually built dates from about 1130, but the settlement itself was probably older, since it was on a relatively large, flat area (in size, no Kansas wheat field though) among the hills and ideal for growing grain. The monastery had had a long and checkered history, and from the middle part of the 1800s had been in the hands of a group of cloistered sisters who for decades ran a girls' school and then, for many years, a home for refugees of German descent in transit from the east. (It has served recently as a summer vacation spot for German families of limited means to enable them to enjoy the fresh air and scenery of a genuinely rural Bavarian town.) When I was first there in the summer of 1975 the town was not yet an exurb of Munich. Cows of gigantic proportions ambled under my window in the chaplain's quarters to the nearby meadow early in the morning and back in the evening to their milking shed. The smell of manure pervaded the streets—the large milking shed was a stone's throw from the convent's simple entrance. The snow-capped Alps lay clear on the southern horizon, with Austria just beyond. Any number of local homes boasted arrangements of flowers in window-boxes, one more beautiful than the other. Forests were all around. Just south of the convent grounds a steep drop led to the Loisach River, flowing clear and rapid over a small dam. Small deer darted in the path of unsuspecting motorists. The sisters provided well-prepared German cuisine, including a voluntary snack in mid-afternoon featuring Bavarian *Kuchen*—cake which was lethal to waistlines. The charms of Beuerberg, including above all the baroque monastery Church of Saints Peter and Paul which had been pressed into service as the parish for the farmers all around, proved endlessly fascinating to me. I have since returned to Beuerberg more than once in the flesh, and many more times in

memory. For me it was and remains an enchanted spot.

56) In the summer of 2002 I attended a meeting in Lebanon. The meeting site was a large retreat house on a high hill some distance north of Beirut and overlooking the Mediterranean. I deliberately chose to arrive several days before the meeting began and to depart some days after the meeting was over in order to spend time with some of the Pontifical Biblical Institute's Maronite alumni and to get to know the Jesuits of the area. I knew in advance that the Jesuits of the large Jesuit community staffing the University of Saint Joseph would charge me nothing for my stay there, so I thought I would arrive bearing a gift. I accordingly ordered a bottle of cognac from the duty-free list provided. No prices were given, but I presumed that without duty I would be charged ten or twelve dollars. Imagine my surprise, then, when, as we neared the Beirut airport, I was given a bottle of French cognac and was asked to hand over thirty dollars. Fortunately my supply of dollars was equal to this challenge, and I reluctantly bade farewell to what for me was a substantial bit of money. Once through customs I was met by a contingent of Jesuits from the community where I was to stay. When we arrived I gave the superior the cognac. I was utterly ignorant of the qualities of various types of French cognac (though I once spent a summer of pastoral ministry at La Rochelle, not far from French cognac country), but when I had handed over the bottle to the French superior when I arrived and saw his face I knew I had done the right thing. I asked innocently in French if the cognac was of good quality. "Bien sur", he replied, and his face showed he was not just being polite. The evening before my departure the superior hosted me and several of the Jesuit community on a balcony eight or nine stories high on the 13-story Jesuit house in the center of the city. After dinner, with the lights of Beirut shining all round, he broke out the cognac. And again, after tasting it and seeing the satisfaction on the faces of the men around me, I knew I had done the right thing.

57) **A**mong my many (50) experiences of Holy Week ministry in Italy one stands out (among other reasons, of course) because of a dog. I was one of a team of three priests working in three churches about a mile west of Parma in the northwestern part of the

peninsula. (The bishop was trying to convince the parishioners that the three churches constituted one parish, but the parishioners were adamantly concerned to maintain that the three churches constituted three separate parishes, even though they were within easy walking distance of each other.) For many meals we priests relied on the good services of one or other of the families in the parish, since we had no housekeeper and were too busy with pastoral work to prepare a meal ourselves. On Holy Thursday I was assigned for an evening liturgy at one of the churches. I was brought to a family who lived in the ground floor of a two-story building. Above the family lived a woman. The pet of the family whose guest I was was a dog named "Ulysses" ("Ulisse" in Italian). Ulisse was a most peculiar animal. The lady in the apartment on the second floor would occasionally throw down a dog biscuit to Ulisse in his tiny plot of grass in the front of the house, but Ulisse would not touch it until it had been picked up by his master and given to him personally. He showed no signs of friendship toward me as most house pets do when they see that the guest is well received by people they trust. When the time came for the master to drive me to the church at about 7:30 p.m. Ulisse was beside himself with jealousy. He barked furiously at me as I sat alongside his master. It was a cold, rainy night but Ulisse was oblivious of the weather. He continued to bark furiously as we pulled away. He gave the impression of wanting to tear me limb from limb. As we drove the short distance to the church I remarked that now that I was gone Ulisse could go inside his dog house to take shelter from the elements. "Not at all", answered his master. "He will remain outside in the yard until he makes sure that I am back and safely in my house. Then and only then will he go into the garage where we have fitted out a bed for him".

58) In the spring of 1990 I was part of a group of 35 men (no women allowed!) who made a three-day visit to eleven of the twenty-one Orthodox monasteries on Mount Athos, the peninsula in the north of Greece which has been a home to monks for over a thousand years. The visit had a memorable start when we were shown the obvious traces of the canal carved out by the Persian emperor Xerxes at the beginning of the peninsula so that his ships would not be subject to the foul weather which often characterized the other end of the peninsula. Our leader was a Jesuit priest who had visited the monasteries for thirty-five years.

Some of the monasteries were friendly, some decidedly hostile (it was said). We visited the friendly monasteries. (Most of our group were Catholics.) And indeed the monasteries said to be friendly proved to be most hospitable, providing refreshments and a guide for the premises. We were allowed to assist at the early morning liturgies in the monasteries where we spent the night. The liturgies began at 4:00 or 4:30 a.m., as I recall. The biggest challenge was to avoid standing with one's back to an icon in a circular church. One had to keep a certain distance (five or six feet) to avoid having a monk come up and give one a friendly tap on the shoulder. There are innumerable memories, some of which can provide material for future entries on this site. One that stands out is a monastery which had a citizen of the United States. He had never married, working in Kansas City as a waiter. At age 60 he decided that the time had come for him to get serious about saving his soul, so he became a monk at one of the monasteries on Mount Athos. Our Jesuit guide had become a good acquaintance of his over the years, and on the occasion of a visit would produce a gift of peanut butter. On the occasion of our visit our Jesuit guide produced three jars of Jiffy peanut butter. The monk was pleased. The maxim "Whatever a monk acquires his monastery acquires" was not operative in this case, because none of the other monks liked peanut butter.

59) **O**ne of the major lessons which I learned from a two-week visit to Egypt from extreme north to extreme south was the dependence of much of the country on the Nile River for water. At our hotel at Luxor (site of ancient Thebes), deep in the south of the country on the Nile, I asked the clerk at the desk how much rain the place had every year. He thought and then said with no trace of humor, "Twelve years ago we had a few drops".

60) **W**ell into the new millenium I was standing in a check-out line at a store in suburban St. Louis. Not being particularly concerned to examine the various things on sale crowding in on the check-out aisle I decided to add in my head the price of the two items I had purchased. The prices were modest—something like \$2.18 and \$4.56. I figured they came to \$6.74, for which I intended to pay in cash. When my turn came to be waited on I told

the young sales girl that I thought the sum was \$6.74 but that she had better process it on her cash register to make sure. She looked at me with undisguised awe: “How did you do that?”, she said with huge eyes. I in turn was taken aback. This was a revelation to me of the nature of primary school education in our country.

61) In the fall of 1975 I attended an anti-abortion rally in Hyde Park, London. It was the first time I participated in the Pro-Life Movement. The rally, so it was said at the time, was the largest meeting in London since World War II. It culminated in a march by many of us participants to 10 Downing Street where each of us left a printed memento of our sentiments in a box in front of the Prime Minister’s residence, where a London bobby gazed impassively straight ahead. Perhaps the thing what impressed me the most about the speakers was the fact that one of them identified herself as an atheist. This was a valuable hint to me about the way the Catholic Church campaigned for Life in the United States—on the basis of reason (i.e., natural law), not on the basis of religious belief (though it was that as well).

62) On my third and last trip to Israel, in 1992, I was driven with some friends down to the airport at Lod from Galilee. At around 7:00 a.m. we passed within a few miles of Mount Tabor, the traditional and most probable site of the Transfiguration reported in all three Synoptic Gospels. I gazed at it in disbelief. The peak of the high hill was completely surrounded in a white cloud, just the kind which the Gospels seem to depict as part of the event.

63) During one of my Holy Week ministries I was assigned to a small country parish in the diocese of Perugia. I had to prepare a homily for Easter Sunday so I thought I would walk out in the neighboring countryside (reachable in 90 seconds from the parish rectory). The 90 seconds were scarcely up when I came across a shepherd and his flock of sheep (plus sheep dogs). I was intrigued. Never before had I met a real live shepherd in action. I struck up a conversation—not hard to do for he was a bit lonely. I kept staring at his sheep. They seemed indistinguishable. I finally said to him, “In the Gospel Jesus says that He knows His sheep and they know

him. But I can't tell one sheep from another. Was that an exaggeration by the Lord?" "I don't think so", he replied matter-of-factly. "I can tell all my sheep apart. In fact, I have names for most of them". (There must have been sixty or seventy sheep in his flock, not counting new-born lambs.) I was taken aback, but his face told me that he was telling the truth. We kept chatting until he excused himself, saying, "Well, I see they've eaten the grass here, so we had better move on down the road". He gave a slight gesture with one of his hands, and immediately the sheep dogs (three, as I remember) were up and barking and the sheep began docily to move in unison down the road.

64) **By** "coincidence" (every discerning Christian knows that Coincidence is Providence acting Anonymously) I was in the vicinity of Saint Peter's Square when the election of John Paul II was announced. I was thus able to receive his first public blessing as the bishop of Rome. I surmised that this would be no normal pope so I obtained permission to distribute communion during the installation ceremony outside in the front of Saint Peter's Basilica. We were about 200 priests who acted in this capacity during the ceremony, as I recall. I was with a fellow Jesuit, Fr. John Welch, and a fellow St. Louisan, Fr. Clarence Deddens. (Fr. Deddens died tragically a short time later by drowning in a river in outstate Missouri.) We three were about fifty feet from the pope when he received the sign of his authority, the pallium. Because of my role in John Paul's installation as pontiff I thought it proper that I take part in his burial, so I wrote his secretary asking permission to distribute communion there. I of course wanted to see the pope's body before the funeral, but failed in two initial attempts. (The first, when I tried to view the body when it lay in state in the Apostolic Palace—my ID from the Pontifical Biblical Institute was waved contemptuously aside by a Vatican official; the second, when I tried to use my age to get in a special line for invalids and elderly—an official said curtly that the line was only for invalids. A third attempt proved abortive: I asked a passing Cardinal whom I know—we were in the vast crowd in St. Peter's Square—if he could get me in, but he shrugged his shoulders helplessly. The reason for my attempt at a short cut was that the queue to get in the basilica to view the body was so long that the waiting time was estimated to be eight hours. As a result of these rebuffs I said a brief prayer to the dead pontiff to get me in with

no waiting. On hearing that my permission to distribute communion had been granted and that I should present myself at the proper office in the Apostolic Palace to pick it up I went into action immediately. It was late afternoon on the Tuesday before the funeral, and St. Peter's Square and the surrounding streets were overflowing with the faithful. Waiting time to view the body was now estimated at thirteen hours. After successfully negotiating five security check-points I found myself in an all-but-deserted Apostolic Palace. It took me five minutes to get my yellow pass to the Palace from the layman in charge of issuing them. (On hearing that I had been 47 years in Rome he wouldn't give it to me until we had discussed my guess as to the identity of the next pope.) I finally got free and worked my way up to the office of papal ceremonies and retrieved my permission. I was about to exit the building when the thought occurred to me that if I left the way I came in I would be back to square one as far as viewing the body. So I decided to attempt an entrance to the adjacent basilica by stealth. I emerged slowly from the office and looked around. No Swiss guard in sight. I discovered a staircase leading down (I had come up on an elevator) and warily descended. I looked around again. Again, no Swiss guard in sight. I found another staircase leading down. Again I descended warily. (I have no knowledge of the geography of the Apostolic Palace.) I came to a door. It looked ancient because it probably was. I cautiously opened it. It opened near the top end of the famous stairway leading up from the Bronze Doors. I had almost succeeded. I say almost because if a Swiss guard saw me emerge he might have arrested me. But as coincidence would have it a bishop with about ten of his flock was passing just as I emerged through the door. I immediately became a member of his flock without the bishop or any Swiss guard noticing me. A few seconds later we came to a Swiss guard. He saluted me. (Roman collars merit a brisk salute inside Vatican City.) I was in! The bishop and his flock joined the line to view the body at the point where it entered the basilica. But that meant a half-hour wait. I wanted instant results. I found the exit line of persons who had viewed the body, and practicing broken-field running up the down staircase, so to speak (though we were inside the gigantic basilica and everything was level). I arrived twenty feet from the body. Waiting time: 0 seconds. (I considered myself particularly blessed until I learned that a fellow Jesuit in Rome had managed to achieve the same result. He, like me, had prayed to John Paul II for

a way to view his body with no waiting time.) I prayed for about 30 seconds and then, not wishing to take up time in place of anyone, exited with the faithful who had seen the body.) The moral of this little tale, I suppose, is that no prayer goes unanswered. There were about 360 of us priests distributing communion at the funeral.

65) **O**ne of my 50 Holy Week ministry assignments took me to a country parish in the middle of the fields in the center of the country. A parishioner met me at the train station at Cortona and drove me some distance to the parish. It was Wednesday afternoon of Holy Week. I met the parish priest, a wonderful old man who had given decades of service to the Church. After the meeting he said: "Father, you realize that Good Friday is a day of fast and abstinence. Holy Mother the Church says we may have only one full meal. What should I tell Palma (the housekeeper) to prepare for us?" I replied: "I am sure whatever you want will be fine with me." Thursday morning came. I met the pastor before breakfast. He said: "Father, you realize that Good Friday is a day of fast and abstinence. Holy Mother the Church says we may have only one full meal. What should I tell Palma to prepare for us?" I replied: "I am sure whatever you want will be fine with me." Friday came. We met. He said: "Father, you realize that Good Friday is a day of fast and abstinence. Holy Mother the Church says we may have only one full meal. What should I tell Palma to prepare for us?" I replied: "I am sure whatever you want will be fine with me. But since you keep asking, why don't we have Garganzola cheese?" "Cheese? Cheese? No, father, not cheese. What you really want is good fresh EEL. I'll go to the market right now and get us one for Palma." And off he went in his battered automobile. He emerged clutching a brown paper bag. He reached in and pulled out a live, squirming eel. We had fresh eel for our main meal on Good Friday.

66) **T**he summer of 1975 I spent two months in Beuerberg in Bavaria. At one point my mother wrote me: "Did you know that your great-grandmother was born in Schneilach in Bavaria and baptized on August 10, 1831?" I immediately went to the tiny post office and asked the postmaster where Schneilach was. After

perusing his list of German post offices he told me that there was no such village as Schneilach but there was one called Schneittach. I immediately fired off a letter to the parish priest of Schneittach (a suburb of Nuremberg, about 110 miles north of Beuerberg). I got a reply the next day! "Everything checks out. And you have relatives here who would love to meet you. That week-end after Sunday-morning Mass, I was on my way to Schneittach, arriving in mid-afternoon. My relatives were waiting for me. They had news of my great-grandmother. She had left Schneittach in 1848 at the age of 20 with a sister age 19 and together they went from Bremen to New Orleans and up the Mississippi to St. Louis. The younger woman died of cholera within a year (probably in the cholera epidemic of 1849), but my great-grandmother survived, married, had children (including my grandmother), and kept writing back to Beuerberg until 1909, when she died. From that date until my letter of enquiry they had heard nothing about the relatives they knew they had in St. Louis. And then I appeared, as one elderly man said, "*Aus heiteren Himmel*" ("out of a clear blue sky"). The relative turned out to be a priest, and he could communicate in German! But some of the relatives, including one who had just graduated from Purdue University, were eager to practice their English (as usually happens in Germany).

67) **W**hen visiting Venice once I decided to attempt a visit to the Benedictine monastery where Pius VII was elected pope in 1800. He was a Benedictine, but the fact that the cardinals of the conclave were meeting in the Benedictine monastery of San Giorgio seems to be unrelated. In any event, I went to the church on a *vaporetto* and went inside in the hope that I could find someone who would take me to the chapter room where the actual conclave was in session when Pius VII was elected. No luck. A solitary workman manipulating a floor polisher informed me good naturedly that he didn't have the authority to admit me to the chapter room, which was still in use. I waited a few minutes in the hope that a monk would appear, since I was not willing to be a bother by calling someone. No one came, so I exited the church and took my place at the nearby *vaporetto* stop, explicitly thinking that if Providence wanted me in to the chapter room a monk would appear at the door. I waited hopefully. Sure enough, after about five minutes, a monk did appear. I walked over and began talking in Italian to express my wish. After an exchange I suddenly

realized that the monk was not an Italian. I ventured a question in English. He replied in English—American English! It turned out that he was the only American in the monastery. Some years previously the monastery had attempted a foundation in upstate New York but without success. The few monks from the United States who had joined were given the option either of joining another Benedictine monastery in the U.S. or of joining the mother monastery in Venice, San Giorgio. My interlocutor was the only U.S. monk to opt for going to San Giorgio. When I explained my wish he immediately took me to the chapter room where the conclave which had elected Pius VII had been in session. The actual folding seat used by the future pope was still there, in usable condition, seemingly untouched by the years. A small metal tag identified the seat with a brief historical note. The U.S. monk gave me approval to sit in it. This I did, basking not only in his approval but the approval of Providence.

68) In the summer of 1941 my parents thought that a few days on a farm would prove instructive for their 13-year old son. We had distant relatives on a farm near New Athens, Illinois, across the Mississippi River and south from St. Louis. If the road leading up to their farmhouse was dry, access from our home in suburban St. Louis was relatively easy. (Though not as easy as today, in the interstate era.) The relatives seemed glad to welcome me. There were the parents and two children, Charlie and Mary, both adults and each unmarried. It was a family farm, and the four of them lived largely on the products of their land—and of their labor. They worked incredibly hard. The men were in charge of the fields. Unbelievably exhausting work, with relatively little in the way of modern machines to help them. The women worked in the kitchen and were responsible for the garden, the chickens and the two cows. There were five full meals served a day—8 a.m. 10 a.m., 1 p.m., 4 p.m., and 8 p.m. The men ate heartily at all five. (I was so exhausted that I was in bed by 8 p.m., falling asleep the instant my head hit the feather pillow.) There was no electricity—light was furnished by kerosene lamps. The morning of the second day Mary asked me if I would like to learn how to milk a cow. I, of course, said that I would. She gave me a few instructions. That evening, at around 5 p.m., the two cows ambled into the barn and Mary placed a stool to the right of the nearest cow and a pail under the cow's udder. And she then told me to sit on the stool

and begin milking as she had instructed. I complied, naturally. I grabbed two of the teats and began pulling. A few drops found their way into the bucket. After about ten seconds the cow slowly turned her head around and gazed at me full in the face. I was frightfully embarrassed, of course, and offered my place to Mary, who was laughing so hard that it was all she could do to avoid falling on the barn floor. But she recovered her poise eventually, took my place on the stool, and immediately a steady stream of fresh milk emerged from the cow's udder. Said cow turned her head contentedly and resumed munching on the hay in front of her.

69) **B**ack in the 80s I received an invitation from Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity to visit their house in Jenkins, Kentucky. Jenkins is not the most accessible town in the United States. To get there from Washington, D.C., I had to take a Greyhound to Richmond, Virginia, and from Richmond another Greyhound to Bristol, Virginia, a town split into two on the Tennessee border between Virginia and Tennessee. After a seemingly endless trip our Greyhound arrived around 4 a.m. in Bristol. Dawn had not yet broken, and no dining parlor was as yet in operation, so I amused myself by walking down the deserted main street, shuffling at will between the two states. At 5 a.m. a small restaurant opened on the Tennessee side, and I had a hearty southern breakfast of biscuits and gravy. At around 8 a.m. my ride appeared—two of the sisters' lay co-workers who had volunteered to drive me. As the crow flies the distance between Bristol and Jenkins is around 50 miles, but as the roads wind up into the mountains among which Jenkins is nestled the distance is considerably more. But in two hours or so we were in Jenkins and I was in a completely new world. The area was heavily wooded and full of hills and hollows. Jenkins was a very small place. There was a Catholic parish with a wonderful priest in charge. His prayerful way of saying Mass was immensely impressive. He told me that the sisters were penetrating into "hollows" where he was afraid to go because of the anti-Catholicism. The sisters began their stay in Jenkins by ripping out the wall-to-wall carpeting (which had been put in at no little expense) saying that it was too luxurious for their way of life. On arrival they began praying, as usual, the divine office, and soon attracted even some Protestants to pray with them. My brief stay was a marvelous experience for me, and as I was driven back to

Bristol and boarded a Greyhound for Richmond and Washington I had much to reflect on and pray over.

70) **A**nd, speaking of Greyhound, there was another trip which has remained etched in my memory. I was traveling between Denver and St. Louis on a trip that began in the late evening in Denver. I slept well, waking only to begin watching the driver change one of the massive tires which had gone flat around 2 a.m. I quickly retreated from the unpleasant chill (it was mid-summer, but once the sun goes down on the endless plains a chill sets in), fully convinced that Greyhound drivers earn their salary, whatever it is. I awoke with the sun shining outside. We were at the bus stop in some small town in Kansas. Most of my fellow passengers were asleep. I looked out the window in idle curiosity, observing the various groups of people—my future fellow passengers and those who had come to see them off. One couple in particular caught my attention: a young man and a young woman were hugging and kissing and shedding copious tears. After a few minutes the bus driver yelled out “Let’s go, folks” and the five or six new passengers climbed onto the bus. The young woman who had been obviously saying good-bye to the young man walked by me down the aisle to the end of the bus and then returned. She looked at my Roman collar and asked if I were a Catholic priest. When I assured her that I was she asked if she could sit in the empty seat next to me. It took her a few minutes to regain her composure, but when she did she said, “I am a Lutheran, but I know that we Lutherans can always talk to you Catholics”. I was, of course, quite moved by this, as I still am, but assured her that this was the case and that she was most welcome to sit by me, glad (as I have often been in my travels) that I was wearing my Roman collar. She then began to tell me of the reason for her tears, obviously in need of someone to unburden herself to. “I am a freshman at K-State, and have been engaged to a young man who is also a freshman there. But I decided that we were just too young to be engaged and so I broke off the engagement. I have just come from saying good-bye to him. I think I did the right thing. We are just too young to be engaged. I was raised on a farm in eastern Kansas, and I love farm life. I want to live on a farm as a wife and mother the rest of my life.” She stopped there, but her thinking was clear: she felt that she was just too young to make a definitive decision about her husband, who would have to be equally

enthusiastic to farm life if she was to have a happy marriage. Some years later a Kansan transplanted to the East Coast was to write a book with the title *What's the Matter with Kansas?* On the basis of my experience one summer morning on a Greyhound bus I would answer, "Possibly not a whole lot".

71) **W**hen I finished my licentiate degree in Sacred Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome I was assigned to be a staff member of the Institute in charge of managing most of the Institute's publications. (Not editing, except for the post of review editor of our Scripture journal, *Biblica*.) This was a considerable challenge for a 35-year old for it required an acquaintance with Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, enough acquaintance to be able to know what one knew and what one did not know. Especially in the area of languages. My knowledge of such secondary languages as Latin, Greek, Hebrew, English, German and Italian was tolerable, but my knowledge of French and Spanish was definitely not. These were only part of the languages involved, of course. When it came to Egyptian, Accadian, Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic, etc. I was completely out of my depth and had to trust on the authors involved and members of our faculty. Dealing with authors in a great variety of places was, of course, also challenging, since so many personalities living in so many different cultures were involved. Having the job I had automatically placed me in a position of great authority with these scholars simply because the Pontifical Biblical Institute, especially its faculty of Ancient Near Eastern Studies, enjoyed so much prestige. I had done nothing to merit such prestige, of course, so I felt a bit hypocritical enjoying its benefits, especially since I was a specialist in absolutely nothing. It was a heady experience to be treated so respectfully by scholars from universities such as Oxford, Chicago, Pennsylvania, Heidelberg, Jerusalem, the Sorbonne, Johns Hopkins, the Ecole Biblique, Harvard, Brown, etc. There was also the challenge involved in dealing with our printers. This challenge demanded immediate improvement in my Italian and in my ability to get along with Italians. Fortunately most of the persons I dealt with were experts in getting along. Most of the publications I was asked to supervise were behind schedule in publication, so I had to move things along for two years or so at a faster than normal pace. Looking back I am not quite sure how I managed to survive the first year. But the

memory of working with so many competent and even brilliant persons (no need to go into details; that could go on at great length) will remain with me as a special gift of Providence until I die.

72) Of my three stays in Israel (which takes in a large part of the Christian holy places), two experiences stand out. Both experiences were special gifts of Providence, and both were surprises. On a pilgrimage with about 45 men and women from Canada and the United States were a number of priests. Our four weeks or more of visiting biblical sites were carefully planned, with a Mass for each day. Each Mass had its own celebrant or principal celebrant. From the beginning I had my sights set in Capernaum and the room where Jesus may have slept while living in that village with Peter and his family. The Franciscans had erected a large church of rather unusual design right over a cluster of houses in Capernaum. The houses are datable archeologically from the 1st century B.C. One of the houses in this cluster was the obvious center of attention of the ruins of a Byzantine church from the fifth century. Other archeological remains indicate that this seems to have been regarded as the house of Peter, with the room which seems to have been singled out being the room where Jesus stayed. The evidence is much discussed, as archeological evidence often is, but the case for the room where Jesus lived while Peter's guest is strong. I made known to the director of the pilgrimage my interest in being the principal celebrant for the group's Mass there, but he said that that role had already been assigned, though he offered to ask the priest selected to surrender the role to me. I of course, declined on those conditions, not desiring to interfere with another's good fortune. But no sooner had we arrived there than the priest selected to be principal celebrant fetched up sick, and I was given the honor. I said Mass looking down on the room from a height of about twenty feet. I regard this privilege as a special gift of Providence. The other gift of Providence was the permission to celebrate Mass *within* the Holy Sepulchre or Aedicule, where the body of Jesus lay after the crucifixion. Again, the archeological evidence is much discussed, but again the favorable view is quite strong. I was escorting three persons around some of the Christian sites in the Holy Land, and went to the Franciscan priest in charge of Masses at the Sepulchre. I asked for permission to

celebrate Mass at the altar placed outside the Sepulchre. He asked how many were in my group. I said four, counting myself. He suggested that I say Mass within the Sepulchre, instead of outside it. I gladly acquiesced. The four of us crowded in. There was barely room for all of us. We were so tightly packed that I had difficulty making the required gestures. And I was so moved that I was visibly shaking. But I managed to finish Mass so that everything was valid. I am still moved when I think of this experience. It is a sort of anchor for my faith. A special gift, entirely unexpected. (I had not thought it possible to say Mass within the Sepulchre)

73) On the occasion of the first stage of my retirement from the Pontifical Biblical Institute I, at age 70, thought it appropriate to ask permission to concelebrate with Pope John Paul II at his 7:30 a.m. private Mass in his private chapel. (In ecclesiastical institutions of higher learning in Rome at 70 one must retire from teaching first-cycle, i.e., undergraduate, courses; at 75 one must retire from teaching second-cycle, i.e., graduate, courses, though one may finish directing dissertations already committed to.) I wrote his private secretary, Msgr. Dziwisz, asking if I could concelebrate. I received a reply saying I was welcome to concelebrate with some ten priests from Brooklyn, New York, who were celebrating their fortieth anniversary of ordination. Since I was about to celebrate my fortieth anniversary of ordination too, I thought an affirmative answer was more than justified. I arrived at the Bronze Doors before 7 a.m. as requested, and introduced myself to the Brooklyn priests. There were several other priests and a handful of laymen and laywomen. We were escorted to the pope's private library where we vested. We then walked the short distance to his chapel. He arrived about 7:15 a.m. and prayed about fifteen minutes in preparation. After the Mass in English we all spent fifteen minutes in silent thanksgiving and then all of us concelebrants and the lay people went to the library where we unvested and awaited the pope's arrival. He soon appeared escorted by Msgr. Dziwisz and another monsignor. The latter was carrying a very large tray of rosaries. (No ordinary rosaries, but rosaries easily worth \$25 each, every one in a beautiful case with the pope's coat of arms.) The pope began working his way down the line of priests from Brooklyn, chatting briefly with each one, and handing out the rosaries. When he came to me Msgr. Dziwisz explained that I was a Jesuit and had taught at the Biblical

Institute for thirty-five years. The pope did not appear overly impressed by my Jesuit identity and said nothing, but he gave me a rosary. I felt like asking for a second rosary, since I had two sisters. But I took a look at the supply of rosaries on the monsignor's tray and thought that they were barely sufficient for the remaining guests. So I said nothing. The pope worked his way to the end of the line and began slowly walking back. As he approached me Msgr. Dziwiesz said again that I was a Jesuit who had taught at the Biblical Institute for thirty-five years. Again the pope said nothing, but he reached up and gave me another rosary. Divine Providence came through again!

74) **W**hile visiting Indonesia on the occasion of an international conference I took the opportunity to visit a fellow Jesuit who was a graduate of the Biblical Institute and as well as another graduate of the Institute in the university town of Djokjakarta. I took a train from Jakarta and traveled several hours to get to my destination where I was greeted by my fellow Jesuit. He escorted me out of the station to two pulled rickshaws whose operators were waiting for us. In the local dialect he told the operator of one of the rickshaws to take my bag and he sat me in the passenger's seat, while he took the passenger's seat in the other. I mentioned to him how awkward I felt being pulled by a fellow human forced to act like a horse. "Look at it this way", he suggested, "if we don't hire him he has no job. This is the way he earns an honorable living". No argument there. I felt less uneasy as we moved quickly through the crowded streets to get to the Jesuit seminary some distance away.

75) **I**n one of my last visits to Beuerberg I came, as usual, through the South Train Station ("*Südbahnhof*") in Munich, a marvelously animated place. I knew I had to catch a light train from the station to the left as one alighted from the Intercity train from Rome, but I had forgotten the train's number. (The train went to Wolfratshausen, where one caught a bus for Beuerberg.) Accordingly I went to the Information Center ("*Auskunft*") in order to find out. The original German conversation merits rehearsal. Swetnam: "*Entschuldigen Sie bitte, ich möchte wissen, was für einen Strassenbahn soll ich für Beuerberg nehmen*" ("Pardon me, I would

like to know what train I should take for Beuerberg”). Agent (young man in early twenties): “*Beuerberg? Beuerberg? So was in der Gegend gibt es nicht*” (“Beuerberg? Beuerberg? Nothing like that in the area.”). Swetnam: “*Doch, doch. Nachschlagen*” (“Oh yes there is, oh yes there is. Look it up”). Agent pores over detailed booklet of names and then says “*Tatsächlich*” (“Well I’ll be darned”). Swetnam (careful not to seem to rub it in, simply says “*Also . . . ?*” (“Well then . . . ?”). Agent: “*Nummer Sieben*” (“Number Seven”). Swetnam (trying not to look as though he had won), “*Vielen Dank*” (“Many thanks”). An appreciative hand-shake begun by Swetnam. Victory over a German in the German’s own backyard in the German’s *Fach* (area of specialization) savored by Swetnam as he walks to get Number Seven. No *Schadenfreude* (gloating), though.

76) **D**uring a brief stay in transit through Singapore I had a chance to visit the local Catholic bishop. It so happened that I had had the bishop as a student many years before at the Pontifical Biblical Institute. While we were talking the bishop remarked, “As you told me in 1973 ...”. 1973! When the bishop was a student of mine! What did I say that made him remember it after over twenty years? I was apprehensive. But then he grinned and repeated the remark with an appreciative laugh. I was so relieved that it was something innocuous that I have forgotten what he said that I said. But the incident served as a good reminder that when speaking to future bishops one should be careful about what one says.

77) **S**tan Musial was and remains an iconic figure for St. Louisans, even those who are not particularly avid baseball fans. He was a remarkably gifted hitter who played for the St. Louis Cardinal baseball team for 22 years before retiring in 1963 at the advanced (for baseball) age of 42. But he was also a remarkably upright and loyal Catholic gentleman, beloved by everyone he ever met and even by a host of persons who never met him. I was enjoying a meal at a restaurant he co-owned in St. Louis, Stan Musial and Biggies, in the summer of 1964, the year after he retired. He came to our table to greet us (it was part of his regular routine) and as I shook his hand I remarked that I had been in Europe for five years

and was looking forward to seeing him play one more game before he retired. I had been following his career since my freshman year in high school, during which he made his appearance with the Cardinals in the late summer of 1941. "It was just getting too hard" was his remark about retiring when he did. Looking back I think he was well advised to retire when he did, Swetnam or not. Inevitably the quality of his game would have deteriorated in one more year had he not. His funeral was a major event in St. Louis, occurring on January 26, 2013. As the hearse carrying his body from the Saint Louis Basilica Cathedral passed by my residence, Jesuit Hall, on Lindell Boulevard on its way to final ceremonies at the ball park and then to the cemetery, I gave it my priestly blessing. Perhaps the most justly famous St. Louisan of all time.

78) Shortly before my second trip to India Pope Benedict XVI made a statement about the need for freedom in preaching the Gospel. I had not yet obtained my visa for entry into that country, and the pope's remark caused an immediate reaction in the Indian government's procedure for granting such documents. I was told by the agency to which I had entrusted the task of obtaining the visa that I would have to go to Chicago and apply personally at the Indian consulate there. I had already purchased a round-trip ticket from Rome to Mumbai on the presumption that getting a visa would be a certainty. Now it was not, but I gambled \$220 (the price of changing my international ticket to allow for a three-day stop in Chicago) to save the \$1,000 I had invested in the ticket. I presented myself at the consulate and filled out the required form. The reason for the difficulty presumably was that I had a Roman collar on my passport picture, and this caused me to be taken as a missionary who was going to India with fistfulls of hundred dollar bills to make instant converts of a myriad of *dalits* and so cause social unrest. (I was actually going to work only with Catholics, in Mumbai, Pune and North and Central Kerala. But the Indian government was apparently unable or unwilling to take cognisance of the difference.) After filling out the questionnaire I was told to return the next day. The next day an official questioned me for about twenty minutes. Finally he said that he thought I could talk to the consul himself. He led me through a maze of back-room offices to the office of the consul. The latter greeted me politely but a bit frostily, and then proceeded to ask

me all sorts of questions about why I wanted to go to India. It was clear from his questions that he knew practically nothing about the Catholic Church. Finally he remarked that he noted I was from St. Louis, the birth place of T. S. Eliot. "Oh, T. S. Eliot, he of *The Wasteland*", I said in reply. From that moment on he turned affable, and after noticing that the letterhead of one of the letters of recommendation which I had was in Hindi, he said, "I tell you what I will do. I will give you a tourist visa for India valid from tomorrow for six month". I breathed a sigh of relief. He could have given me a limited, missionary visa which would have meant reporting regularly to the police during my stay in his country. Or he could have given me no visa at all. I accepted the visa and departed. He was a cultured gentleman, proud of his knowledge of English literature. I suspect he was moved by the thought that I was a fellow connoisseur. Saved by a fellow St. Louisan—and a fellow connoisseur of English literature!!

79) **W**hen working once in a parish in northern Italy I was struck by the dedication of the parish priest (as I often have been in Italy and elsewhere). The housekeeper was quite an individual in her own right. She held forth in the kitchen, when not engaged in her duties, ready to share a cup of coffee with any and all comers on condition that they share some tidbit of information about the parish. I think she knew more about the parish than God did. She had worked with the parish priest as his housekeeper for decades. And she was, as the saying goes, "opinionated". At the end of my stay in the parish I thought I would venture a question as to her assessment of the pastor. I asked her in the most circumspect of ways. She was obviously not displeased at the opportunity my question gave her to voice an opinion. She thought for a bit and then said, "He's a good man, but he prays too much". What a bishop would not give to have that assessment made of each of his men!

80) **O**nce, as I often have, I was waiting at a gate to board a trans-Atlantic flight. This time I was at JFK. I was standing at a spot where two gates were close to each other. I was standing and walking to prepare myself for hours of being cramped in a sitting position. I noticed two men at the nearby gate, each about 60

years old. They were obviously enjoying each other's company. They were dressed in rumpled sweaters and unpressed slacks. I thought to myself: "No woman would ever let her man leave the house dressed like that". I finally went up to them and said (I was wearing my Roman collar), "You guys are members of the F.B.I.". In the context the initials were clear. In U.S. clerical language, "You guys are members of the Foreign Born Irish", i.e., Irish seminarians or priests in the days when Ireland had an abundance of priestly vocations, who volunteered to come to the U.S. to live their priesthood. The two laughed in agreement. One was the chancellor of a U.S. diocese, the other, a parish priest in the same diocese. They were going home for their annual "holiday" (please, not "vacation").

81) **O**nce, at the turn of the millennium, I was scheduled for a week of talks in Fatima in central Portugal, but I had to land in the flight from New York in Lisbon. Friends took me by automobile (after some hours of walking up and down Lisbon's hills) to the area of central Portugal in a few hours. I had never been in Portugal, much less in Fatima, but I had a pre-conceived view of what life must be like in this fabled site of Marian apparitions. I envisioned a primitive peasant economy regularly flooded by pious pilgrims from around the world. Our small group arrived too late for supper in the Capuchin monastery which was hosting me, so the Capuchin priest in charge of me during my stay said that we would have to go to a local restaurant. "Now I'll see what a peasant restaurant is like", I thought. We took our place at table and a waitress took our orders on a strange looking device. When asked what it was she said it radioed the orders to the kitchen as soon as they were made so that the cooks could begin work as quickly as possible. Same for the bill for our meal: it was waiting for us at the cashier's desk, having been sent by wireless there by the waitress checking to make sure it was all correct. (The veal cutlet I had ordered was one of the tastiest pieces of meat I can remember ever eating.) The next morning I spent some time watching from my window as a team of workers put a tile roof on a shed. The foreman was maneuvering a crane by remote control as he moved the tiles from the ground to the roof with effortless ease. After my experiences of the previous twenty-four hours I decided that my views of the primitive peasant culture of central Portugal were in need of some qualification.

82) **D**uring my 1976 visit to Turkey with a group of some twenty or so Scripture specialists I visited the site of the two Ecumenical Councils of Nicaea, the First (325) and the Seventh (787). The two physical sites are adjacent to (325) or within (787) the modern Turkish city of Izmir, about two hours east and south of Istanbul. The council in 325 was ordered by the Emperor Constantine to settle the vexed question of the full divinity of Christ. The bishops voted overwhelmingly for the traditional view that Christ was fully divine. The scene of their deliberations was the emperor's summer palace on the shores of a beautiful lake. Changes in the shoreline have left the ruins half in and half out of the water. But they are still there. The scene of the deliberations of the bishops in the second council is in the center of the small town, where a Church stands with the walls in place only to a height of a few feet. When we were there a family of storks had taken possession of one of the higher elevations of the ruins, a perch looking right down on a busy street and sidewalk. (In the Middle East storks seem to like being close enough to people to enjoy their company, but removed enough to feel safe.) The Second Council of Nicaea was called to settle the dispute about the veneration of images. The bishops voted decisively in favor of such veneration. Each council had an enormous effect on the thinking and practice of subsequent generations. Thinking of the bishops as persons of faith legislating for persons of faith makes the visit immensely meaningful for me in retrospect.

83) **O**nce, when working in Gorizia in northeastern Italy, I had a few hours free on Holy Saturday and I thought it would be a good time to visit Slovenia, which was right across the border. I walked to the border crossing only to be informed by the young Italian border guard that the crossing where we were talking was for automobiles only. (Quite a few Slovenians worked in Italy and crossed over from Slovenia and back every day.) He said I would have to go to the border crossing for persons about a mile and a half away. I said I didn't have that much time and couldn't I just cross here? It was physically quite feasible. He said he had nothing against it, but said I would have to have the approval of his

Slovenian colleague, also a man in his early twenties. I walked over to this Slovenian official, speaking in Italian. (I knew and know no Slovenian.) He said he had nothing against it but be sure to come back the same way I entered. So across I went, without even showing my passport. On the Slovenian side I asked the first gentleman I met in Italian where the Catholic Church in the town was. (The town, incidentally, was celebrating the 1,000th anniversary of its foundation.) He replied in heavily accented American English, saying he had lived in Pittsburgh for many years., He said the parish church (Slovenia is predominantly Catholic) was around the bend in the road ahead. And so it was. I entered the church where the parish priest was busily preparing the altar for the Easter vigil service and Easter. We talked in Italian—he had studied in Rome. A most pleasant chat, mainly about the situation of the Church in the village. After some minutes I decided that it was time to retrace my steps. So back I went, around the bend, came to my two border guards, waved at each and got a wave back from each (I was dressed in my Roman collar), and crossed over into Gorizia. Mission accomplished. Another country to add to the places I have visited.

84) In April of 2005 I was in Växjö in southern Sweden giving a retreat to four of Mother Teresa's contemplative sisters. I was living in the apartment belonging to one of the sisters' friends and walking the two or three blocks to the convent for the conferences. Just before leaving Rome I had assisted at the funeral of John Paul II. The conclave to elect his successor had begun shortly after the retreat had begun. One morning I arrived and found the superior (who was not making the retreat) excited. She had just received a phone call from a superior in Rome who had been watching news of the conclave. The superior in Rome knew that the sisters were cut off from communications and so had phoned to alert the superior in Sweden that a new pope had been elected since white smoke was issuing from the Sistine Chapel. The superior asked me if the sisters in retreat could interrupt the retreat silence to visit a nearby house where the wife was a woman from Central America who had offered the use of her house and TV set to the sisters for just such an occasion. I naturally gave her my approval and immediately five sisters and an ageing cleric were walking rapidly the several hundred yards to the woman's house. We arrived just in time to kneel as the new

pope, Benedict XVI, gave his blessing “Urbi et Orbi”. A memorable beginning for us of a memorable papacy for the Church.

85) **Y**ears ago I was scheduled to give two retreats in Ireland. I arrived a few days early to take advantage of a cheap flight from Rome. I thought it would be desirable to get to know the country and its citizens a bit better so I decided to hitchhike around the island. (Something which I would not venture to do today.) A fellow Jesuit was traveling to Waterford to visit a sister whom he had worked with in China, and this gave me a ride there and a place to spend the night. The next morning, after Mass, I struck out on my own, clad in a Roman collar and with a small bag for some necessities. In the next three and a half days I traveled all around the perimeter of the island, stopping the night at Waterville, Sligo and Patrick-on-Shannon. I got a ride from approximately 35 motorists, never waiting more than five cars before one stopped. It was an instructive experience, because Irish men and Irish women like to talk. And the Irish landscape provided a scenic backdrop as I moved along. And staying the night in a bed-and-breakfast was also a treat. (“Sure, Father, and you don’t owe me a thing. Just say a Mass for me and my family.”) Not to mention making the acquaintance of several hospitable Irish parish priests. I began the first retreat feeling (with justification, I believe) that I was somewhat less uncultured.

86) **D**uring my 1992 visit to Israel, during which I served as a Scripture consultant for 45 pilgrims from Canada and the U.S., part of the carefully arranged program was a visit of several days to the Negev, the arid area to the south of Beersheba. One morning we were bussed to a site deep in the wilderness which was particularly desolate. The sun was challenging, burning relentlessly down. For our noon meal we were given box lunches and told to find some shade and eat lunch. Two of our group found a seven or eight-foot high outcropping which provided a modicum of shade. For the rest of us, nothing. I looked and looked, but could find absolutely no shade. It was an instructive way to show us what the Exodus from Egypt must have been like. Forty years of this (not to mention bitterly cold nights) would have made the

question “Is the Lord with us or not?” powerfully real as the Exodus generation assumed the guise of real persons.

87) Several days before Pope John Paul II visited my native city of St. Louis, Missouri, I received a telephone call from Telepace, the European Catholic TV network. I was at my desk in the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. I was asked to do a live commentary in Italian on the pope’s visit to my city. Three possibilities were offered., I accepted one, his arrival at Lambert International Airport at 5:00 p.m. St. Louis time (11 p.m. Rome time). I then said, “I don’t know you people. Who gave you my name?” “Oh, Msgr. Dolan did” said the voice. (Msgr. Timothy Dolan, at the time rector of the North American College in Rome, now Cardinal Archbishop of New York.) I thought that this would be fun, working with Dolan whom I knew only somewhat but well enough to know that he was a pleasant person to deal with. On the day indicated and a half-hour before the pope’s arrival I arrived at the studio (near the southeast corner of Vatican City, but in Rome, not inside Vatican City) and asked where Msgr. Dolan was. “Oh, he assured us that you could do a splendid job by yourself” was their answer. My performance was passable and no more—I could hear but not speak at the same time, so I was able to translate only half of what transpired, mainly remarks by President Clinton. (The Italian journalist who was my colleague was responsible for translating the pope’s address on arrival and had the translation of the English text before him. It had been supplied by the Vatican press office. But shortly after the pope began the journalist looked at me with terror in his eyes and remarked in Italian, “The pope is adlibbing!”) At the end of the transmission an Italian technician came to congratulate me, but I was not sure how valid his words were. When I next saw Dolan I asked him where he had been at the time. His reply: “Oh, I was watching you on TV. You were doing splendidly”.

88) One of my many memorable students from Regis High School in Denver, Colorado, where I taught for three years, 1952-1955, was Fr. Martin O’Keefe, S.J., now deceased. Marty was a wonderful person. And sharp as a tack. He was in my senior year class of Homeric Greek as I made my debut in the Mile High City. His knowledge of Homeric Greek helped me get through the first few

weeks of the course. (“That’s an easy question, Danahey. O’Keefe, what’s the answer?”) Although I had studied Attic Greek, Homeric Greek was an uncharted sea for me. Some years later, as a young Jesuit priest, Marty was assigned to study medieval philosophy at Michigan State University. (He was a loyal Spartan sports fan until the day of his death.) As part of the doctoral requirements was an exam in “modern languages”. There was a woman in her seventies who had the job of judging the proficiency of doctoral candidates. Marty showed up at her office at the time and date assigned him. She greeted him with words to this effect: “Well, young man, I see you have put down Latin as a language in which you wish to be examined. (Quite legitimate for a major in medieval philosophy; in fact, appropriate to the point of being necessary.) Let’s have a conversation in Latin”. She had picked the wrong man for this kind of challenge. After fifteen minutes of Latin conversation she said to Marty, “Young man, you have made my day”.

89) **O**nce, on a trip to Malta, I took a public bus from the Jesuit Retreat House in the northern part of the main island to Valetta. The bus route skirted a bathing area fronting the sea for a few blocks. Malta, of course, hosts countless tourists, often from the British Isles, who come south by chartered planes to enjoy the Mediterranean sun. On this day my bus stopped to pick up a group of bathers. One of the bathers was very skimpily clad. As she was about to climb aboard the driver took one look down on her and announced sternly in a loud voice: “THAT woman is not going to board THIS bus”. There was an immediate scurrying hither and yon as the lady’s friends sought large beach towels to wrap around her. When the operation was completed the driver took another look at her and announced for all to hear: “That will do”. I rather suspect that what I had witnessed was not a unique occurrence.

90) **W**hen studying at Oxford in the late 70s I received a phone call from Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity in London. The sister in charge said they would like to visit the Newman sites in Oxford and asked if I would show them around. She gave me the date they wanted to come and said they would bring their lunch but would I find a place for them to eat it. When I told the Catholic chaplain of Oxford about the sisters’ plans he was delighted and

said they could eat in the foyer of the Catholic chapel. I wrote my mother in the States and, among many other items of news, informed her of the coming visitors. She immediately wrote back sending a check for \$15. She said she wanted me to use the money for the sisters on their visit, and on no account should I give them the money, otherwise "It would just end up with the poor". I changed the dollars into pounds and wandered along High Street wondering what I should get. Then the sign "Baskin-Robbins Ice Cream" caught my eye and I knew I had the answer. I went in and asked for eight pounds worth of ice cream. The clerk immediately queried, "Did I hear you correctly, governor, eight pounds worth?" "Yes, I answered", pleased that I had managed to cause a moment of befuddlement in an unflappable Brit. I brought the ice cream home to Campion Hall, my residence, and when the day of the visit came brought it to the chaplaincy and entrusted it to the care of the chaplain's fridge. Neither the chaplain nor I informed the sisters. When they had finished the modest meal they had brought from London I produced the ice cream and the necessary utensils. When I saw the sisters' faces as they got their first view of the ice cream I knew I had done the right thing. The chaplain and I managed to get a spoonful apiece. (Judging by my experience of the sisters' meals elsewhere, they normally had ice cream once or twice a year.)

91) The anecdote about Oxford and ice cream reminds me of my first visit to the British Isles in the summer of 1961. I stopped off at the Jesuit novitiate in Roehampton for a few days before going on by train and ferry to Ireland to give a retreat. The week-end I was at Roehampton I was approached at 8:30 a.m. by the superior who asked if I would be willing to say Mass in the local parish Church at 9:00 a.m. "The people like hearing a Yank", he remarked. A half-hour to prepare a sermon (back in those days, that is what we called the words after the Gospel)! But I thought that this was a chance I couldn't pass up so I agreed. (I suspect that the regularly-scheduled priest for some reason had to cancel at the last moment, for normally Jesuits are not quite so disorganized.) I was at a loss for what to say in the "sermon", since I had been ordained only recently and lacked experience in preaching. So I talked about my experience in saying Mass on a Sunday in a Catholic parish in West Berlin. And I remarked that despite the fact that Germany and England had been at war

relatively recently (the war had been terminated only 16 years previously), I felt as much at home there in Germany as I did here in England. No sooner had a mentioned “war” than sobs began to arise from the ladies in the congregation as they pulled out their handkerchiefs. The man stared stonily ahead. I suddenly realized that for me World War II had been an affair of reports from abroad, even though I had lost some friends who had been combatants. I hastily ended the sermon and continued with the Mass, but now with the realization that for the people in front of me the Battle of London was something they had lived through, with deaths of friends and relatives at close hand. A sobering lesson on the need to size up a congregation before speaking.

92) In the summer of 1962 I managed to work in six weeks of studying modern Hebrew at Ulpian Etzion, to the south of Jerusalem. I was the only *goy* amid some twenty some students, all of whom came from a variety of countries. We were instructed to speak as much modern Hebrew as we could, even after leaving class. And so it was that a young woman from Pittsburgh and I found ourselves conversing (haltingly) side by side on a public bus. When I noticed that my stop was approaching I said to the young woman: “*Slika, aval akshav ani sarik ...*” (“Pardon me, but now I have ...”) and then paused, suddenly terrified by the need to come up with the irregular infinitive needed in the context to convey the idea of “to get off”. As I paused in search of the elusive form, the two women in the seat in front of us turned around and said together “*laredet*”, the exact form needed. All four of us then laughed. Poor ladies, having to hear their language butchered behind them. But I was consoled by the thought that I had succeeded in communicating in however primitive a manner.

93) One summer I spent a couple months in Madrid trying to improve my Spanish. I said Mass daily in the Jesuit parish on the north side of the city. On Sundays I gave a brief homily. My knowledge of the language was not sufficient to permit me to write the homily in advance by myself, much less to give it extemporaneously. In the preparation I relied on the help of one of the young religious women in the parish. After I left Madrid to return to Rome she was assigned to a city in Venezuela to work in the ministry of her congregation. We exchanged letters a couple of

times and then ceased the correspondence. Some years later in Rome I was asked by guests who were visiting the city to accompany them about 9 in the evening to the Piazza Navone. I almost never went out on the streets of Rome at that time—I would hazard the guess that in my fifty years in Rome I visited the Piazza Navone only two or three times at that hour, if that often. But on this particular occasion we arrived in the Piazza Navone at about that hour and found it, as usual, occupied by a number of persons. We were standing there, taking in the scene, when the aforementioned sister detached herself from a group of her fellow sisters and ran over to greet me. She and a group of her fellow religious were visiting the city. How she ended up at the Piazza Navone and how she then picked me out of the people looking on (she and her sisters were fifty feet away or more), is beyond me. The coincidence of the two of us meeting in such a way verges on the impossible. The odds were certainly many millions to one, at least.

94) I was at the airport in Denver, waiting for my flight to leave. As often, I was walking back and forth to get the blood circulating in my legs before subjecting my ageing body to the immobility of a lengthy flight. Suddenly, alongside of me, swung up a cart for transporting passengers to and from gates. A young man in his early twenties asked if he could give me a ride. “No thanks”, I replied, “I’m only fifty feet from my gate and I need the exercise”. “Please, Father”, he insisted, “it will be an honor for me to give you a ride”. That was an irrefutable rejoinder, so I got into the seat alongside of him and together we rode the short distance to my gate. As we parted he said, “I am a Catholic. I will always be a Catholic. I am proud to be a Catholic”.

95) Appropos of airport gates. I was waiting at a gate in the St. Louis airport when a middle-aged gentleman approached me and sat down beside me. His communication was as follows: “Father, I’m a Catholic and the other persons with me are all Catholic. We are going down to Yucatan to a beach resort for a vacation. The girls don’t know it yet, but on the beach a priest-friend of all of us is going to appear and we couples are going to renew our marriage vows in his presence. All of us are celebrating our 25th wedding anniversaries this year. Don’t tell the girls. It is going to

be a surprise for them". "Well, there are still a few things right in the world" I thought as he walked away.

96) It was a pleasant day in Rome and I was escorting a visitor to St. Peter's Basilica. We had paused to allow my visitor to walk some distance away to take some photos. While I was waiting a young man came up and asked if he could talk. (I was wearing my Roman collar, of course, which I normally did when moving about Rome and elsewhere, for that matter.) He had had some fascinating experiences and was eager to share them. (Such persons are not unusual in St. Peter's Square.) When I returned to my Jesuit community at the Biblical Institute I shared the story of this encounter with one of my brethren from the U.S. "Why do you always have such interesting experiences?", he queried. He normally did not wear his Roman collar when moving about the city and elsewhere.

97) It was July of 1976 and our group of twenty-five travelers to the Middle East were in Turkey. Our leader, Fr. Robert North, S.J., well versed in things Middle Eastern, had got special permission of the Turkish government to visit the Turkish army camp on the site of the ancient city of Carchemish, an important site in the ancient Near East. The Turkish officer who was the commander of the camp spoke excellent English, and he was showing us around the site. It was hard on the Syrian border, which, as a matter of fact, was only a few feet to the south. As we were walking back after crossing the Euphrates River on a railway bridge one of our group walked a bit innocently off the beaten path inside the fort. "I wouldn't go there if I were you", drily remarked the officer. "That area is heavily mined". I have seldom seen such alacrity as was manifested by the person in question as he vacated the area. As we were in our bus about to leave, a couple of bus-boys in immaculate gloves went down the aisle pouring tea. When all the formalities of farewell were over our bus stopped at a store on the outskirts of the dwellings which surrounded the fort, and our leader paid for two bottles of Vodka which he instructed should be delivered to the commander. This way of proceeding avoided making an issue out of the failure of the commander and his men to observe the Muslim stricture against the consumption of alcohol.

98) One of my Nigerian students in Rome had to have a minor operation at one of the local hospitals. I decided to visit her the afternoon of the same day, thinking that she would be able and willing to receive visitors. She was an excellent student and had an attractive personality. She was only in her early twenties, but was superior of her congregation's small community of students in the city. I got to the hospital, a large, sprawling complex on the outskirts. It took me a while to find her room in the labyrinth, but finally arrived. I was immediately profoundly moved by what I saw. My student was lying in bed, sound asleep. Standing around her bed were three or four young Nigerian sisters. They were completely silent so as not to awake their superior. But they wanted to be with her and were just standing there, silently. "What a marvelous testimony of love", I thought, as I nodded to all the sisters and took my leave.

99) On my first visit to Nablus in the West Bank (in 1987) I was visiting the Catholic parish of St. Justin. A fascinating place. In the Church the walls were decorated with murals of the life of St. Justin Martyr, the apologist of the second century who was born here when the city was called Neapolis ("new city", in the Greek). The pastor was an elderly priest of Italian descent who had come to the Holy Land as a boy of twelve or thirteen to be educated for the priesthood and to serve as a priest in the diocese. He was fluent in Arabic, Hebrew and English, of course, and probably French as well. But he was delighted when I suggested that we speak in Italian, a language he seldom had a chance to use. He was not optimistic about the future of Christianity in the area, noting that his flock which at one time had numbered over a thousand was now down to two or three hundred. "I would leave too, if I could", he observed. Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity had a shelter for homeless women in the parish buildings. Sr. M. Regina, a trained nurse from Ireland, had her share of intriguing stories to tell. Early in their arrival stage in the city (well over 200,000 in population) she said she and another sister had been literally chased by a group of young men and had escaped by knocking on the door of a friendly Muslim lady. She told me the moving story of one Muslim family with a 20-year old daughter who had been

paralyzed from the neck down in an automobile accident. Sr. Regina spent much time instructing the mother how to take care of her daughter. The daughter was patience itself, said Sr. Regina. She quoted the daughter as saying, "Allah has willed this. I accept the will of Allah". There is no believer who cannot learn from this.

100) At the Pontifical Biblical Institute there were many professors who qualify as memorable. Not the least among them was Fr. Mitchell Dahood, a Jesuit born in Montana but raised in New England. (I once attended a lecture he gave on a Hebrew preposition. For fifteen minutes I remained baffled at the preposition he had in mind, for I could not for the life of me recall any such word as "*ler*" that qualified. But suddenly I realized that he was speaking about the Hebrew preposition "*le*" in Bostonian—Bostonians put in "r" where it does not belong, and take it out from where it does.) One afternoon I met Mitch as he had just returned from having had a midday meal (an Italian *pranzo*, not a U.S. lunch) at Alfredo's, a famous restaurant near the ruins of the tomb of Augustus. He was in a state of mild consternation. When I asked him why he said that at the table next to his there were four Roman matrons having their *pranzo*, and all four were drinking—Coca-Cola! For Mitch, in the country where one could have the pick of Italian or French wines, this was an act of sheer barbarity, utterly incomprehensible to any civilized person.

101) Near the Pontifical Biblical Institute was a building housing offices of the Italian senate. It was a stately building, probably built before World War I, having an enclosed courtyard with Latin inscriptions on the walls, visible for all to see. When the Italian classical *liceo* was still a force to be reckoned with I am sure many an appreciative glance was directed to them. I liked the line from Virgil's *Aeneid*, spoken by Dido: "*Non ignara mali miseris succurere disco*" ("Not as one ignorant of evil do I learn to help those in need"). But my favorite was a hexameter from one of Virgil's *Eclogues*: "*Incipe parve puer risu conoscere matrem*" ("Oh little child, begin knowing your mother with a smile"). From the ages where the family still meant something in public law and life.

102) I once attended a panel discussion in Rome. The panel was designed to encourage inter-religious understanding. The three members of the panel were a Jew, a Catholic and a Muslim. At one point the Muslim stated: "We Muslims do not enjoy freedom of religion in Western Europe". The Catholic, incredulous, replied: "But there are thousands of mosques all over Western Europe". "Yes", countered the Muslim, but there are no mosques in Vatican City". "But there are no Muslims in Vatican City" noted the Catholic. "Yes, but it is the principle that counts—we Muslims have a right to have a mosque everywhere". "But there are no churches in Saudi Arabia and there are many Christians in Saudi Arabia", the Catholic replied. "Oh, but Saudi Arabia is a special case. Only mosques may be built there" concluded the Muslim. End of conversation. But there was an increase in understanding on the part of the Catholic and of the Jew.

103) Many years ago one of my colleagues at the Pontifical Biblical Institute decided to tease me about the way I taught Church History to Mother Teresa's novices in Rome (one of my most agreeable pastimes). "I bet you never teach them anything scandalous about the Church's past", Hans taunted. "I disagree, Hans", I countered, "I teach them all about Pope John XII who, according to one account, died committing adultery". "What?, What are you saying?", gasped Hans. "Hans, I replied", the story is in any history book or encyclopaedia". Hans never teased me about my course in Church History for Mother Teresa's novices again. Mother Teresa must have been in agreement with my approach, for she asked if she could use my course notes in all their novitiates.

104) Once when in an English town the identity of which I can no longer remember I was walking down one side of a street which had some construction work on the side opposite. As chance would have it a blind man with a seeing-eye dog was walking on the side with the construction and a little in advance of me. The man and his dog came to the construction work. There was a protruding beam at the level of the blind man's head, but at the level of the dog there was no obstruction. I was about to yell out to the blind man to let me help him when I saw the dog, who had

caused his master to come to a stop and had looked up at the obstructing beam at the level of his master's head, deliberately take a sharp left turn and lead the man onto the street so as to avoid the obstruction. Once both he and his master were at a point where there were no more obstructions at any level, the dog took a right turn and led his master on his way. At the time I was in awe at the training that had prepared the animal for such an impressive display of concern for his master, and I remain so to this day.

105) One of the centers of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity with which I had the good fortune to be associated with was located at St. Patrick's Church in Newark, New Jersey. The sisters had a shelter for homeless women and a soup kitchen for men. It was a particularly dangerous neighborhood—the sisters' convent had strong metal bars on the outside of all the ground floor windows. And between the convent and the church was a run for Cato, their German Shepherd, who had failed obedience school at the local police academy. But Cato was a faithful guard for the sisters, night and day. Cato knew and respected all the sisters, but his real master was an elderly gentleman in his seventies, Matthew, who was half Indian Indian and half American Indian. Matthew used to play basketball with some of the younger man despite his age. He was in top physical shape. He was the enforcer at the soup kitchen, and woe to the gentleman who stepped out of line in any serious way. Cato worshipped Matthew, who regularly took Cato on daily walks in the neighborhood. One day I was celebrating Benediction for the sisters. Matthew heard I was doing this and came up from his nearby apartment to greet me—we were good friends. He came a bit late for the beginning of the service, but entered into the chapel unobtrusively in the back and began to take part in the singing in a most edifying way. The problem was that Cato's run was immediately below the first-floor chapel windows, and soon Cato picked out Matthew's male voice and began whining inconsolably. He would not shut up. Finally Matthew went to a window and opened it and glared down at the dog. And he said sternly, "If you don't be quiet I'll never take you on a walk again". Cato immediately subsided, doubtless getting the point from his master's tone of voice. Matthew was another example of the wonderful co-workers one meets when working with Mother Teresa's sisters, no matter in what part of the world.

106) In the nineties I visited a fellow Jesuit in Miami. Tom was chaplain at Dade County Hospital, an enormous and yet overcrowded complex. Tom and I had been fellow theology students in Kansas many years before. He parked his car in his official place in the parking lot and together we entered one of the buildings and he pulled out an enormous notebook which contained the names of current patients who might need his help. We immediately went to a corridor on an upper floor crowded with beds overflowing from the maternity ward. We approached the bed of a woman in the U.S. illegally. She had had a child out of wedlock knowing that the federal government was reluctant to expel from the country mothers of U.S. citizens. The new-born infant of this mother was in danger of imminent death—he had been born with his vital organs all in the wrong places and the doctors said there was nothing they could do for him. The woman was Catholic, and Tom presumed she would want the child baptized, but he needed her permission to do so. In the brief conversation with her (I remained out of earshot) Tom got her permission and we immediately descended to the ward where there were new-born infants. The little lad in question was lying strapped to a reclining board, with tubes going in and out of his body. A passing doctor shook his head as confirmation that there was no more to be done for the child. Tom pulled out his equipment for the baptism and then suddenly stopped: “I forgot to ask the lady what name she wanted for her child”, he remarked. “But if I go back up to the mother he might die before I can get back. So we’ll give him your name” he said, looking at me. And so the child was baptized “James”. I never heard what happened subsequently. I hope to find out on the other side of death.

107) For all of my fifty years of residence in Rome I retained my U.S. citizenship, of course, and voted in all but one presidential election. (In that election my election board in Kansas sent the ballot by first-class mail instead of by air-mail, and the ballot reached me in England on the day of the election itself.) I voted by absentee ballot in Pottawattomie County, Kansas (county seat, Westmoreland). I had established legal residency because of four years of theological studies in St. Marys. And subsequently I was

never in the U.S. long enough to establish legal residence in any other place. I did present myself at the office of the county election commissioner in Westmoreland as often as I could. Once I appeared and asked to speak to the county clerk (= the election commissioner). Said county clerk appeared on the other side of the counter but when I introduced myself all I got was a blank stare. Fortunately one of the office staff came to a rescue, for when it became apparent in the office that the county clerk was at a loss to place me a voice came from a desk in the rear saying "He's the one from Rome". That produced recognition by all and sundry, the county clerk included. (This could never have happened in a big city.)

108) **W**hen visiting in cities in distant places I often found it useful to walk for an hour or two through the heart of the place in order to see how people lived. Thus Tempelhof to Marienfelde in Berlin, Mayfair to Paddington Station in London, Sacré Cœur to Les Invalides in Paris, lake-front water fountain to Veyrier in Geneva, Jesuit parish in north Madrid to Puerto del Sol, etc. A wonderful way to get a certain feel for a place. In Athens I used to walk regularly from the Jesuit residence near the main train station to the American Academy in Athens, occasionally modifying my course for variety. Once when walking such a modified course I found myself in front of a boutique selling women's accessories. It was opening day and the management was celebrating by offering a free pastry as a snack. I was endeavoring to pass by the front door unnoticed, clothed as I usually was in my Roman collar, when one of the aforesaid management personnel accosted me and offered me a pastry. I protested that I would almost certainly never offer them the slightest bit of business. "Oh, that's OK" came the cheery reply in quite acceptable English. Whatever one may say about the work ethic of some Greeks, most are quite agreeable people, as this incident shows.

109) **M**y fifty years in Rome left me quite familiar with the center of the city, where my residence was two minutes from the Piazza Venezia. My morning jogging course for many years was Piazza della Pilotta to Baths of Caracalla, then Circus Maximus, Piazza Venezia, Corso, Piazza del Popolo, Trevi Fountain, Quirinale, and then back to the Piazza della Pilotta. There were occasional

distractions, even at 5 in the morning: a young sport who challenged me (I outran him—easy because I was clad for running and he was not); a prostitute (I ignored her); a cloudburst with lightning (I headed for home); a rat from the sewer who bumped into one of my shoes (he was as startled as I was and we both parted immediately by mutual agreement). But my real source of anxiety were the packs of wild dogs which used to roam the streets of Rome in the 70s and 80s. They usually seemed to mean well, running slightly behind me, but one never knew. If one snapped at me I turned and yelled at him and that always produced results. I was relieved though when the city eventually was able to round them all up, I became known to some of the morning persons of the city. Once I going by the Monumento Vittorio Emmanuele when one such worthy asked another who this spectre was. “Oh, he comes by here every morning at this time” was the remark (in Italian, naturally) which reached my ears as I moved out of earshot.

110) In the 70s I once spent New Year’s eve in the priest’s quarters of a convent of Mother Teresa’s sisters in London after saying midnight Mass for them to usher in the new year. A cousin of mine was in London at the time and had invited me to help him celebrate the new year. He said he would pick me up at the sisters’ residence. Which he did. He brought me to the Dorchester on Park Lane, one of England’s swankiest hotels. Together we entered. I became a mildly disorganized victim of culture shock, moving from the stark poverty of a Missionary of Charity house to the Dorchester. As we entered, the *maître d’* announced to us “Gentlemen, the drinks are on the house”. “But we aren’t guests”, my cousin protested. “No matter”, the *maître d’* replied. Does the Guinness Book of Records accept Culture Shocks?

111) In the 60s I was traveling from El Paso to Dallas on a Greyhound. The trip had begun at 10:30 a.m., but west Texas is endless. It was midnight when we arrived in Dallas. I was sound asleep as we went through the city, but something roused me and I looked out the window. There, for an instant, was the scene of President Kennedy’s assassination. I had never been there, but after seeing dozens of pictures of the site all the details were etched in my memory. We were on the highway which the

preident's car was facing when he was shot. A couple of seconds and the bus was beyond the scene. I was intensely moved by the fact that I had been wakened at just the precise second needed.

112) Not too many years ago I was giving a retreat at a convent in Alhambra, California (a suburb of Los Angeles). The priests' rooms were a few yards from the convent buildings. One morning early I set out from my quarters to take a brief walk. Next to the priests' room was a stylish fountain. As I walked past it on the driveway leading into a parking lot I looked at the fountain and, much to my amazement, saw two skunks. At least they looked like the pictures of skunks I had seen. I quickly put some distance between them and myself. I later learned that a family of skunks had a hole at the base of the fountain. It seems that the convent was in a wadi leading from the surrounding hills down to lower levels, and the skunks had thought this stop on the journey a nice place to settle in. A short time later one of the sisters said she had encountered a skunk while on the rosary walk near the fountain. The skunk was trapped, or thought he was, and expressed his dissatisfaction to the sister in a tangible manner. She was pondering how she could get the smell out of her habit. I advised her not to waste time, but to burn the habit and get a replacement.

113) Some years ago I visited a small graveyard in central Missouri. It contained the remains of some of my father's ancestors who had come there from Kentucky (and before that had come from Virginia and before that from Pennsylvania and before that from England). The oldest gravestone, as I recall, was dated 1831. Only ten years after Missouri entered the Union. American Indians still roamed parts of the state. (I have heard that the last group of Indians seen in what later became Webster Groves, my native suburb of St. Louis, was seen in the neighborhood of what later was the site of the Frisco station in about 1821.) My father's relatives (for such were these in the graveyard) later produced, among others, General Omar Bradley who commanded the U.S. ground troops in the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944. Previous generations had fought in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. It is said that one was the "Captain Gooding" of the second stanza of "Yankee Doodle" (impossible to prove one way or another, it seems). When one

begins to study roots one discovers interesting information.

114) Once, in the 90s, I found myself in eastern Switzerland in search of documents about my grandmother's antecedents. It was a Sunday afternoon, and I was in a village called Twann. Not surprisingly, the village was deserted at that time. I did find a Calvinist or Lutheran church that was open, however, and went inside. There I found the janitor tidying up after morning services. I introduced myself and said I was in search of my paternal grandmother's birth certificate. He asked me what her name was. "Engel", I replied. "That's my name", he said. My grandmother was of French extraction and came from a village on the other side of some very high hills bordering Twann, which was German speaking. (I eventually got to the French-speaking village and explored the cemetery, which had all sorts of names which I knew were distant relatives.) The next day I returned and went to the diminutive city hall of Twann. I asked to see the birth certificate of my father's mother, who was born on July 4, 1875. The gentleman asked if I had permission to do this kind of research. Taken aback, I admitted that I did not. (I didn't know it was even necessary.) "No matter", he graciously said. "I'll do the research for you and communicate the results". He looked but came up with the disappointing news that he found nothing under the date July 4, 1876, which I thought the correct one. I was about to walk away when he said "Here it is. It is dated 1875 though. He made me a photocopy and I went away quite content. A few steps away I met a gentleman who owned a vineyard. We got to talking and I explained my mission. At the end of the conversation, as I was about to walk away, he said, "Wait here a moment". And he returned after a few seconds with two bottles of wine. "Courtesy of your grandmother's village", he said. Gracious people, the Swiss.

115) In the 70s I went from St. Louis to San Francisco by Greyhound. But in stages, with a day or two for each stop. There was an extended rest stop in Reno, so I thought I would peek into a nearby casino and see what was going on. (This was before the current glut of casinos in the U.S.) I went through the door and stood out of the way unobtrusively taking in the scene. The only thing I remember (but this I do with a vengeance) is the view of a

number of elderly ladies feeding slot machines. Each had stacks of quarters near her right hand, and each would feed a quarter into a machine and then pull the handle, feed a quarter into a machine and then pull the handle, feed a quarter into a machine and then pull the handle, and so on and so on and so on. It was one of the most depressing experiences of my life. Each woman looked utterly and absolutely bored. But they were obviously addicts and couldn't help themselves. What a terrible offense against their dignity as persons.

116) In 1849 one of my maternal greatgrandfathers was serving in the French army. He had decided to desert and had written to two uncles who were diocesan priests in Paris. The two priests were uncertain if their young French nephew could do so in good conscience, so they wrote to a parish priest in the south of their country, a priest universally respected for his advice. He was parish priest of a small village named Ars. His name was the Abbé John Vianney. He replied that the young man could indeed desert in good conscience. This my great grandfather proceeded to do. He left the country immediately, of course, and eventually found his way to New Orleans after having been shipwrecked in the Azores and rescued by a British ship. From New Orleans he took a steamboat up to St. Louis where he met my greatgrandmother, who had recently arrived from Bavaria by way of Bremen.

117) When the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, archbishop of Chicago, was created a cardinal it so happened that I thought it opportune to greet him personally. I normally did not greet newly-created cardinals except ones I had known previously, but for some reason I felt that Bernardin should be an exception. He was in a large room in the Paul VI Hall inside Vatican City. I entered the room expecting to find him surrounded by monsignors, but for some reason he was entirely alone. Just the two of us were present. I introduced myself as being from the Biblical Institute and from Chicago's neighboring city, St. Louis. He was most affable and we chatted for a couple of minutes. As I took my leave he said, with obvious sincerity, "Pray for me". Which I did. I did not realize how controversial a figure he would prove to be, or, at his life's ending, how edifying.

118) The Vatican's Swiss Guards are clearly photogenic and a source of endless fascination for first-time visitors to St. Peter's Basilica and its environs. At papal ceremonies they provide abundant color with their picturesque medieval attire. Not so well known, perhaps, is their identity as persons. I recall a papal Mass some years ago when I was distributing Holy Communion. An usher had instructed me to go to the rear of St. Peter's Basilica which I did, of course. The Mass was not particularly well attended, and the rear of the basilica was largely empty. A few Catholics came up for communion which I distributed to them as they stood. (No pews or kneelers available.) I was about to leave the area and return to the sacristy when a Swiss Guard in full uniform came and stood before me. He stood rigidly at attention a foot from me and solemnly removed his steel helmet. I was taken aback, wondering if I was about to be arrested for something. No, he simply wanted to receive Communion and had removed his helmet as a sign of reverence. On another occasion I had stationed myself outside the gate of Sant'Anna, the normal point of entry for automobiles into Vatican City. I was watching for a friend of mine to emerge. He was a diocesan priest and worked in the Secretariate of State. I waited twenty or minutes or so past what I thought was the time he had told me he would emerge but he had still not arrived. There were two Swiss Guards visible at the gate, one waving through traffic entering Vatican City and the other on the sidewalk checking incoming pedestrians. I had been there about twenty minutes looking anxiously at the pedestrians who were emerging when the Swiss Guard on the sidewalk came out to me and said that he and his companion had been watching me and wondered if they could help me. I explained my problem and he asked the name of the priest I was expecting. When I told him he pulled out a much-thumbed booklet with, as he informed me, the telephone numbers of everyone in Vatican City. He rang my friend's number and he immediately answered. When I asked why he was late he replied that he had told me he would be finished for the day at 1:15 p.m., not 12:15. I explained my predicament to the Swiss Guard. He said that I still had almost a half-hour to wait and why didn't I just step inside the Swiss Guard office which was right there where I could remain seated. I entered the office, where a third Swiss Guard was seated, ready to be on hand if any problems developed. On the west wall were miniature flags of all the Swiss cantons. He offered me a drink of water, pointed to a

bowl of hard candy, and began chatting amiably. He said he had nothing to do but be on hand in case he was needed. After a bit I thought of my visit to Twann, a village in the eastern part of Switzerland where my father's parents were married. No sooner had he heard the name "Twann" than he yelled out to the Swiss Guard checking automobiles if he knew of such a town. (He had informed me that the Swiss Guard in question was from western Switzerland and was French speaking, not German speaking.) "Yes, of course", yelled out the Swiss Guard and came to the door of the office to see what was causing the interest in said Twann. When I explained to him the reason for my curiosity he smiled in understanding and went back to waving his white gloves to keep the flow of traffic going. (It had been flowing unchecked while he came to the door of the office, but it would seem that no unwanted persons entered.) Shortly afterwards my American clerical friend arrived, a bit ahead of time. I waved good-bye to my newly-made friends from Switzerland and they waved good-bye to me, good naturedly. Friendly people, the Swiss.

119) In my teaching years in Rome (36) I made it a habit of learning how to say "Good morning" to my students in their native languages. For the most part I succeeded. But I was frustrated in my attempts to learn how to greet all Nigerians. (Though I did manage for the Ibos.) When I asked a Nigerian how to greet one of his countrymen he replied: "The first thing you have to do is find out if the person you want to greet has killed a lion. Such persons deserve special honor".

120) Recently I gave a retreat in Tijuana, Mexico. It was a memorable experience, which I recall with pleasure to this day. Among the memories was my crossing the international border from San Diego to Tijuana, and from Tijuana back to San Diego. I have crossed many international boundaries in my life, but these crossings were unique. The crossing from the United States to Mexico was made in an automobile at reduced speed, but hardly a crawl. There was a policeman on the Mexican side looking on, but he waved us through with no ceremony. And instantly the entire surroundings changed. Two changes were immediately noticeable. One was the obvious decrease in the prosperity indicated by the quality of the buildings. Tijuana was

by no means a slum, but the building code was clearly not as strict, or not as strictly enforced, as on the United States side. But the more striking change was in the number of signs. The signs increased by a factor of at least fifty. The change in the quality of the buildings was more or less expected. Not so the number of signs. Their number took me by surprise. And I immediately began to muse on the relation between such a multiplicity of information and the local citizenry. All different kinds of signs, of course, for a variety of purposes. On the return trip, from Tijuana to San Diego, things were somewhat more complicated. My local driver, a U.S. citizen residing in Mexico, brought me to a border crossing in the center of the city—where I had entered from the U.S. He brought me to the end of the line. After ten minutes (he was driving an automobile) he reappeared and announced that he had changed his mind about my point of re-entry. There was another border crossing on the outskirts of Tijuana which he thought would get me through faster. (He himself had a special pass for the fast lane automobile crossing, but all I had was an ordinary U.S. passport.) We drove several miles west, alongside for much of the way the famous double fence system, to the less frequented crossing. This second crossing was in a much less populated section. I took my place at the end of the line. The line inched forward when it was not moving at all. Apparently persons with special passes had priority, and they were numerous. I was unable to figure this out for myself, and ventured a question in English to the gentleman ahead of me. He replied in excellent English, though he was clearly a native Spanish speaker from Mexico. He explained the problem. He identified himself as a Mexican with a job in San Diego. Finally I reached the exact boundary, a metal line embedded in the sidewalk. Immediately the ambient underwent a significant change. Alongside the large U.S. Customs building was a swath of carefully groomed green grass. And on its fringe was a public drinking fountain. (In Tijuana people drink bottled water, at least where I was.) Eventually I was able to enter the customs' main hall and waited for a chance to go through one of several check-points. An agent motioned me to come to him. He took a practiced gaze at my passport, flipped a few pages in the process, pulled out a rubber stamp which he carefully used on one of the passport's pages, and I was back home. I exited and there was my host, who took me to his automobile a few steps away in a small parking lot. In a few seconds we were heading north in the U.S.A. Surprisingly few

signs.

121) Many, many years ago I wanted to plan a day-long excursion for myself and some fellow Jesuits at the Biblical Institute. We would travel by public bus to a remote village at the highest elevation in Lazio. I was prepared for difficulty and was not disappointed. But I also got an unexpected bonus of an observation about the fraught nature of human existence. Here is a transcript of the conversation with the young female who represented the bus line:

Swetnam (in English-accented Italian): "Good morning".

Young female voice (in Italian): "Good morning".

Swetnam (in English-accented Italian): "I would like to know the bus schedule from Palestrina to Genzzano, please".

Young female voice (in Italian): "Just a second". (Sound of pages being flipped. Not a good omen.) Then the female voice again. "The first bus is at 7 in the morning, and the next ... the next, is at 1:30 in the afternoon".

Swetnam (in English-accented Italian): "*Mamma mia*, isn't there anything in between?"

Young female voice (in Italian-accented English): "That eez life!"

122) In my 19 years of jogging in Rome and elsewhere I took part in four or five mini-marathons of 30 kilometers or so. They usually began at the Circus Maximus in Rome and finished at the stadium in Ostia Lido. Once, just before I arrived at the stadium in Ostia an automobile pulled up a few yards ahead of me and a youngster in his teens emerged wearing immaculate jogging togs and not showing a drop of perspiration. (I and my fellow joggers near me were drenched in sweat after 29 plus kilometers.) In a few yards and we were all in the stadium, doing a victory lap before breaking the final tape. If I had been the youngster the applause of the spectators would have seemed a bit hollow to me, not that the applause meant that much to me or any of my companions, for whom the "high" achieved by a long run was quite sufficient as a reward. (There is no "high" like a jogging "high" in the world of nature.) On another stage of this mini-

marathon or one like it I was approaching a small knot of spectators. We joggers were strung out along the Cristoforo Colombo, the highway leading from Rome to the Mediterranean. As I ambled into view the small knot of spectators broke into applause. I was puzzled at first but then realized what was happening. They were saluting the stamina of an ageing male. "Welcome, Swetnam, to old age" was my inference from the applause.

123) When I first came to Europe in June of 1959 and went to Berlin (*West* Berlin as people in the West spoke of it at the time, to distinguish the western part occupied by England, France and the United States, from the eastern part occupied by the Soviet Union), I stayed at a Good Shepherd Convent in Marienfelde in the American sector (in the south of the huge city). The sisters frequently hosted priests from "the Zone", i.e., East Germany, who came for their annual vacation. I spent much time with them, trying to improve my conversational German. And in the process I was learning a lot about life. For example, once in the house on the grounds of the convent where the guest priests were lodged I was in the midst of several of them. Without giving much thought to it, I began to criticize Communism. Immediately I was asked to stop speaking. One of the priests from the Zone went to a window that was near our group, looked out, closed the shade, returned to the group, and then said I could say what I wanted. Similarly, while visiting the zoo in East Berlin with a couple of them I began making a rather negative observation about Communism. Again I was asked to stop speaking. We moved to a spot where there was no one within hearing distance, and then I was told I could say what I wanted. I am not exaggerating. It was an instructive lesson. I had thought stories about spies in Communist countries were inventions of the U.S. government to win support for its anti-Communist policy. In West Berlin I learned differently,

124) Once I flew from Rome to Argentina (non-stop!) to give some lectures in San Rafael in the province of Mendoza. The area around San Rafael was flat and dry, watered by canals fed from the Andes, well over a hundred miles away. On the outskirts of the town, in a roundabout, was a statue of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. The local high school students were studying Latin and Greek. It

was an intriguing place. After the lectures I spent some time in Buenos Aires, being shown around by one of my former Rome students. One of the most pleasant memories, as we walked around the area in front of the presidential palace (“The Rose House”) was the small shrine on the edge of a busy sidewalk, to G.K. Chesterton. I was taken aback when I examined it. It seems that the bishops of Argentina are promoting his cause for sainthood! I think it a wonderful idea. However I can’t imagine reading G.K. in any language but English: thinking of his wit translated into Spanish just doesn’t make sense. Just as English is the natural language of detective stories, so English is the natural language of paradoxes.

125) **D**uring the Second Vatican Council a number of theologians came to Rome to act as “*periti*” (experts) for the bishops. One such was Fr. Henri de Lubac, S.J., a famous French scholar who later was to become a cardinal. He lived at the “*Bellarmino*”, the Jesuit house for young Jesuit priests studying for graduate degrees. But he occasionally came to the Pontifical Biblical Institute to consult our library, one of the best biblical libraries in the entire world. So it was that I met him there one Sunday morning. It was early, and we were the only two persons in the entire facility. (The library was not open to the public on Sundays, but was accessible to Jesuits in the community who lived in the same building and their Jesuit friends—one of the perks of power). I was tracking down some reference. He was undoubtedly doing the same. He came to me and asked in French how he could get to a certain section. My spoken French at that time was limited—quite limited. I countered in Italian. Blank. I then tried English. Blank. Then German. Blank. Then it occurred to me that Latin might do the trick. I tried a tentative sentence. His face brightened. He understood American Latin! I explained where he should go, and then, since he seemed so pleased, I kept on chatting. (In those years this was not nearly so impressive as it would be now.) After a few minutes of conversation we parted with smiles.

126) **M**y month of teaching Church History to some forty sisters of Mother Teresa in Calcutta was challenging—I was asked to teach even on Sundays. But the sister in charge was also generous, assigning for me one of the convent vans with a driver so that I got

at least an introduction to life in that enormous city. One day we were driving in a particularly poor area near a railroad track and we passed a building into which two men were carrying a corpse. It was a crematorium, where bodies of dead citizens, presumably Hindus all, were burned shortly after death so that their ashes could be scattered on the surface of the river on whose bank the crematorium was situated. Our driver had driven past the crematorium and I was mentally giving thanks that the sister giving instructions to the driver had not had me inspect the inside of the building when said sister suddenly spoke out, saying "Oh that was a place you should see". (Mother Teresa's sisters in Calcutta are so familiar with death that it no longer fazes them.) She gave instructions to the driver to back up. No sooner said than done and I soon found myself climbing the steps which the two men carrying the corpse had just ascended. Inside the room (about thirty feet on a side) were about twenty persons. No sooner had I entered with several sisters in tow, than about ten men immediately formed a semi-circle around me at a distance of ten feet, looking on in a somewhat hostile silence. About ten other persons were gathering around a corpse about twenty feet away, audibly grieving. I looked at the floor. Within two feet of me was a row of corpses wearing brightly-colored paper clothes with stripes of brightly-colored powders on their faces. While I looked on, the corpse with the grieving family was taken up and shoved into one of the two crematoria as the family moaned. I did not know how long it took the electric crematorium to reduce the body to ashes, but I did not wait. I told the sister in charge that I thought I had seen enough. (I was uncertain how the semi-circle of men was going to react if we seemed to over-stay our visit.) So we returned to our van. (The driver told me that while we were inside a couple of drivers in other automobiles directed threatening words to him, knowing that he was working for Christians and possibly a Christian himself.) And so ended another introduction for me to an aspect of one of the most awe-inspiring cities I have ever visited.

127) **O**nce, on an impulse of curiosity, I turned over my dinner plate before the food was served during a meal in a 10-month long period of spiritual formation in Austria. It was during the first few months of 1960. There, not to my surprise, was a swastika and the words *Deutsche Wehrmacht*. In the U.S., five years after the end of

World War II, I was driving a U.S. army jeep left over from somewhere. I and my Jesuit colleagues were using it for entirely benign purposes. So why not German army equipment left over from the war as well?

128) **M**y first visit to London was in 1961. Looking back on it, it seems now that London was in a different world. In the center of the city were newsstands on, it seemed, every corner. Few of the stands had attendants. There were neat stacks of fresh newspapers and neat stacks of coins of the realm of varying denominations. This was the honor system with a vengeance. One was expected to take the newspaper of one's choice and leave the stack of newspapers as neat as before. One was expected to make change for oneself and leave the proper coins on the proper stacks (no small challenge to the non-Brit: on other occasions I would hold out a fistful of coins to the person responsible and ask him or her to take what was needed), and leave the stacks just as they were.

129) **A**nd speaking of London. While visiting the Jesuit community at Roehampton back in the 60s I found myself after one of the meals mixed in with a number of elderly Jesuits living in retirement. Being fairly young and inexperienced in general and with regard to England in particular I was heartened when one of the elderly Jesuits indicated that he had something to tell me. "I have something important to tell you", he said. I was impressed and, needless to say, was all ears. His exact words: "Master the Baker Street Station". I thanked him, a bit puzzled. But then, a few days later, I had occasion to transfer at the Baker Street Station in the course of traveling on the Underground. Then I saw what he meant.

130) **D**uring the final days of my summer in West Berlin in 1959 I and a visiting Jesuit friend of mine decided we would try to find the spot where the body of Adolf Hitler lay on the top of the bunker where he killed himself as the Russian army was closing in on the city. This was 1959, two years before The Wall was built dividing the city of Berlin and eventually dividing East Germany from West Germany. We consulted standard sources and figured

out approximately where the site was—in a rather out-of-the-way spot in a park inside the eastern sector but not far from the western sector. We arrived at the spot and saw only one guard, as it turned out a rather bored young man from the east. We approached him a bit gingerly before we discovered this, but when we had introduced ourselves and he saw that we meant no mischief he was quite friendly. When we asked if this was the spot where Hitler's corpse was cremated, he said that it was, and pointed to a spot about 30 feet away, a shallow hollow in the ground next to a barely noticeable outcropping of cement. (The bunker which, if I remember correctly, he said was flooded.) "You can go over and look for yourselves, but there is really nothing to see", he remarked in German. My friend and I walked over and looked down solemnly at the muddy hollow. It was a moving experience. Hitler had undoubtedly been a gifted person to be able to capture the loyalty of such a large country. But the evil he caused directly or indirectly was incalculable. I hope he had some inkling of this before he shot himself. And was able to ask for God's mercy.

131) **O**ne of the more interesting requests I have received in my life came from a prominent Italian specialist in Semitic languages. His name was Sabatino Moscati. He was of Jewish descent, and during World War II the Jesuit rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute helped Moscati in his education at the Institute in the Oriental Faculty (= Faculty of Ancient Near Eastern Studies). Moscati went on to have a distinguished career at the University of Rome as a Semitist and also as supervisor of Italian archeological excavations around the Mediterranean basin. He came to me one day and asked if I could help him with his English. He had to give press conferences in Italian, French and English in connection with his work as supervisor of the excavations. He felt that his mastery of French was sufficient (Italian, of course, being his native tongue), but he felt that his English needed improvement. He proposed presenting to me all the excavations in question in English with the request that I make any corrections necessary in the pronunciation, grammar, idioms, etc. of what he said. This was a marvelous opportunity for me to get to know not only the excavations in question but also to get a famous Italian scholar. He asked me to name a day and a time. As I recall I suggested Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. He agreed. And for several

weeks he came faithfully on the day and time I suggested until he had finished the whole round of excavations. Whenever I corrected him he would humbly repeat my correction two or three times until he was satisfied that he had learned the right way to say in English what he wanted to say. When we had finished he asked if we could do the presentations all over again. This we did together, with his English noticeably improved. After the second time he asked if I could suggest someone else to help him—he wanted to do it all over again but did not want to impose on my generosity. I gave him a name or two and heard no more. It was a moving experience. Years later, shortly before his death at an advanced age, he returned to the Biblical Institute for a guest lecture. The lecture amounted to a lengthy thanksgiving to the Institute for all the help it had given him. There were tears in his eyes when he said this final farewell.

132) During a brief stay in Singapore I contacted Mother Teresa's sisters and asked if I could visit them. They agreed and said they would send one of their volunteers to pick me up and bring me back from the local Jesuit community. He was a most pleasant person, as such co-workers usually are, quite fluent in English, though his mother tongue was Chinese. The latter was the subject matter of much of our talking during our time together. He was irked by a ukase from the local government which stated that all Chinese speakers should use Mandarin and not Cantonese in their conversations, even at home. Cantonese, of course, was the pronunciation of most of the Chinese-speakers in the city-state. The purpose of the city fathers, obviously, was to prepare Singapore for the future. Being a tiny entity it relied on commerce for economic survival, and the main customer in the future was clearly going to be mainland China. And the only common dialect was Mandarin. My driver had to admit that the government was right. But for him that didn't erase the nuisance value of what it was asking.

133) In my Jesuit ministries I have visited Alhambra, California, a number of times. It is a middle-class suburb of about 100,000 people. I gave retreats at the local Carmelite retreat house. The order came from Mexico in the 1920s to escape the persecution there at the time. Many of those arriving from Mexico were

trained in medical care, and when they arrived in California proceeded to open a modest-sized hospital. After one of the retreats I preached, one of the older retreatants volunteered to show me around the former hospital, now converted into a day-care center and retirement home. These were situated in a neighboring suburb of Los Angeles. As she showed me around what had been the hospital, she pointed out a room and told me of what had transpired there when she was directress. The patient there in the room at the time was a Jesuit priest just entering old age. He was suffering from a serious disease of the lungs. A team of four doctors, none of them Catholic and one of them Muslim, was responsible for his care. After much effort they had decided there was nothing more that they could do, and told him to prepare for death. A number of persons were praying to Blessed Claude de la Colombiere, a Jesuit from the 1600s. They were praying for a miraculous cure of the Jesuit priest, a cure which could be used for the canonization of Blessed Claude. The sister told me she visited the priest's room the evening of the night when the doctors thought he would die. She said he was surrounded by relatives who were taking what they presumed would be final leave. The next morning the directress dropped by the room to see what had happened. Much to her surprise she found the patient sitting up in bed and eating a hearty breakfast. He announced that he had ordered pizza for lunch. Naturally intrigued, the sister ordered X-rays of the priest's lungs to be taken and sent to the team of four doctors. The doctors, after seeing the X-rays, returned them saying there had been a mistake and that someone with healthy lungs had been X-rayed. So the sister ordered a new set of X-rays. Same result. When informed that the X-rays were indeed of the lungs of the priest the team of four was baffled. They examined him carefully and said they could not explain what had happened. Word was sent to Rome and a monignor appeared in Alhambra, collecting information. When he returned to Rome all the information was handed over to a set of doctors in Rome. When they said they were unable to account for the cure (pronouncing the cure a miracle was beyond their competency, of course), everything was handed over to a group of theologians who examined all of it, including the writings of Blessed Claude. When the theologians said they thought a miracle had taken place they handed in their report to a commission of cardinals. When the cardinals had examined everything they informed the pope, John Paul II, that they thought Blessed Claude

de la Colombiere should be pronounced a saint on the strength of what they considered a miracle. And after John Paul II agreed, Blessed Claude was pronounced a saint on May 31, 1992.

134) **M**any years ago I was at a town on the Rhine in southwestern Germany. I wanted to go to Cologne, some distance to the north. I went to the train station and approached a window indicating ticket sales. I asked for a one-way ("*Einfach*") ticket to Cologne, using German all the way. When the poker-faced agent of the *Bundesbahn* had given me my ticket and the proper change he leaned across the counter and whispered in my ear in quite acceptable English: "You speak our language rather well, but I can still tell you are from the U.S.A." Italians are not the only ones who know how to make life enjoyable.

135) **N**ot many years ago I attended a Scripture conference at Durham in the north of England. I purposely kept a morning free after the conference was over so that I could explore at leisure the fabled cathedral, a structure justly famous for its beauty, and absolutely bewitching to one such as I who was addicted to English cathedrals. Two of the sites I wanted especially to visit were the two tombs of famous English saints. At the western end of the enormous building was the tomb of St. Cuthbert. At the eastern end, in the Galilee Chapel, was the tomb of the Venerable Bede. It was late morning of a week-day when I entered each area (both of ample size). To my considerable edification I found a man at each tomb, quietly kneeling in prayer,

136) **D**uring my visit to Egypt in July of 1975 our group of 25 priests found ourselves in a spot in the center of the country. Our director, Fr. Robert North, S.J. (now, unfortunately deceased), wanted us to travel about ten miles to the site of the famed obelisk which had been abandoned as it was being carved out of solid marble because it had cracked. The site was unforgettable because the labor of prying such a huge piece of material out of a solid substratum became understandable at a glance. The back and forth grinding away which was said to take up to a year of time of forced labor by slaves was there for the imagining. North had hired five or six taxis to take us the ten miles, and had warned

the drivers that on no account were they to race one another with his men aboard. They had ignored his advice. When we were all safely out of the taxis North summoned them to stand before him in a group,. He then proceeded to give them a tongue-lashing in Arabic. North was a famed linguist (at the end of his life he confided to me that he could handle eighteen languages—all of which he needed for his editing of *The Elenchus*, the most complete bibliography of scholarly literature on the Bible in existence). My knowledge of Arabic was non-existent, but it was clear from the sheepish attitude of the drivers as they stood before North, faces to the ground, that he was succeeding in communicating his displeasure. One of the drivers kept protesting “*Abuna, Abuna*” (“Father, Father”). but it was clear the other drivers had a guilty conscience. And their sad expressions were also doubtless caused by the knowledge that their tip was being steadily reduced.

137) One of the more fascinating spots in Greece to visit is the excavated market place at Corinth. A few acres have been carefully restored. Outside the walls was a jumble of piles of stone, the residue of earthquakes, all overgrown with vegetation. The featured spot of the excavated area is the “*Bema*” or “judgment seat” where the Roman proconsuls sat. The one in Corinth is about 8 feet high, 10 feet deep, and 30 feet long (as I remember it—these figures could need revision). The spot where the accused person stood is about 20 feet in front of the center of the *Bema*. It is indicated by a circle of marble about a foot across set in the pavement. Here stood Paul before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia (cf. Acts of the Apostles 18,1-17). The whole scene comes to life as soon as the judgment seat and the circle where the accused stood are seen. Silence reigns, but the imagination can easily take over with such visual promptings.

138) In the summer of 1945 I and another youngster just out of high school traveled to New York City to inspect the Big Apple before the two of us entered the Jesuit novitiate at Florissant, Missouri, on August 8. We traveled by rail, of course. It was an overnight trip from St. Louis to Grand Central Station. Many and varied were our experiences. Germany had just surrendered in the late spring, but Japan was still very much an active enemy—it

was before the atomic bombs were dropped: America was still at war. We stayed in the apartment of a cousin of mine who was employed in the city. The apartment was in the famous parish of Corpus Christi, near Grant's Tomb and Columbia University. Two of the parishioners were Frank Sheed and Maisie Ward, the well-known Australian/English Catholic authors. They had two children, Rosemary and Wilfred. During our stay Frank Sheed was absent (on business) as was Rosemary (away on a visit of relatives). My friend and I met Maisie Ward through the parish. (Maisie was a daily Mass-goer.) My friend and I were invited to a discussion group one evening at her apartment. It was a fascinating event. My friend and I were flattered by the company—they were all adults. In connection with our visit I engaged son Wilfrid in some table-tennis. Wilfrid was about 14 years of age at the time. He was an avid sports fan. But he was crippled in the use of his legs by a childhood case of polio. He was forced to stand in a fixed position at his end of the table. I, at the other end, tried to keep the ball within his reach. I had to chase all errant balls no matter at which end of the table they ended up. This I did most willingly, for it was clear that he was thoroughly enjoying himself—and it was also clear that there were not many table-tennis players who came to the apartment. The accoutrements were noteworthy. It was during the war and what table-tennis tables were being produced went to the military. Our table consisted of a raw plywood board. The paddles and ball were the real thing, but the net was a series of books placed horizontally, bindings up. (I recall that one such book was Bede Jarrett, O.P.'s, *A Shorter History of England*.) Maisie saw that Wilfrid was enjoying our company, so she asked if we could take Wilfrid to a baseball game at Yankee Stadium the next Sunday afternoon. She would pay for everything, including the taxi rides back and forth. She would not be present. (The game of baseball was probably a profound mystery to her.) We agreed and attended a Yankee–Detroit Tiger double-header. Wilfred enjoyed himself immensely. Seeing his enjoyment was more than enough to repay us for donating our precious time in New York, limited as it was to two weeks. Wilfred later went on to become an accomplished novelist, of course. I read one of his novels (the one about life in an Oxford college) and thoroughly enjoyed it. (He himself was an Oxford graduate, of course.) I never met either Wilfred or Maisie again, but Frank Sheed came to give a lecture at the Jesuit seminary in St. Marys, Kansas, in the late 1950s when I was a student there. He was most pleased to hear

my account of our meeting his wife and son.

139) Well into the new millennium I volunteered to give a retreat to some of Mother Teresa's sisters from their region in northern Europe. The superior gave me a choice of the place—in Bruges or in Chemnitz (the former Karl Marx Stadt). These were the only two houses of the congregation in the area sufficiently large to accommodate all the retreatants. I chose Chemnitz, since I had never worked pastorally in that area. I arrived by plane from Rome in Dresden (*"Drays-den"* in German—I never got used to it), was met by some sisters at the airport, and brought by automobile after a two-hour ride to Chemnitz. I was taken aback by how shabby the town seemed, but then I had grown used to second-guessing first impressions. On meeting some of the Catholics in residence, however, I really was taken aback. For they reported that Communism, whatever its failures as an economic system, in East Germany had been a complete success from the standpoint of enforcing its anti-Christian worldview. Of course the area which became East Germany was never a Christian stronghold even before the arrival of Communism, but still the success of a generation of Marxism had been stunningly successful in eliminating Christianity as a meaningful force in public life and even in private life. I was told that Catholicism claimed the allegiance of perhaps 1% of the population—down from 15-20% before World War II. Lutheranism, which had been by far the dominant religion, had been all but eliminated. There had been a massive exodus of East Germans to the west in search of employment after the reunification, and that must have played a part. (The East Germans had demanded instant parity between their mark and the west's, instead of taking a gradual approach. So, instead of establishing factories and offices in the East to take advantage of the low wages, businessmen in the west had opted for factories and offices in Eastern Europe outside Germany. Chancellor Kohl, it was said, realized the folly of instant parity, but was helpless in the face of political pressure. Perhaps this interpretation is a bit *simpliste*, but there was no denying that there weren't many jobs available in the east. But the west had spent huge sums on highways and bridges, and that was evident too.) I was edified by talking with the native German Catholics I met. They were dedicated. They had to be: the peer pressure was

completely against any kind of religious belief. But such belief was not always well informed. I heard of a case where a believing Catholic had never heard of the feast of Christmas.

140) One of the more famous Jesuits of the Missouri Province is Fr. Edward Dowling. He is principally known for his role in the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous. In 1949 I made the transition from life in St. Stanislaus Seminary in (at that time) rural Florissant, a suburb of St. Louis, to life on the campus of Saint Louis University, where I was to study philosophy for three years. My first year I was assigned the role of athletic manager, which meant that I arranged for make-up softball, soccer, and basketball games either on campus or in neighboring Forest Park. Fr. Dowling approached me and asked me if I would be willing to take part in an experiment. Television was just becoming available as a common means of information and entertainment, and he was convinced that some major changes would be necessary in these sports if they were to be suitable for TV. For example, he thought that the square infields of each sport would have to be changed to a lozenge. And the familiar 4 balls and 3 strikes for softball would have to be modified to 2 balls and 1 strike to speed up the game. One foul ball was all that a batter was allowed. Two fouls was an out. I said I was game, and we managed to get enough men to volunteer to make a trip to Forest Park feasible. The game zipped right along, and rather impressive sums of runs were amassed, when he called a halt after several innings. When we were all on the bus he announced that "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox" and announced that we would be stopping at a drive-in on the way home unless someone objected. Needless to say, no one did. We arrived at an ice-cream place and a young woman came out armed with a notebook. She took one look at a bus full of sweaty young men and sensibly refused to climb aboard to take orders. But Fr. Dowling, clad in his Roman collar, assured her that all was well and thus reassured she climbed aboard. I am sure she received a generous tip. Thus ended what was perhaps the only trial of Dowling softball. He pronounced the experiment a success, but it didn't seem to catch on and we resumed our normal game. (Without benefit of TV cameras, of course.) American baseball and softball has since survived in the conventional forms for TV. (I personally felt that the experiment showed that the conventional forms of baseball and softball should remain unchanged for TV,

but I didn't want to dampen Fr. Dowling's enthusiasm in any way, or interfere with any possible future stops at ice-cream drive-ins.)

141) My grade school memories are by and large happy ones. The religious women who taught us (Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, New York) were caring persons who gave me (and, I presume, others as well, although I have a right to speak only for myself) an excellent education. I visited most of them in their retirement home in Sparkill before they died, and know where they are buried in the community burial ground. Not all were free of faults, but all gave generously of their time to us children. One negative memory does stand out, though, and it does not involve the sisters but fellow students. It is a memory of being bullied by having my face washed by some upper classmen after a snow storm. Several of them would gather together and hunt down weaker students and wash their faces in the fresh snow. I could never understand this. I still don't. Even in a recent version when I saw a seminarian washing the face of a weaker seminarian in fresh snow. "Boys will be boys". I disagree.

142) Some time in the last year or so of grade school I suddenly realized the plight of one of my classmates. He had no father in his home, his father having died when he was quite young. He and his brother were being raised by their mother. For some reason the plight of the family came home to me one day and I recall curling up in an easy chair in the family den and crying and crying. My family gathered around me. My parents were anxious. They wanted to know what the trouble was. Why was I in tears? I felt that I could give no satisfactory answer. The classmate in question was well-behaved. He and I were good friends. Neither he nor any of the other two members his family—an older brother and the mother—had done anything wrong. (The yard of their home was a bit unkempt, but I regarded this as a minor matter.) I was just concerned that he had no father growing up. His older brother and he were in World War II. The older brother came home psychologically crippled. It was said that he had been constrained to strangle a pet dog who was betraying his hiding place from nearby German soldiers. Neither he nor my classmate ever married. My classmate was his usual gracious self after the war as

before. It was just that he had been deprived of his father. In many neighborhoods today growing up in a fatherless family would not be the occasion of any comment, such is its frequency. But in the world of healthy families which I grew up, not having a father was quite unusual. When I read in today's newspapers of attempts to find the cause of crime in fatherless neighborhoods I am baffled. Various causes are adduced, but the collapse of the father-mother family is usually not one of them.

143) **My** first visit to England, in the summer of 1961, was limited to a few days—I was on my way to a job in Ireland. I visited some of the standard sites in London and then spent a day in Oxford (at that time much more user friendly for visitors, i.e., no admission charges anywhere). Oxford impressed me so much that I decided I would dedicate a precious day to Cambridge. Armed with a guide book, I went from college to college listed as open to visitors. I approached the final college in the mid-afternoon and knocked at the door. I heard footsteps approaching at a stately pace. The entrance was slightly elevated, two or three steps above where I was standing. I waited expectantly. The door opened gradually and before me stood a tall gentleman in formal attire. He spoke in a measured way. Authority dripped from his voice as he said, "Wellllll?" I was somewhat flustered at this unexpected revelation of British decorum and I stammered out: "According to the guide book this college is open to visitors and I would like to take advantage of this offer". His reply, in solemn tones, was "Are you of royal blood?" Needless to say I was taken aback by this query, and felt like saying "No, I am a simple soul from the Midwest of the U.S." but what came out was a stammered "I am sorry, but as a matter of fact I am not". The risposte, in dignified tones: "Today the college is playing host to the Lady Margaret and only members of the royal family are admitted". I apologized for my intrusion and escaped his baleful gaze at my non-royal self. As I passed on the pavement (not the sidewalk) alongside the college garden I heard the tinkle of tea cups and the low murmur of royal discourse. The fence was draped in impenetrable canvas and I could see absolutely nothing. I fled the scene of my crime as quickly as possible.

144) **Once**, when visiting my East Coast sister and her family in

Washington, D.C., I happened on a road map of Maryland. For some reason I thought of the origins of my province (Missouri) of the Society of Jesus, which traces its lineage back to the Maryland Province, and, in particular, to the settlement in "White Marsh" somewhere in the vicinity east of the capital. No name "White Marsh" appeared on my map, but the title "Priests' Bridge" did. It was roughly in the center of the triangle whose points were Washington, Annapolis and Baltimore. My sister was game for an adventure so we set out early one summer afternoon for said Priest's Bridge. Not far from the bridge was a brand new Catholic Church dedicated to the Sacred Heart. And nearby was an historical marker saying that the site was called "White Marsh". We had hit it lucky. The marker said that the original church was on a small plateau 200 feet high accessible by a road to the north of the new parish church. At the top of the hill was a historian's paradise. There was the ancient parish church, built in the first part of the 1800s, and rebuilt after a fire in mid-century. It was still in use, although its small size precluded its being used for normal parish worship. But the priests' residence (rectory) was there and the parish offices. The current pastor met us and graciously showed us around. Back in the first decades of the 19th century the plateau was the site of a Jesuit novitiate. In 1822 or shortly before, the local bishop informed the Jesuits that he was no longer able to assure them of the food necessary for their survival and suggested that they disband. The bishop of St. Louis at the time heard of the Jesuits' predicament and offered them land for a farm on the outskirts of St. Louis. They accepted and bought two flatboats on which they floated down the Ohio to a point above Cairo, Illinois, walked overland to St. Louis, and were given forthwith a considerable portion of land near the village of Florissant, northwest of the city. Thus began the famous St. Stanislaus Seminary of the Society of Jesus in which I passed four happy and eventful years.

145) One Christmas I spent in a small village on the sea in the Archdiocese of Messina. The day after Christmas the parish sponsored a "*gita*" or excursion to the slopes of Mt. Etna not far from Taormina. There were not quite fifty of us (I being a guest) from the parish, and we were riding in a Mercedes-Benz bus driven by the Sicilian owner. At a rest stop I struck up a conversation with the driver, a most affable person. Having taken

part in a number of such excursions in Rome I was curious about this Sicilian operation. Among other questions I asked the owner-driver was a question about the bus. I asked him how long the motor functioned before it had to be replaced. "About 500,000 kilometers", he answered. "Then what do you do?" I asked, thinking he might purchase a new bus. "I have the motor replaced", he said. "Here in Messina?" I queried. "No", he replied emphatically. "I wouldn't trust it to the *menefreghisti* here". (*"Menefreghisti"* is a term better not used in polite society in Italy. It may perhaps be advantageously translated as "don't-give-a-damnners".) "I drive the bus to Rome where there are German mechanics and have the motor replaced by them". I occasionally read that the success of the German economy is made possible by its strength, which enables it to arrange for favorable credit to customers. I am not able to judge the wisdom of this observation. But the anecdote above was an example of the way German craftsmanship is respected in Europe. "You cannot distribute what you do not produce."

146) In order to teach at a seminary in Guam a few years ago I had to arrive and leave by way of Narita Airport, the main international airport for Tokyo. On arrival there after a non-stop flight from Amsterdam I found that my check-through bag had not been checked through to Guam. (Two different airlines were involved and a careless clerk in Rome had bungled.) I was told I would have to exit the airport and then re-enter. I was a bit irked, but was then consoled by the thought that exiting the air terminal would give me a right to say I had visited Japan. On exiting the terminal I accordingly basked in the Japanese sun. I then went back into the terminal presuming that it would be easy to arrive at the check-in counters. I was wrong. There were no signs in English as I re-entered the building from which I had just emerged. I tried various possibilities, presuming that the entry into the check-in counters would be obvious. They were not. I began to be uneasy. I approached several Japanese who were coming and going, no foreigner being in sight. Each one panicked on being addressed in English. Not all Japanese know the language, at least not around Narita. My anxiety level was growing. I did not want to spend the rest of my life in Japan, much as I admired the Japanese. In desperation I decided I would try to re-enter by way of the way I had exited. This would mean going

against security. I prayed that I would not end up riddled with machine gun bullets or in a Japanese jail. I did manage to get a security man quite excited, but he at least could speak English, and he said to get to the check-in counters I would have to go to the entrance foyer and take a corridor on my left and go to an elevator and take the elevator to the fourth floor. This I did, with check-through bag in hand. It worked. On the fourth-floor I found a raft of genuine check-in counters. The rest was easy. On my way out of Guam I was given VIP treatment at the Guam airport on the strength of my Roman collar (Guam is 80% Catholic). Protests availed naught. My fellow travelers looked as though they thought this was normal, so my conscience was at ease. At Narita I had to wait two hours or more for my connecting flight to Amsterdam, so I settled back to enjoy my airport habit of looking at my fellow travelers. There were few non-Japanese. But many Japanese. In the space of time I was there I saw hundreds and hundreds who passed me by. In all this throng I saw one person—a man—whom I would consider overweight. I was impressed. Would that I could say the same for spending a couple of hours at a U.S. airport.

147) **O**nce, when faced with a scheduled arrival at the airport in Dakar in Senegal at night, I was perplexed as to a place to stay when I arrived. There was no Jesuit residence in the city, nor any community of Mother Teresa's sisters who could have recommended lodging for me. The following morning I was due to go to the Catholic seminary on the outskirts of the city where a meeting of African Catholic exegetes was in progress. One of my former students from the Pontifical Biblical Institute who worked for the Vatican's diplomatic service heard of my problem and suggested that since I worked for the Vatican (the PONTIFICAL Biblical Institute) I could legitimately contact the nuntiature in Senegal and ask for help. With some hesitation I did so and was most pleased with the result. The nuncio said he would be unable to meet me at the airport (!—that he would even think of doing so never occurred to me) but would send a driver. This was most helpful, for trying to get transportation at 9 p.m. from an African airport to an address I knew nothing of did not strike me as a foolproof operation. And so I arrived on a direct flight from Paris, and so indeed was I met by a driver from the nuntiature who drove me to the building and escorted me to my room. The nuntiature

was hosting a reception that evening (thus explaining the nuntio's inability to meet me at the airport), and I could here the murmur of conversation as I went to my room. The driver proved most congenial. The next morning he drove me to the seminary and on the way discussed with great animation the house he was planning to build at the beginning of his retirement. The nuncio and his staff proved most hospitable, and I stayed two days with them as I prepared to return to Rome. A most pleasant experience.

148) In mid-winter I handed the final draft of my dissertation at Oxford and was faced with a period of forced inactivity until I heard from the two examiners. (Which I did, but only after the reasonable period of six weeks or so..) I was faced with a sort of *post partum* syndrome, an experience of emptiness felt by women who have given birth. My dissertation had been with me night and day for more than nine months, and I knew I would have to do something to avoid a let-down. I asked my superior at Campion Hall, Oxford, if I could take a holiday (not vacation—we are in England) and visit the Jesuit parish in Bristol. (Now no longer in Jesuit hands.) He was most gracious, enthusiastic even, about my going there. A telephone call to assure that I would be welcome and off I went by public bus. It was a fair distance, as distances in England go, to Bristol, but well within a day's travel, and so it was that I arrived the evening of the next day. I spent a day or two exploring the port area of the city and visited some sites where Methodism began. It was fairly easy to find my way around the port area, but the greater part of the city-center was a bewildering maze of streets running up and down hills at indecipherable angles. After exploring the city a bit I asked the local Jesuits for advice on visiting other notable places in the area. One which caught my attention immediately was the possibility of visiting the grave of Msgr. Ronald Knox, the famous convert to the Catholic Church, a commanding figure in the English religious and literary scene in the first half of the 20th century. He was buried, so I was told, in a Church of England graveyard in a small village some distance from Bristol. I thought it well worth the effort to visit the site even though it was bitterly cold outside. I consulted local bus schedules for Mells, the site of St. Andrew's Church of England church where he was buried in an ecumenical graveyard. I quickly came to the conclusion that public busses were out—I could not feature myself waiting at a lonely country bus stop for an hour.

The only solution was thumbing, since I had no automobile. I easily arrived at a point within striking distance of Mells when a middle-aged gentleman stopped to pick me up. He asked where I was headed. "Mells", I said. "That's where I live", he replied. "I would like to visit the grave of Msgr. Knox", I said. "I used to serve his Mass", was the reply. Divine Providence helps drunks, U.S. foreign policy (Bismarck) and Jesuits wandering the back woods of Somerset. When we arrived my host pointed out the grave. I paid my respects with a prayer and, armed with an unforgettable memory, headed back to Bristol.

149) **W**hen walking once along a deserted road on the main island of Malta (yes, there are deserted roads on Malta) a gentleman in a stately black car stopped alongside me and asked if I wanted a ride. Actually I didn't, for I was enjoying the morning air and the Maltese scenery. But, thinking it would be impolite to refuse, I accepted and climbed aboard. When he left me off where I wanted to go he said "That will be one pound, please". I was naturally irked, and for a moment wanted to argue. But then Christianity perked up its head and I gave him the money with no demurrer. In a split second I had concluded that it would be churlish of me to refuse. I really wouldn't miss a Maltese pound, whereas he was clearly in need of business—a lonely country road in Malta is not the neighborhood of Charing Cross in London. I wished him well. I still do. A learning experience much to my good.

150) **M**y sister and brother-in-law from the States had just landed in Shannon and, after my brother-in-law had rented a car, the three of us were riding through the Irish countryside. We entered a village and were about to exit it when a member of the local constabulary pulled us over. He addressed my brother-in-law who was, of course, in the front seat to the right, behind the steering wheel. I was to his left. The policeman was ever so courteous: "Now, sir, I perceive that you are not a citizen of this country. Now, sir, we have our own regulations for driving and you have just violated one of our laws". He glanced over to me and for the first time noticed that a Roman collar was aboard. "But I am sure, sir, that you will obey our laws from now on and I wish a pleasant stay in our country". He saluted sharply and my brother-in-law drove off, leaving the scene of his crime with official permission.

“Keep that Roman collar on and stay right where you are”, he said to me.

151) The Missionaries of Charity (that is, the sisters founded by Mother Teresa) have a nursery in Calcutta under the supervision of a member of the congregation who is a certified nurse. In Calcutta, if a new-born child is found abandoned the police have to attempt to identify the mother. If, after 24 hours, this is fruitless, they go to a judge who authorizes them to give the infant to this nursery. The nursery in question has a section with dozens of cribs with such infants, in blocks of 10 or 12. Each block is under the care of a woman, married or unmarried. When I visited the nursery some years ago under the guidance of the sister in charge I asked if she had much trouble getting women to staff the positions. “Are they well paid?”, I asked. “Not really”, the sister answered, “but we have no trouble getting the positions filled, because the women know they will not be sexually harrassed here”.

152) I have visited Northern Ireland only once, as guest of a former student who is a Redemptorist priest. He took me to the Redemptorist monastery on the Falls River Road in Belfast. In the evening a helicopter hovered 500 feet overhead—the monastery was considered the geographical center where problems might erupt. British Tommies fully armed who looked like high-school sophomores to me walked in the neighborhood. As I gazed out a side window on the second floor of the monastery I saw a steel wall about 20 feet high only a few feet away. On the other side was a Union Jack displayed to avoid any suspicion as to which side was which. Nearer at hand, on the Catholic side, were some apparently abandoned houses where previous generations of Catholic families had lived. They were unbelievably small. I tried to imagine growing up in a family in such a cramped setting. A good reminder that space is an important part of growing up, but not the most important part.

153) The Catholic seminary at Rolduc in the diocese of Roermond was known to me long before I was ever invited to teach there. A long essay could be written about the place, especially the most

important part, the faculty and students. But noteworthy persons are not hard to find in seminaries. What was unusual about Rolduc was its situation on the frontier between the Netherlands and Germany. My room in the seminary was within about 60 seconds walking time of Germany in one direction, and about four minutes walking time in another. The border was quite irregular because the frontier was carved out to make sure that the seminary was in the Netherlands. When I was first there the Schengen Agreement had made border guards unnecessary, so one had the luxury of crossing from the Netherlands to Germany and back unimpeded. This had practical effects. One faculty member told me he purchased his groceries in the Netherlands and his gasoline in Germany and saved an appreciable amount of money thereby. There were also curiosities: close by the seminary was an office building which straddled the boundary. As a result, if one needed to sign a contract in Germany one merely went to one end of the building; in the Netherlands, to the other. A row of houses was pointed out to me which had the house in one country and the garage in the back in the other. The open border made life easier for the cleaning ladies, who came mainly from Germany. All spoke Dutch as well as German, of course. But it made communication more intriguing. And probably one's sense of identity more catholic.

154) On one of my Holy Week assignments I worked in Cuneo, a small town in Piedmont. In the town was a family of three sisters with their mother. They had a brother who was a Jesuit stationed in Rome. Two of the sisters were blind from birth. The third sister, who had normal vision, had dedicated her life to making sure that her two blind sisters had as full a life as possible. None of the three had ever married. One of the blind sisters was a teacher in a local conservatory of music. She played classical music faultlessly and beautifully, entirely from memory. She had hundreds of pieces memorized. The other sister taught Latin in a local Italian classical *liceo*. As a hobby she edited medieval Latin texts. Her brother in Rome would find a suitable text and e-mail it to her. She had a Japanese-made machine that translated the texts into braille, and she worked with these. When I was visiting them she challenged me to see who could translate a text faster—she who read the braille or I who read the accompanying printed Latin text. I read as fast as I could, but she easily matched me. All three

sisters were examples of the dignity of the human person in action, monuments against self-pity. I recall them all (with their mother and brother) with profound love and respect.

155) Years ago the Secretary General of the world-wide Society of Jesus (aka the Jesuits) was a son of Colorado in the U.S.A. The position has considerable importance within the Society, because it demands knowledge of languages (at that time including Latin), the ability to work long hours, and the ability to get along with persons of considerably varying nationalities. Once, the story goes (and I heard it from the secretary's own lips) the secretary was sent on a confidential mission by the Jesuit general superior to Austria. Travel then was by train, and said secretary thought it wise to spend the night on the way at a Jesuit community in Milan. He arrived in the afternoon and was shown to an undusted room with a lone light bulb dangling from a cord at the upper extremities of the large building. Not a room one would expect to be assigned to the holder of such an important position. But said secretary was an old-shoe type and though he thought his sleeping arrangements a bit odd he said nothing: life had challenges which were really formidable, and this was hardly one of them. That night after evening meal the Jesuits of the community were gathered together in the recreation room having coffee (as Italian Jesuits are wont to do) and someone asked said secretary who he was. He gave him his name. And "what do you do?" he was asked. "I'm secretary", he replied. "Secretary of what?" continued his interlocutor, with a number of interested spectators gathering around. "Why, of the Society of Jesus", was the simple reply. There was a stunned silence. Then movement in the background. A minute or so later the assistant superior who had assigned the sleeping quarters to the visitor appeared before the embarrassed secretary and, on his knees, humbly asked his pardon, while visions of some Jesuit Siberia ran through said suppliant's head. Said secretary had to struggle to keep from laughing for no such retribution had never even occurred to him. He was not that type of person. He was discomfited by the local superior's discomfiture. But, it occurs to me as I hazard a guess in retrospect, from that time on the name of the Secretary General of the Society of Jesus was probably well known in the community.

156) Back in the 1960s a high school friend of mine wrote me to ask my help. His wife had been diagnosed with cancer and the two of them, both very pious Catholics, had contacted the local archbishop of St. Louis at the time asking his advice about praying for a miracle. They wanted to contact the cardinal in Rome responsible for the congregation which was appropriate in order to make sure that the formalites for such prayer were in line with what the Catholic Church wanted. The archbishop had contacted Rome and was told that Cardinal Enrico Dante was the appropriate cardinal to contact. When contacted, Cardinal Dante said he would gladly receive the couple but he was confined to his bed in an apartment near St. Peter's Square. For the couple this made no difference, of course, so arrangements were made for them, with me as the translator, to visit Cardinal Dante in the afternoon. The apartment where he was bedridden (he was on his death bed, as it turned out) was owned by the Vatican but given to the cardinal and his family to use during his lifetime. The family was taking care of their distinguished relative. We arrived at the address given us, a stately building on the Via della Conciliazione (the avenue created by Mussolini leading from the Tiber to St. Peter's Basilica to commemorate the reconciliation of the Italian State and the Vatican after the decades of estrangement following on the capture of Rome in 1870) and were greeted by a member of the family who ushered us immediately into the cardinal's bedroom. He was most gracious, apologizing for his condition. His mind was perfectly clear. In a few minutes he told me what must be done to meet the Church's requirements for praying for a cure of the wife's lung cancer which would serve as a recognized miracle for the canonization of a saint. (I forget the name of the blessed whose intercession they were praying for.) With their mission accomplished they excused themselves, not wishing to tire the cardinal. A member of the cardinal's family invited them for tea in a different part of the apartment. I was about to follow them when the cardinal said he would like to talk to me. There was nothing momentous in what he had to say—he was just a bit lonely and wanted to take the chance to talk with an American who spoke a bit of Italian. Cardinal Dante was a famous person back then, having been the master of ceremonies for Pope Pius XII during a good part of the pope's pontificate. I recalled seeing pictures of papal ceremonies with Pope Pius XII officiating and the crew-cut Msgr. Dante at his side. I welcomed the opportunity to speak to a person who had known one of the great figures in the

history of the papacy. Cardinal Dante was clearly proud of his career as minister of ceremonies—he knew exactly how many Holy Weeks, how many Christmases, how many canonizations, how many ordinations, etc. he had been on the altar with the pope. I asked him what he had done while not helping Pius XII on the altar. He said he was a professor of philosophy at the Lateran University. I asked him if he was a Thomist. “*Certo!*” he replied with unmistakable pride. It turned out that he was also a soccer coach of a local team. We chatted on until my U.S. couple appeared, and together we exited the apartment. Not your typical afternoon in Rome. At least, not my typical afternoon in Rome.

157) During my summer in West Berlin in 1959 I lived in the priest’s quarter’s of a large Good Shepherd Convent in the district of Marienfelde. This was in the American sector of the occupied city. Berlin is a huge city, geographically speaking, with an abundance of parks and lakes. I was walking in a park not far from the convent when I came across a group of GI’s amiably hitting out fly balls. It was a wonderful sunny day, even hot (the summer of 1959 in Berlin was unusually warm). The temptation was too great. I went over to a GI (they were all in civilian attire, of course), introduced myself as an American abroad, and asked if I could join in. He affably gave his approval so I took off my light jacket and laid it out of the way, picked up a spare glove, and joined the group catching flies. I devoted a half-hour to this delightful diversion when one of the other men came up to me and asked if I wanted to go with them to a regular game in Frankfurt over the week-end with other U.S. army men. I was a good field, no hit sort of player so I guess my performance in shagging flies impressed him. When I explained I was not in the army he said, “That doesn’t make any difference. Come on with us, We are flying down to Frankfurt over the week end”. I was a bit taken aback when my excuse did not work, so I had to explain who I really was and how I had obligations over the week-end. And so I missed a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a trip to Frankfurt at the expense of the U.S. taxpayer. Who knows if there were any big-league scouts in the stands down there? But after a couple of bats my Jesuit vocation would have remained secure.

158) In May of 1959 I began my journey to West Berlin by taking

a train from St. Louis to Washington, D.C. This was the time when trains were beginning to be phased out in favor of travel by interstate highways or jet airplanes. I called Union Station in May to begin the process of buying a ticket. A female voice answered with a cheery “Good morning” and I artlessly asked, “Is the Baltimore and Ohio train to Washington D.C. still running?” There was an audible gasp at the other end of the line, and the female voice said, “Sir, that train will run as long as this station stands”.

159) For decades the Jesuits of Regis College and High School in Denver had a “villa” on the Western Slope of the Continental Divide near the town of Fraser. The elevation was 8,400 feet. For anyone who loved mountains and forests it was a paradise. Unfortunately it was only a mile from Winter Park, a popular ski area only 75 miles from Denver—now what were meadows and forests are asphalt roads and hot tubs and condominiums. Fraser was chilly—in summer the temperature was down in the 30s in the morning, and could get to minus 45 in the winter. It had the reputation of being the coldest spot in the continental U.S.A. I spent four delightful summers in the log cabins of our villa, teaching catechism to some of the local children, playing bridge on rainy days, and going on hikes on the surrounding snow-capped peaks. We had some good friends among the permanent inhabitants. One such was a veteran who knew all the best fishing spots. Once he showed up at our kitchen and asked “Can you folks use some fresh trout”. After an affirmative reply and the indication of a sink in which to put them he opened his hamper and poured out 43 freshly-caught trout. Years later I visited him and his wife in the county seat of Granby. A stream ran through the center of town. The wife had picked me up at our villa and driven the 20 miles to Granby with me. Before going to their home in the middle of town we checked in on the husband. He was fishing in the stream which cut through the town, and when we asked how the fishing was he said “Terrible”. So when he appeared at his home two hours later with his hamper I expected a meager catch. But with no further ado he poured out 12 large trout into the kitchen sink. To this day I am not sure if his “Terrible” was said facetiously or not.

160) During my three years of teaching at Regis High School in

Denver (September 1952 – June 1955) I was often delegated as the driver of a 12-passenger De Soto. I often acted in this capacity for a number of my fellow Jesuits for excursions into the Rocky Mountains. One morning several of us piled into said De Soto in Denver and headed for the Jesuit villa near Fraser, on the western slope. It was June 21 of, I believe, 1953. We had to pick up another Jesuit several miles away in Denver, which we did. The temperature, under a bright sun, was 83 degrees. We loaded his gear aboard (we were going to spend more than two months in our log cabins, teaching catechism to the local children, hiking, and playing bridge on rainy days). I steered the car west to Golden and the foothills. Dark clouds loomed over the highest peaks, It began to rain. The temperature began to drop. We were headed for Berthoud Pass, at 11,300 feet the only way over the Rockies in the area (the age before the interstates). We began the hairpins. The temperature kept dropping. As we ascended, snow began to appear with the rain. When we arrived at the refreshment area at the top of the pass it was snowing heavily. Tourists were throwing snowballs. I heard a voice with a southern drawl cry out, "Mississippi was never like this". After a bit of refreshment we began the descent into the Fraser Valley. The snow gradually changed into rain. About three hours after leaving Denver we arrived at the villa. Ascending and descending was made slower by the snowy roads. Our villa season had begun.

161) A distant relative of mine, now long dead, was a farmer. His farm was on the bluffs overlooking the Missouri River, about 25 miles east of Jefferson City, the capital of Missouri. In the early 20s of the 1900s he was in his fields when he noticed an airplane landing in one of his meadows. Naturally curious as to what was happening on his property he hastened over to greet the young man who had descended from the cockpit. My cousin asked the young man what had happened, and he replied that he had lost his bearings. "Where am I?" he asked. "About 25 miles east of Jefferson City. That river down there is the Missouri. What's your name, young man?" "Charles Lindbergh" the young man replied.

162) Once, when exiting a security check-point in the Seattle-Tacoma airport, a woman with two little girls in tow inadvertently cut in front of me. When she realized what she had done she

turned to apologize to me. "Don't let it bother you", I replied, "mothers have absolute rights of precedence in my book". "Yes", she returned, smiling, "I have three children in tow", pointing to her two little girls and her six foot two husband, who acknowledged the truth of his wife's remark with a sheepish smile.

163) In the Acts of the Apostles 16,11-15 Luke describes how Paul and Lydia met on the outskirts of Philippi, and how Lydia became a Christian and how she succeeded in having Paul for a house guest. In 1990 I had an opportunity to visit Philippi and walk to the outskirts of the ancient town to the site of this momentous meeting. Before arriving I fancied that the actual site was now in the midst of a jumble of houses and that the stream referred to in the passage in Acts was buried under asphalt. Imagine my surprise when I saw the reality. It looks today much as must have looked when Paul and Lydia met. The stream is a typical mountain stream, shallow and fast moving and cold. It is only about fifteen feet wide, and flows between banks ten or twelve feet high. The water is crystal clear. All around are empty fields where crops grow. There is a Greek Orthodox church and a small building selling souvenirs and a small cemetery with a modest-sized parking lot. It did not take much of an imagination to see a small group of persons praying in such a suggestive spot. Today steps descend to a small pool on the right bank of the stream where baptisms are performed. The spot is moving in its simplicity. One can almost hear Lydia's voice as she presses her hospitality on Paul.

164) Above my computer hangs a reproduction of Michelangelo's *Doni tondo*, a work of the young artist at the beginning of his fabled career. Michelangelo was an extraordinarily gifted individual, but what makes him particularly interesting is the fact that he was a believer, and an intelligent believer at that. The *Doni tondo* is rich in symbolism, and I regularly regard its different details in an attempt to decipher what the artist was attempting to convey. The symbolism is much discussed, but unanimity is far from being achieved. Perhaps it never will be. But the symbolism of the plants in the picture seems to indicate a reference to a quotation of Rabanus Maurus which states that Christ represents

the union of the Divinity which He receives from the Father with the Humanity which he receives from the Virgin. This, together with the way the principal figures in the *tondo* are posed, suggests to me that the elderly father-figure in the background is not St. Joseph, as the father-figure is often taken as representing, but God the Father, who, as the ontological Father of Jesus, is handing the Christ child to the Virgin, i.e., exercising His role as Father by handing Christ over to the Child's Mother. In implicitly retaining His role as Father the Father hands the Child over to the Virgin so that she may begin to exercise her role as Mother. This explanation for me is stunningly effective, for it explains the gesture of the male figure handing over the Child to His mother: the gesture originates with the male figure, thus indicating the priority of the role of Father in the divinity of the Child as over against the humanity indicated by Mary. Conventional interpretations which see in the male figure St. Joseph are unable to give an account of the gesture. Much more remains to be interpreted, of course, but this seems to me a solid foundation on which a fuller explanation can be based. (The nude male figures in the background I take as symbolizing the presumed active role of the male in generating human life, which is the background for understanding analogically the generation of the Son by the Father within the Trinity. The juvenile figure of John the Baptist to the right is looking up to the Holy Spirit. The waters of the Jordan in which he is immersed represents the divide between paganism and Christianity.)

165) Once, while walking around London to take in a bit of the atmosphere of a great city, I was walking around the circle that encompasses the famous fountain at the center of Trafalgar Square and came face-to-face with a member of my Jesuit province, Missouri. He was Fr. James Burke, S.J., known affectionately in the province as "Slippery Jim" because he was one of the most guileless creatures ever to leave the hand of God. He was from a sheep-raising family in Wyoming. We were both surprised, obviously, but managed to overcome our surprise with an amiable exchange of information. On another chance encounter I met another Jesuit I knew in front of the train station in Venice. After exchanging greetings my friend confessed that he was terrified by his surroundings. How anyone could be terrified by Venice was beyond my capacity to understand and remains so to

this day, May they both, long dead, rest in peace.

166) At a meeting of Scripture persons on the campus of the famed Notre Dame University in Indiana an experience of one of the non-Americans caused considerable amusement mixed with a bit of indignation among the participants once it was known. One of the participants in the meeting was from Australia. During a lull in the day's activities he was wandering around the campus and happened on a practice session of the famed football team of said university, He was gazing on the scene in all innocence when an assistant coach came over to him and reprimanded him for spying. The Australian could not have distinguished a tight-end from a water boy, hence the amusement among the other, U.S., participants. But the fact that the practice session was in full view, with no canvas guards to block the vision of anyone walking around the campus, was a source of indignation. He who wants legitimately to act secretly should act secretly legitimately.

167) Not too many years ago I was at a garden party in Washington, D.C., well inside the beltway. I was conversing with a Catholic gentleman who was quite loyal to his faith as well quite knowledgeable about U.S. politics, as people living inside the beltway normally are. In the course of our conversation we began talking about abortion and the official position of the Catholic Church in the United States. I stated that the U.S. bishops had always relied on natural law principles, i.e., reason, in making their case for a pro-life position. He said he hadn't realized this. I thought that if *he* hadn't realized it, 95% of people in the U.S., Catholics and non-Catholics, hadn't realized it either. No wonder the view that the Catholic Church is trying to impose its beliefs on non-Catholics (something forbidden by Church law) is so widespread.

168) While on a brief visit to the California town of Palmdale I was impressed by several things. One was the geographical lay of the city. To get there from the suburb of Alhambra one journeyed by automobile through affluent suburbs while steadily climbing. And all of a sudden one found oneself in a national forest. This

continued for some time and then all of a sudden one found oneself in a desert—the edge of the Mojave. One was soon in Palmdale, which is inhabited (at least when I saw it) only in the first 30 or so of its 200 blocks. Most of the city was laid out with surveyor sticks until 198th street, where a few dwellings appear. Among these were the retreat house and nursery school run by the sisters who were my hosts. At the nursery school I asked if they ever encountered rattlesnakes. I was told that during the previous six years no rattlesnake had been encountered until the day before my arrival, when a particularly dangerous type was found curled up and enjoying the shade in the playground of the nursery school. (It was quickly dispatched with a spade.) When moving on to the retreat house about 200 yards away I was given a choice between walking through the scrub or riding in a golf cart. For some reason I chose the golf cart. As we were departing I suddenly felt very thirsty and was told that a store in the inhabited part of the town sold bottled water. I went inside and found that the store was owned and run by an Orthodox Christian from Syria, inasmuch as I had visited Syria years before I talked a bit about my experiences there. I asked him how he was being treated in America. Not to my surprise, he said that he was being treated very well. When it came time for me to ask for a bottle of water he refused payment. And gave me an extra bottle to boot. I tried to force my money on him, but he refused. Memorable place, Palmdale.

169) In the summer of 1970 the rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, Fr. Carlo Maria Martini, S.J., taught during a summer session at the University of San Francisco. (His English was quite respectable.) At the end of the course he stopped at my native St. Louis (I was home for the summer, teaching a course at Saint Louis University). He arrived at Lambert Airport in St. Louis in mid-afternoon of a very warm August day—the temperature read 93 degrees. When we met I apologized for the heat. “It feels good”, he replied, “I froze in San Francisco all summer”. My sister and her husband had a party in his honor. The last guests departed at 1:30 a.m. I apologized. “I loved every minute”, he countered. “In San Francisco the authorities were most solicitous in helping us spend our week-ends. They took us to the zoo, to the cathedral, to the ocean to see the seals, and so on. But I wanted to meet people”. Martini was a people-person. No wonder he was

popular with the people of Milano where he became a well-loved archbishop and cardinal.

170) Reading Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is like living a long life in a foreign country that is strangely familiar. My favorite scene is when Platon Karataev, a simple soul who dutifully accepted the weaknesses involved in being a child of God, is sitting under a tree by the side of the road as part of a group of Russian prisoners. He had been mistakingly taken as a criminal during the brief occupation of Moscow by the French under Napoleon. The ordinary soldiers in the French army were severely constrained by the lack of transport, and killed off any of the prisoners who were too weak to keep up with the army on foot. Karataev had become increasingly weak, and was sitting under a tree by the side of the road. His friend Pierre (the principal hero of the novel) sees Karataev and senses the situation. He himself would like to be with Karataev at the end of his friend's life, but he realizes the French soldiers would probably take his life with Karataev's. Tolstoy writes: "Karataev looked at Pierre with his kindly round eyes now filled with tears, evidently wishing him to come near that he might say something to him. But Pierre was not sufficiently sure of himself. He made as if he did not notice that look, and moved hastily away." As the retreat resumes Pierre sees two French soldiers talking over Karataev's head as he still sat by the side of the road. A few moments later, as Pierre is absorbed in his own safety, a shot rings out. Pierre, himself exhausted, does not grasp the meaning of the shot at first. "Behind him, where Karataev had been sitting, Karataev's dog began to howl. 'What a stupid beast! Why is it howling?' thought Pierre. His comrades, the prisoner-soldiers walking beside him, avoided looking back at the place where the shot had been fired and the dog was howling, just as Pierre did, but there was a set look on all their faces."

171) While on a bus in Rome I was feeling in a mischievous mood as I talked with a fellow American priest. We were speaking English, of course, but all around us were Italian-speaking Romans. For some reason we were speaking of California, and I said, "Most Americans would be quite content if the Sant'Andreas Fault would go into action and the entire state of California would detach itself from the mainland and just float out into the Pacific".

My friend smiled—and so did many of the Romans around us.

172) During the summer of 1973 I worked in a parish in La Rochelle to try to lessen my imperfections in speaking French. I naturally met some of the parishioners. One lady spoke about life in the city during World War II when La Rochelle was under German occupation. She had two young girls at the time who were attending a grade school some distance from her home. To make sure that they arrived safe and sound at the school for the beginning of the school day she sent two large dogs to escort them. Mission accomplished, the dogs returned home. When the closing hour arrived she said to the dogs, “Go get the girls”. Which they faithfully did. Nothing quite matches the loyalty of a pet dog.

173) After a meeting in Hong Kong I was sitting next to a priest from Poland in the departure area of the old airport. He was waiting for his flight to Frankfurt, from where he would proceed to Krakow. I was waiting for my flight to Milan, from where I would proceed to Rome. We were speaking in Italian, of course. He had studied at the Pontifical Biblical Institute where I was a professor. He had represented Poland at the meeting, and I had represented the Biblical Institute. I had never made his acquaintance. “What part of Poland are you from?” I asked. “Krakow”, he replied. Krakow of course was the diocese where Karol Wojtyla had been bishop before becoming John Paul II. “Did you know our present Holy Father?” I queried. “Yes”, he replied. “I used to serve his Mass”. And then, almost as an irrelevant afterthought, he added, “I was his private secretary in Rome during Vatican II”. “You are going to write your memoirs, of course”, I observed. “No, I foolishly destroyed all my notes”, he replied. “But your memories can give you enough to make some kind of publication worthwhile”, I pressed on. “Perhaps”, he countered. But he didn’t sound too committed to the idea. During Vatican II the priest was a student at the Biblical Institute, and Wojtyla was eager to make use of the priest’s knowledge of the Bible. “The cardinal knew Scripture well”, the priest remembered, “but he couldn’t remember where the texts came from. It was my job to get the exact chapter and verse”. An interesting piece of trivia about one of the great figures of the modern Catholic Church.

On second thought, skip the “modern”.

174) **T**he English love animals. This is a well-known fact of English life. In the last of my three years at Oxford a mother duck succeeded in having her nest in our modest-sized garden. When the ducklings (five or six, as I recall) were able to walk, the mother proudly led them out of the garden and unerringly toward the Isis (Thames) two blocks away. She took them by the nearest route, right down a main street. Naturally she was given absolute precedence by all and sundry. Drivers good-naturedly made detours, bobbies kept pedestrians at a distance, bystanders looked on approvingly. By no means a dismal day for ducks in this university town.

175) **T**wo or three times before the advent of low-fare airlines in Europe I took the cheapest train route from Rome to London. I was in the same wagon all the way to the Channel, of course. For the Channel there was the ferry, and from the ferry the boat train to London. Once my train from Rome arrived too late for the last ferry, and we were advised we would have to spend the night in our wagon (not a sleeping car) until the first ferry at 3:30 a.m. Not an inviting prospect. We were in the port of Dieppe, famous for the World War II evacuation of the bulk of the British troops after the collapse of France in May of 1940. I got off the train and searched for a Catholic church. It did not take long to find one. The priests were most obliging, giving me a meal and a chance to say Mass in the morning before taking a Channel ferry at a civilized hour. The railroad authorities were not entirely above suspicion: the notice of the fate of us passengers was given to us in the form of mimeographed bulletins. Obviously what had happened to us was not unusual. Fair enough. But they should consider revising the schedule and advising the passengers accordingly.

176) **W**hile in the Philippines in the summer of 1999 to give a retreat to some of the Filipino bishops and conferences to some of the country's seminaries, I managed to visit a various parts of the islands. One of the most moving sites was the place on Mactan Island, not far from Cebu City, where Ferdinand Magellan was killed. A giant cross marks the spot. It was a moving experience to

visit the place, in a rather isolated area on a rather heavily settled island. And to think back on the heroism of him and his men and so many of the other explorers who sailed the oceans in those days.

177) In 2006 I taught for a month at the papal seminary in Pune/Poona in northwest India (four or five hours by automobile south and east of Mumbai/Bombay. The seminary had originally been in Sri Lanka/Ceylon, but had been moved to India for a variety of reasons. At the time of the move Pune was a much smaller city than it is now, developing rapidly as it is has because of its computer-related resources. The seminary was situated in what was at the time a large open field of many acres, completely undeveloped. Now, with the growth of the city and of the seminary, the undeveloped space is smaller. But it is still a bit wild, overgrown with waist-high grass. I was assigned a room in the infirmary of the Jesuit seminary, in a section which had been recently built as an addition to the area for the sick. It was a pleasant room, with French windows looking out on a small veranda which, in turn, gave onto the waist-high grass. When I began my stay I used to keep the French windows open when I slept in order to enjoy the fresh air. But then the superior of the seminary remarked to me that two weeks before my arrival a cobra had been killed right below the veranda of my room. That ended the sleeping with French windows open. (Cobras of course can attack without provocation.) But the memorable thing about my room at Pune was the maneuvering of Indian military jets in the airspace right over my head. Apparently the authorities of the air force had concluded that the undeveloped acres adjacent to the seminary were ideal for the ground which lay under said maneuvering, for it enabled a pilot to abandon his plane with a well-grounded hope that both he and it would not cause any problems as regards human life. (There was a military air base quite close to the seminary.) So it was that French Mirage jets regularly swooped to within a few hundred yards of the ground right above my head. They did make for spectacular viewing, even if the spectacle was a bit unnerving at times.

178) During the Holy Week I did pastoral work in my fiftieth and final diocese in Italy—Pavia—with the help of a former student of

the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome I obtained a post in the Basilica of St. Michael in the heart of the old city. To say that this parish church was old would be an exercise in understatement. In the middle of the main aisle was a round plaque in very clear black and white lettering stating that on this very spot Frederick II (“Stupor Mundi”) had been crowned “King of the Italians” in 1231. (Pavia, of course, had been the capital of the Lombards for centuries before Frederick appeared on the scene.) The parish had a physical memento from the 9th century. Its first mention in a written document goes back to the 600s. For centuries the town has had a famous university. Today the university is noted for its school of medicine which specializes in delicate surgery (e.g., heart transplants). In cooperation, the diocese has a hostel for the relatives of patients undergoing such surgery. Relatives stay for as long as necessary and pay what they can, the diocese making up the difference. During Holy Week no operations were scheduled, and so the hostel was empty. Thus I was able to enjoy the absolute silence of large building while not on duty at the basilica, a ten-minute walk away . I ate my meals with the Biblical Institute alumnus and his mother in their apartment adjacent to the basilica. Another resident of the apartment was Leo, a Siamese cat, who was constantly being lectured to by the *signora* but without the least signs of compliance. All of this could be looked on as a wonderful summing up of my five decades in the country—history in a very human context.

179) My high school years corresponded almost exactly with American’s participation in World War II—fall of 1941 to spring of 1945. Getting to the place from where I lived took between 35 and 45 minutes by street car as a rule, depending on the traffic. Traveling by automobile, so common nowadays for high schoolers, was rare then. First of all, America was not as affluent as it is today. And then gas rationing was a major obstacle. But, of course, public transportation was much better. One day after school was over I decided to hitch-hike part of the way home, probably to save time. America was a kindlier, gentler, safer place then, of course. My Jesuit high school frowned on hitch-hiking in the proximity of the school, probably as a sign of decorum. (We had to wear shirt and tie on the premises and even within 100 yards of the school.) But when I was what I felt was a suitable distance away from the building I went to the side of a moderately busy

street and stuck out my thumb. I was quickly picked up by an upper classman who, as it turned out, was one of my Jesuit high school's most famous graduates: Tom Dooley. Tom's family was well off, and I was not surprised that he was driving a car. We had a pleasant chat, he left me off at a convenient street car line, and that was that. The brief ride did not lead to a friendship. Tom of course went on to medical school and fame for his volunteer work as a doctor in Laos until his untimely death from cancer. I think it is not unfair to say that no one would have foreseen such a future for him. But then that is the prerogative of persons, to preside at major changes in their lives.

180) The first stop of my 51+ years in Europe was in a large Good Shepherd convent in the southern part of West Berlin. There was a community of about 50 sisters who supervised over 300 women who were being helped in various ways. The chaplain was a soft-spoken German diocesan priest from the city of Görlitz in what had been a German city before the Poles took it over as a result of boundary changes after World War II. He was a pleasant person who had heroically stood by the sisters all during World War II, including the Russian occupation of the city. He told me that when the first wave of Russian troops arrived the commanding officer came to the convent and told the chaplain that this first wave of troops were highly disciplined and that he and the sisters had nothing to worry about from them. "But when the next wave comes", he said, "watch out". And so it was he told me sadly. When I was there in the summer of '59 his mother came from Munich to visit him. In talking to me she said she and many other citizens of Munich were unaware of what kind of place Dachau was. I believe her and believe her still. (This does not mean that the German people were free of guilt in the conduct of the war, but once it began they were helpless. Many decent German citizens were horrified by what took place in World War II. But having put Hitler into power, it was too late to change things once the war started.) A few years after I left the convent for good the chaplain stopped by to visit me on his way home from his one and only visit to the Holy Land. He was obviously quite moved by the experience, as he had every right to be. He is long dead. As I think of him and think of my life and of the different scenarios Providence had arranged for the two of us to live out I feel strangely moved, as though I subconsciously learned from my

association with him more than I realize, and that he still has things to teach me. I remember once he took me to a soccer game in the huge stadium which Hitler built for the 1936 Olympics. This was the stadium where Jesse Owens taught Hitler a lesson which he never learned. The chaplain also took me out for some ice cream one afternoon. (It was a very warm summer—in the nineties.) He was constantly gracious. Looking back I am even more impressed by him now than I was at the time. May we meet again in the world to come, never to be parted.

181) **O**nce, in 1990, I was able to travel extensively in the Peloponnese in Greece. In traveling down a main highway I was told we were in “Arcadia”. I noticed that the scenery had somehow improved. I could see why the area was considered a sort of fairy land in ancient times. It was noon time and we stopped at a roadside restaurant. The owner had spent some years in Pittsburgh, and spoke respectable English. He was obviously pleased that our party of Greeks included an American. We were in a rather flat and empty part of the Peloponnese. In other parts of Arcadia there are towns and mountains. I later visited some of them. But for me my first impression of Arcadia remains. A sort of fairy land out in the country.

182) **A**ll during my fifty years in Rome a steady stream of visitors arrived in the city. Some more colorful than others. For example, there was the famous Fr. Kennedy, a renowned English spiritual director. He had been formed in the old school of classical Latin and Greek studies, and had an enviable memory. At that time the Roman Forum was relatively unmonitored, and most things were easily accessible. For example, the historic rostrum, about ten feet high, thirty feet long, and fifteen feet deep, with the notches for the rostra of captured enemy ships clearly visible in its front. Kennedy used to walk up and down on this rostrum (now no longer mountable) declaiming orations from Cicero which he knew by heart. Unfortunately he was a dying breed.

183) **A** number of times I participated as a priest in ceremonies in the vast piazza of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. Vesting for such occasions was inside the basilica. Presiding over stacks of freshly

washed and ironed albs were several Italian sisters. When a priest, bishop or cardinal came before them one of them sized him up with a practiced eye and then handed him the proper sized alb—small, medium or large. It didn't take much of an imagination for me to calculate the immense amount of labor involved in washing and ironing hundreds of albs the length of a grown man. I asked one sister how long she had been doing this work. "Forty-seven years" she replied. "Do you like it?", I asked, rather boldly. "Father, I love it", was her reply. Thus a look behind the scenes in St. Peter's Basilica.

184) Once when I was acting as chaplain for a spell at the convent in Beuerberg I was out on one of my early morning jogs. Jogging there was always a memorable experience, moving lazily along through the gorgeous Bavarian countryside. Forests, meadows, farm houses. I was on the return lap of a six-mile run when a gentleman flagged me down. "Are you the *Sportler* who is the priest at the convent?" he asked. News that the priest at the convent was a jogger had evidently spread far and wide. He then went on to say that when the first workers had arrived at the morning shift at a nearby small factory they had discovered the body of the night watchman in a ditch alongside the road leading to the factory. He had apparently had a heart attack as he walked around on his rounds, but managed to roll over into the ditch before dying. A circle of workers was standing reverently around the body, waiting for the police. They wanted me to give the man the last rites of the Church. The man's face was grey—he had evidently been dead for some time. But I had no problem with giving him conditional absolution. I was dripping perspiration and clad in running shorts and T-shirt. But by the time I could arrive at the convent, change, and return the body would have been long gone. The circle of workers looked on reverently as I said the words of absolution. I asked them to pray for the soul of the dead man. A sobering way to begin my day.

185) One of the more insightful theologians of the past century was Romano Guardini. Despite the Italian name he was thoroughly German. He was professor at the University of Munich. When visiting the university church one day I came across his name in the guide book. The book said he was buried under the

floor of the sanctuary of the church, but I looked and looked without success. Finally I found it, in the extreme righthand corner. Not every theologian ends up lying beneath the sanctuary floor of a university church. Let us hope it remains there until judgment day.

186) **While** visiting the island of Crete in the spring of 1990 I attempted to find the tomb of Nikos Kazantzakis. My guide book said he was buried at a gate of the city of Candia. I went to said gate and looked around. No grave. People were coming and going and without giving it any thought I attempted to stop a lady coming toward me on the sidewalk. To my embarrassment said lady waved me aside and marched on around me. Obviously in Candia a man should not attempt to converse with an unaccompanied lady even in a very public place. Chastened, I turned to a man at a newsstand. He succeeded in conveying to me that the grave was on top of the wall and indicated the stairs which I should ascend to arrive there. Sure enough, once on top of the wall there was the grave. I said a brief prayer for the deceased and then carefully committed the inscription on the grave to memory. It was in modern Greek, of course: "I believe in nothing. I hope in nothing. I am free". Rather bleak, and giving a rather mistaken view of freedom. I have seen a different version. Whether my memory is faulty, or whether the inscription was changed, I do not know. The inscription as I memorized it makes a good basis for discussing human freedom.

187) **When** the group of 25 priests I was a member of was visiting Iraq in July of 1976 we were the guests of a Franciscan monastery while in Baghdad. Our first night there the superior said that he didn't have enough rooms for all of us but he said that he could offer some of us cots on the roof under the open sky. I volunteered for the roof, not knowing what to expect. What a delightful surprise! As I lay on the cot the stars in the unpolluted atmosphere seemed to close that I felt I could reach up and touch them. Now the atmosphere is probably not so crystalline. What a pity. Looking up at the stars from a rooftop in Baghdad gave me a much better understand the ancients of biblical times, and God's word to Abraham that his offspring would be as the stars in the sky.

188) As I entered East Germany in June of 1959 I heard a public announcement on the loudspeaker in the station. We were in Magdeburg. "Travel in the German Democratic Republic without permission involves difficulty" said the voice in crystal clear German. I was thrilled because I was able to understand each word. I looked out of the window. There, right below me, were two sturdy German ladies in uniform and carrying automatic rifles. I got the message. Later on, when I was in West Berlin and contemplating a trip to the Luther sites in the DDR, I called up the U.S. consulate and asked for advice. "We can't stop you from going over to the east", came the encouraging reply, "but know that if something happens we can't help you because we do not recognize East Germany. But if you do decide to go please let us know when you plan to go over and then let us know when you get back". I decided not to inspect the Luther sites.

189) When I was a young Jesuit in the early '50s I met Fr. Harold Gardiner, S.J., the then literary critic of *America*, the Jesuit national opinion journal. I asked him if he thought I should read James Joyce's *Ulysses*. "Of course you should", he replied unhesitatingly. And so it was that I entered the Denver Public Library, wearing a Roman collar, and went to the card catalogue, where I found that said book had to be requested personally from a librarian. Which I did. She was a prim, elderly lady. When I made my request she looked at me over her reading glasses and said, "Very well. If you *insist*". She went to a nearby cabinet, pulled out a key, and pulled out the needed book. I read it all. A bit saucy, as it was reputed to be. I have to confess that I was not impressed. A collection of puns and erudite allusions. (I enjoyed Msgr. Ronald Knox's *A Spiritual Aeneid* much more.) Years later, when I was doing pastoral work in the Jesuit parish in Trieste, I looked out of my rectory window and saw in the beautiful little park beneath me a bust of Mr. Joyce. I went and visited the bust from close up as soon as I could, treating it like a meeting with an old friend. But I still think *Ulysses* is basically just a collection of puns and erudite allusions, and a bit saucy.

190) One summer in the nineties I was working as a chaplain in a convent in Veyrier, a suburb of Geneva. Veyrier was hard on the French border. The fence at the far end of the Veyrier cemetery showed a sag where people went illicitly back and forth between the two countries. (Groceries were cheaper in France.) The office for passport and customs control was a couple of blocks away. In a small hollow not far from this office was a peculiar maze of very low walls. This was a device to enable Jews to enter Swiss territory without going through passport control. It was sufficient for the Jew to get inside the first of the little spaces to escape the control of the occupying German forces of Vichy France. I suspect that the Germans were happy with the arrangement, which was in plain view, for it enabled them to get off the hook of enforcing anti-Semitic laws in an alien country.

191) When waiting in St. Louis for a flight to Los Angeles years ago I was approached by an elderly lady who identified herself as a Catholic, a widow and a lawyer. (My Roman collar was what undoubtedly attracted her.) She said she was returning from a visit to a daughter in Illinois. We chatted amiably and then boarded separately. To our surprise we turned out to be seatmates. We chatted some more, and then, by mutual tacit agreement, pulled out our onboard reading. To my immense surprise (and edification) she pulled out *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, a monthly much appreciated by the U.S. Catholic clergy. She was reading an article by Fr. James Schall, S.J. (so she told me), and volunteered the information that she was not certain she could agree with him on all the points he was making in the article. He was arguing (she said) that in discussing politics and social change we should abandon "rights" language and go back to the "virtue" language of Aristotle. We didn't go into the argument any further for I had not read the article. When I e-mailed my friend, Fr. Schall, about my experience he replied "The lady obviously has good taste in her reading matter".

192) During my formal education in the Society of Jesus I had a number of memorable teachers. Not the least of them was Fr. John C. Ford, S.J., a moral theology professor in New England. He came to where I was studying, in eastern Kansas, because the regular professor of moral theology at the institution where I was

studying, St. Mary's College, had a very weak heart and could not take the rigors of prolonged teaching. Fr. Ford was an amiable man who was finding it difficult to prevent the country cooking at my seminary from adding to his already ample girth. Little did I realize the privilege I had in studying under him. (Not all my classmates, I suspect, would be as grateful as I in retrospect.) For not many years after teaching in Kansas as well as his native New England he played a major role in the work preliminary to the drafting of *Humanae Vitae*, certainly one of the most contested documents of the papacy in modern times and one, I am proud to say, which I supported from its proclamation. (Though I did not know at the time of the role of Fr. Ford in its preparation.)

193) During a sabbatical year in Greece I lodged with the Greek Jesuit community in Athens. The community was responsible for a residence for university students and a parish. The community was situated in a spot between the railroad station and the national museum. In the spring of the eight months I was there national elections were called. In Greece at the time citizens had to vote in the place of one's birth, i.e., absentee ballots were not permitted. Inasmuch as all the Greek Jesuits were from one of the Greek islands, all would be absent for the Sunday of the election. This meant that there were only two Jesuits, a Frenchman and myself, to handle the Sunday Masses for the Greek parishioners. I had been celebrating Mass daily in Greek (i.e., a Latin Rite Mass in the vernacular), so the Mass was no challenge. But the homily was. I had given homilies in a variety of languages, but the prospect of giving a homily in Greek terrified me. I worked carefully in preparation with a Greek university student to make certain that the syntax was correct, the thought was clear, and the pronunciation was understandable. But when Mass time came I was dripping perspiration even though the church was by no means overly warm. The fifty or sixty Greeks who were present did not seem to notice. They were quite attentive, either out of courtesy or out of curiosity. Fortunately there were no more elections scheduled during my sabbatical.

194) During that same sabbatical year an event of possible international scandal was averted. My room in the community of Greek Jesuits was on the top floor with a balcony fronting a very

narrow street. When I cleaned my room with a dust mop I would go on the balcony to shake the dust out of it. Occasionally a Greek matron would be engaged in the same or similar exercises right across from me, only 25 feet away. I wasn't sure how I should act in the situation—should I greet the matrons or not? I asked one of the native Greek priests. He replied that he was not certain, but suggested that we consult some ladies of the parish. Which we did. A group of four or five ladies, married, talked the matter over for some time. As I remember the result, their advice was to wait for some signal from the matron, and then reply in an exact imitation of the signal in question. Such a signal never came about, as I recall. But subsequent life in Greece enlightened me as to the dominant role of the husband in married life. A false step and I could have been sued for alienation of affection.

195) **O**nce, when working during Holy Week in a parish in Italy, a friendly pastor took me on a tour of the neighborhood. We were not far from the Swiss frontier, near Lake Como. We came to a spot on a country road and he pulled over out of the way of traffic and we exited and stood at a certain spot indicated by some kind of sign as I recall. "This was the spot where Mussolini was executed by Communist partisans", he said. At the end of the war Italy was in turmoil in the north. Mussolini tried to take advantage of the confusion and flee in disguise to Switzerland whence he hoped to take a plane for Spain. He was accompanied by his mistress. When she was offered her freedom she refused to accept and died with him. Several other fascists were later killed as well. The bodies were then taken to Milan and hung up for public viewing. This unexpected encounter with Mussolini together with my visit to the spot in Berlin where Hitler's body was cremated after he committed suicide was a kind of closure for me to World War II. To the extent that wars have closures.

196) **W**hich brings to mind another contact I had with the legacy of Benito Mussolini on a superficial but memorable level. I had just visited or was about to visit some Jewish catacombs which lay under the Villa Torlonia on the Via Nomentana not far outside the ancient Aurelian Wall on the eastern side of Rome's *centro storico*. I was inside the Villa grounds, With me were two U.S. archeologists for whom the visit to the catacombs had been

arranged. At the time Villa Torlonia was not open to the general public because it was the object of litigation between the Torlonia family and the *commune* of Rome. For some reason there was a delay and I struck up a conversation with the Italian caretaker. He seldom had any visitors and was understandably eager to exchange a few words. I asked him how long he had had the job of caretaker, and he said "Since 1935". I was taken aback. At the time of my visit we were in the early 1970s and his claim was quite plausible. "This means that you must have known Mussolini" I said. (During Mussolini's rule his office was in the Palazzo Venezia in the center of Rome, but his domicile was in the villa in the small park which he had confiscated from the Torlonia family. Hence the litigation. The *commune* of Rome wanted to use the area for a public park, but the Torlonia family maintained that they were the legitimate owners.) "Indeed I did", he replied. "I was gatekeeper when he lived here. Do you want to see his private office?" "Of course", I said. And immediately he took me into the villa and showed me an office on the ground floor. Dust was literally an inch thick everywhere, for by court order nothing was supposed to be touched until the court case was settled. Just outside the office was a small garden, overgrown with weeds. Mussolini evidently used the office for matters that did not require his presence at the Palazzo Venezia. During his rule he caused a wide avenue to be cut through a residential neighborhood so that he could see the Colosseum over a half-mile away from his office in the Palazzo Venezia. The avenue ran between and over several *fora* from imperial Roman times. So in a brief space of time I had been exposed to Jewish catacombs (which all that that implies about the conquest of Jerusalem by Rome in 70 A.D.) from the second and third centuries A.D. and to the personal haunts of a key figure in World War II shown me by an eyewitness. There is no place like Rome for history.

197) Tolstoy never ceases to fascinate me. Not only his uncanny ability to portray the interior lives of his protagonists, and to convey the most subtle aspects of the interaction of persons, but his attempt to wrestle with the causes of historical events. *War and Peace* is a classic, perhaps *the* classic, example. He constantly refers to historical figures as he weaves the tapestry of the lives of the fictional characters in his many plots. And then there are the interminable pages which attempt to get at a philosophy (perhaps

even a theology) of history. How much he was influenced by Hegel is unknown to me, but then I am neither a scholar of Hegel nor a scholar of Tolstoy. Much as I admired his handling of fictional characters and the way they attempted to cope with the reality that constantly unfolded around them, I (presumptuously?) failed to arrive at approval of the way he attempted to handle the causality of the world he wrote about in this, my favorite “novel”. He seemed unable to come to terms with the possibility that Napoleon was in large part responsible for the havoc caused by his invasion of Russia in 1812. This runs counter to what his fictional characters seem to embody—personal responsibility for their decisions and the effect these decisions had on their lives. The catch, of course, is that individual decisions do not affect history individually: history is often the result of the interplay of many individual choices. The cause of this interplay is, I cheerfully admit, beyond my ability to comprehend. But not all elements of reality should be assumed to be intelligible by the human mind. This does not imply, however, that some elements of reality are not intelligible. Perhaps Tolstoy’s indecision is a tacit sign that this is the conclusion he has arrived at without being fully aware of the fact.

198) On December 7, 1941, my father was showing my cousin and me some ways to kick a soccer ball. It was a chilly Sunday afternoon in the suburb of St. Louis where we lived. I was a freshmen in high school and my cousin was in eighth grade. We had barely got underway in mid-afternoon when my younger sister, Caroline, who was 6 years old at the time, came wandering down to us bearing a note from our mother. “The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor this morning” the note said in my mother’s distinctive handwriting. All of us were mystified. My little sister was unable to give any particulars, so all of us walked the two hundred yards back to our house and tried to piece together what had happened. Communications, and in particular international communications, were much more primitive in those days, of course. And it was not for some time until we could figure out what had taken place. In the wake of all that we know now about Pearl Harbor and its aftermath this seems rather naïve, of course. It is so easy to judge the past by the present that many people don’t seem to know that there can be a problem involved.

199) One evening during my three years at the University of Oxford I was taking wine in the senior common room with a number of the other occupants of Campion Hall, just down the road from Christ Church and right next door to Worcester. Someone near me, noticing where my wine class was resting, told me to put my glass on another table and to turn the table over (it was quite small) and look at what was written on the underside of the top. This I did, and was amazed to read: "On this table Napoleon Bonaparte signed the surrender at Waterloo". There was no way to prove that this was true, of course, but then I had no way of proving that it was false. It was quite easy for me to imagine some British officer, in the confusion of the signing, telling his *aide-de-camp* to take the table when the dignitaries had left and see that it got to his estate across the Channel. From there it was also easy for me that a descendant of said British officer to donate said table to Fr. Martin D'Arcy, S.J., long-time rector of Campion Hall, and friend of many of the British nobility in the mid twentieth century. Some time later I had contact with Napoleon somewhere in the vicinity of La Rochelle in western France. I cannot recall if the precise place was on the mainland or one of the islands (Isle de Re, Isle d'Oleron?). I was shown the spot where Napoleon forever left France and boarded a small boat for a ship and exile on Saint Helena off the coast of Africa.

200) In 2002 I was in Lebanon for a meeting. I took the occasion to visit a former student of mine who was the superior of a monastery of Maronite monks high up on a hill north and east of Beirut. By coincidence, the evening of the day of my arrival coincided with the arrival of relics of the Little Flower. Her relics were on a grand tour but were visiting only in the dioceses where the local bishop had agreed to honor them. The relics were scheduled to arrive in the very large church connected with the monastery (it was a shrine dedicated to St. Chabel, a Lebanese hermit of over a hundred years before who lived where the monastery is now.) The relics were supposed to arrive at 7 p.m. and the church was packed with over 1,000 of the faithful. I was among fifteen or twenty priests who were to concelebrate. The rite was, of course, the Maronite, and the language was Arabic. I knew no Arabic, but someone gave me a pamphlet with the entire liturgical text. The priest next to me, who knew English, offered to

tell me when the words of consecration were about to be pronounced. It was some time before 7 p.m. and the people were kept occupied by the singing of hymns and the recitation of the rosary. All in Arabic of course. 7 p.m. came and went. Still no relics. At 8 p.m. or sometime thereafter the relics arrived in a case of polished wood carried by several men. As soon as they entered there was a prolonged applause such as I have never experienced before or after. Later the cause of the delay was explained. There were a number of villages on the hill on which the monastery was situated. At every Christian village a stop had been programmed so that the relics could be venerated. But the Muslim villages also wanted to venerate the relics. For these Muslims, apparently, a holy person is a holy person.

201) **O**ne of my numerous Spanish students at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome later became a canon at the famous shrine of Santiago de Compostela. He extended a standing invitation to me to visit him whenever I could. I was of course quite interested in accepting this invitation to visit this famous shrine of my patron saint, but the air fare always seemed a bit high. Then RyanAir announced a round-trip flight from Rome in the range of 85 euros. That did it. My student had assured me that he would take care of me when I arrived, and he more than kept his promise. About half of the twenty canons of the cathedral were inactive, for some reason or another, but that simply amplified his clout as a canon who was active. He asked the sacristan for a special place for saying Mass (immediately in front of the silver shrine of St. James' relics at a convenient time) for example, and it was arranged with no trouble. (I hope no other priest had his assignment changed because of this.) My host took me all round Salamanca during my whirl-wind visit of three days, and I saw much more than the average pilgrim. He accompanied me on all of these occasions and, of course, gave professional-level explanations and comments. The final day he apologized for having to teach a class at the local seminary. He supported his statement with the explanation that as a matter of principle he never skipped a class. After giving him sincere congratulations for honoring his principle even at the expense of a former teacher (Spanish students always seemed to have a special reverence for their teachers), I asked him what the class was to be on. "The parables of Jesus", he replied. "I'll take care of it" I said. (We were

speaking Italian—neither my Spanish nor his English was sufficiently under control to be an instrument of communication between us.) I thus pulled rank on the hapless canon, but I felt confident that a class on Luke 15, a chapter which I had just researched carefully, would be a justification by me for my hybris. We went to the majestic seminary for the class of about twenty seminarians and laymen. I spoke slowly in Italian, and they seemed able to follow. They asked questions in Spanish, most of which I understood and was able to answer on the spot in Italian. Everyone seemed to be happy with my interpretation of the chapter, which sees the principal protagonist to be not the prodigal son but the elder son. (Cf. Item #23 on my website.) After class we celebrated my teaching with a visit to nearby Finisterre, the westernmost point in continental Europe, prefaced by a luncheon at a nearby town that highlighted by the best-tasting wine I have ever sampled.

202) **W**ell into the new millennium I was the guest of a Kansas friend at a parish celebration at a small town in the eastern part of the state. The parish complex was at a distance from the town, and was situated all by itself in the midst of the rolling hills of the prairie. The church was built of red brick, and would have done credit to any parish in the world. Across the street was the parish hall where a bingo game was in constant progress (profits to go to the parish, of course—a new and much larger parish hall was the particular goal the people had in mind), with a chicken dinner served just below in the rather cramped basement. Barbecued chicken, mashed potatoes, corn on the cob were being featured. All from the farms round about, of course. Serving and cleaning up were students from the parish grade school. I asked one of the girls doing the work if she enjoyed cleaning up and she replied sweetly but firmly, “No”. But she was probably a farm kid, and farm kids were used to doing chores whether they enjoyed them or not. Would that every American, myself included, could have been raised on a farm. The country would be having many fewer problems if we had been.

203) **A**round the turn of the millennium I visited the rather isolated town of San Rafael in Mendoza Province in Argentina. I

gave some talks there at the novitiate of the Institute of the Incarnate Word, some of whose members I had taught in Rome. The Institute was founded in 1984 and is a wonderful example of the New Evangelization. It deserves extended treatment impossible in the space of Persons from the Past. One aspect of the visit not connected with the Institute was a visit I made to the local high school. The students were studying Latin and Greek, and some of the great classics of Western Civilization. I taught with these students, boys and girls, and was impressed by their sophistication discussion expressed in quite respectable English. What a marvelous example of education that helps people learn to think.

204) **I** grew up in a rather prosperous suburb of St. Louis, Missouri—Webster Groves, to be precise. But it was the 1930s, and the place was hardly prosperous in those depression times. Many conveniences we enjoy now were yet to come along on the cornucopia of material progress. In particular, refrigerators run by electricity were not at all common. Most houses had “ice boxes”. (I still refer often to refrigerators as “ice boxes” in unthinking moments out of force of habit.) The ice was supplied by horse-drawn wagons. (That’s right—horse-drawn wagons. Undoubtedly because they were cheaper than trucks.) We children often followed the wagons in search of slivers and chips from the ice cubes which the drivers carried from tongs from the wagons to the ice boxes which were reachable through square doors cut in the backs of the houses. We often picked up these pieces from the road. Not the most sanitary way to get one’s refreshment on hot summer says. But we all seemed to survive with no obvious ill effects.

205) **O**nce on a visit to Israel I thought it would be good to try to visit Hebron, where David ruled before going to Jerusalem. I knew it was primarily an Arab town, but the burial place of Abraham (the main attraction) was at least partly in Jewish hands. In Israel always better to check ahead of time as to the ifs and whens and hows to visit certain places. Someone with experience is needed to give good advice. The advice I got was a visit is possible but during the daytime (obvious) and not alone (not so obvious). A

visiting Japanese Jesuit was game so off we went to the Arab taxi rank in Jerusalem. I was about a half hour down south to Hebron. We were the only passengers in the cab. On arriving we made inquiries as to direction to the tomb of Abraham and were told that a round-about route was the safest and it was about a mile in length. We were told that directions were clearly indicated on signs. Which proved to be true. We arrived at the shrine with no difficulty and plunged down and down until we got to the level of the tomb. After a suitable and very amateurish inspection we headed back to the surface. We had encountered very few persons. Since we had encountered nothing worth seeing on the way to the tomb from the taxi, I thought it might be useful to attempt a shortcut on the way back to the taxi and perhaps see something worthwhile. (True, on the way to the tomb we had passed a Jewish synagogue in the midst of an Arab neighborhood. It was heavily guarded by Israeli soldiers, needless to say. But we had to move along as we passed, and saw all that was worth seeing as we did so.) My companion offered no objection so off we went on the return by a quite different route, not circuitous but direct. The streets were strangely empty, I suddenly noticed. But too late to retrace our steps with certainty so we pressed on. Then, all of a sudden, right in front of us, was a squad of five Israeli soldiers. They had weapons drawn and were standing far apart from each other to minimize the effect of a surprise burst of automatic machine gun fire. When we were about twenty feet away I asked a stupid question in English, speaking slowly and distinctly, for not all Israelis understand English easily: "Is it dangerous here?" One of the soldiers turned and looked at us and said slowly and distinctly in English, mimicking me, "Yes, it is dangerous here". No other words were spoken. But I can take a hint. I whispered to my Japanese companion that we should retrace our steps as best we could. Which we did. The taxi rank looked very good when we approached it. Seeing Jerusalem on arrival there looked even better.

206) **F**or anyone interested in history the name "York" is a name to be conjured with. And so it was that during my doctoral studies at the University of Oxford, when the announcement was made that British Rail was sponsoring a special train for York, stopping at Oxford on the way, that I signed up for a very modest fee, return trip included. A large number of our fellow passengers (a fellow

Jesuit was with me) were “tracers”, i.e., persons who went to medieval tombs in England to “trace” on special paper the image of images and inscriptions on a tomb, a tomb usually in the floor. They came armed with large scrolls of tracing paper which they would spread over gravestones in the York Minster or other churches in the city so that with the proper tools they could capture a reproduction of the often elaborate carvings embossed on said gravestones. They were obviously well informed and fully prepared, for no sooner had the train arrived in York than they headed out, with jaws set, at a brisk pace so as not to waste a moment of time before the journey back home. My Jesuit friend and I headed for the huge cathedral. Unbelievably impressive. One had to be careful to avoid gawking too long to the heights lest one develop a stiff neck. Some had mirrors. Some mirrors were thoughtfully provided in a fixed position so that one could study the carefully wrought ceiling. And, this being the England of old, people were obviously unselfishly concerned not to monopolize the public mirrors. For me the unforgettable part of the upper church were the famous “Five Sisters”, five enormous slender windows in a row, perfectly proportioned with each other and with the ambient architecture, and each one of a most exquisite combination of grey. I found them stunning. It was as though one could reach out to the artist or artists who planned the display centuries ago and with him or them agree that beauty is something that indeed is objective. An addiction to English cathedrals was born forthwith in my soul. Historically the York Minster is of enormous importance because of the undercroft, where a military encampment from Roman times is impressively preserved. It was the Roman Empire’s furthest outpost in the north of England. It was here that Constantine was the commanding general when he was acclaimed Roman Emperor by his troops. The precise spot was said to be just in front of the main entrance to the camp, and I carefully calculated that on this precise spot today was, at least when I visited it, a men’s haberdashery shop. Last, but not least, in York, in a winding street, is the spot where St. Margaret Clitheroe used to entertain underground priests so that Mass could be provided for Catholics loyal to the old religion. She was eventually betrayed and pressed to death. A remarkable woman in a remarkable place. I lingered reverently in the neighborhood, respectful of someone far greater than I.

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