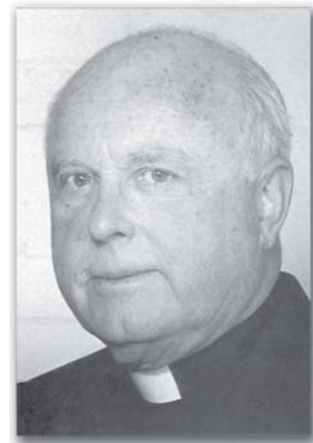


In Memory...

Robert A. Doyle, S.J.

July 24, 1919 – May 1, 2002



Bob Doyle, S.J., was the Regional Ecclesial Assistant for the Missouri Region. Here are a few remembrances of him and his contributions to CLC on both the regional and national levels.

“I will be a witness to you in the world, O Lord. I will spread the knowledge of your name among my brothers and sisters. Alleluia! (Psalm 21: 23)

Father Bob Doyle died during the Easter season, between Easter and the feasts of Ascension and Pentecost. Using the language of the Spiritual Exercises to describe Father’s life and ministry, we would say he was a Fourth Week Jesuit.

Upon receiving news of Father Bob’s death, we spent some time remembering our relationship with him as members of the Nicholas Owen Christian Life Community and as colleagues in Bridges and Prayer Companions. Two ideas surfaced, one an awareness and the other a memory. Awareness that Father had a gift for bringing people together and through him we became “friends in the Lord”.

The memory was of my last visit with Bob. In typical Bob Doyle style, he started telling me how much Jim and I had done for Bridges and CLC. Before his Irish reminiscing took him too far from the truth, I interrupted. It was important to remind Father that we couldn’t have gotten Bridges off the ground and sustained it without his help and encouragement. He suggested our first spiritual directors, mostly Jesuits and Sisters and helped us organize a board and coordinators when Bridges became too big for the two of us to handle. Today, these people are our closest friends, and have been and still are leaders and directors in Bridges. He also invited many people to do the Spiritual Exercises through Bridges and they would report that their lives changed through this experience.

During that last visit, I also reminded him of his great help to us in CLC. During my terms on the Executive Board of Christian Life Communities of the United States, it was Father Bob Doyle who was called upon to help us restore confidence in the financial operation and the regionalization of CLC. Once again, he was there with advice, support and the suggestion of an accountant with the expertise to help us through that crisis.

Looking back, this visit was a grand opportunity to express to Bob our gratefulness, our deep respect and affection for him and our appreciation of his friendship and confidence in us. His response was, “I shouldn’t enjoy your words so much, but I love hearing them.” This was classic Bob Doyle; telling it like it is, delighting in God’s work and enjoying friendship. Father lived all the weeks of the Exercises, but he was mainly a Fourth Week man, our Barnabas, our Son of Encouragement. He was the living example of what was envisioned in the General Congregation 34’s document, COOPERATION WITH THE LAITY IN MISSION. Above all, he was the presence of the Risen Christ, a son of Ignatius, who loved like God loves. Like the disciples at the Ascension, we’ll miss him a lot.



Bob Doyle (third from left in back row) with Bridges leadership.

Joan Felling

When I suggested to Peggy Edwards and Mary Ann Mennemeyer that we honor Fr. Bob Doyle at our World CLC Day celebration, I truly believe it was the Holy Spirit that put the idea in my head. Looking back, I also believe it was the Holy Spirit that provided us the opportunity to give him our tribute in the private setting of Bob's room with Peggy, Mary Ann, John Foley, S.J., and myself. Mary Flick wrote the tribute and I added the "accounting" references.

Kitty Gray

**World CLC Day
March 24, 2002
St. Louis, Missouri
Regional Acknowledgements: Bob Doyle, S.J.**

It's my honor today, in the name of all of us to say thanks to Fr. Bob Doyle, a CLC promoter, supporter, treasurer and No. 1 good friend.

A native of Kansas City, Bob had a four-year stint in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. After which, he made St. Louis his home when he entered the Society of Jesus and St. Stanislaus Seminary in 1954. He was considered a "late" vocation, entering at age 30. But he made up for "lost time." By the time he was ordained in 1962, he had earned degrees in philosophy, theology and, yes, accounting from Saint Louis University. He also passed the CPA exam in 1952.

Oh, and another "little" job he held was "procurator" — that's the term they use in Rome for treasurer.

He moved down the street to the Provincial Offices in 1970, being named Assistant to the Provincial for the Jesuits-In-Training. But in 1972, that treasurer hat was given to him again. This time, he wore it for 16 years.

Father Doyle has been a member of the Nicholas Owen CLC Community since the late '60's. In 1989, he returned to an "old" way of life, tending to the spiritual lives of those he met as retreat director and spiritual director at White House Retreat. Fr. Doyle brought those same skills to the Bridges program serving as one of the first spiritual directors in the 19th Annotation Retreat program in St. Louis. And he has shared all of his gifts as a promoter of and treasurer for CLC. All three positions have consumed the last 13 years of his life, until his recent heart and health complications forced him to "retire," at last, at age 82. Those who know him will dispute what the doctors say: his heart is anything but weak!

I had the occasion to visit Fr. Doyle at White House Retreat the weekend between Christmas and New Year's to officially take over where he left off as treasurer of CLC for the Missouri Region. Accounting has its own language; its own means of measuring, communicating, and interpreting financial activity. The ledger maintained by F. Doyle read like a novel for me. I could tell at a glance that everything footed; things ticked and tied to the bank statement; and debits equaled credits.

Fr. Doyle is known as a man of "uncommon common sense" and down-to-earth wisdom, one who is able to help people keep their bearings, especially in tumultuous and confusing times. How else could one explain his success with and acceptance by the men in formation during the post-Vatican II years of the mid-1960s and early-1970s? And certainly this bears true during those less-than-glamorous years during which he has served and assisted others serving as Treasurer CLC-USA.

Fr. Doyle has a knack for looking after practicalities — like finances — and tending to hearts — like those he's counseled and consoled in retreat and Christian Life Community work. He's highly respected and highly revered by those within community, whether in the Society of Jesus or CLC.

Please rise and join in on our blessing:

Dear Lord, we give thanks for the many gifts and talents you have bestowed on Fr. Doyle and for all he has meant to Christian Life Communities. We promise him our prayers and well wishes, confident that in these days, he is praying for us more than ever, as he prays for the Church and the Society. May we continue to be blessed with his steadfast faith and love. Amen.

In Memory... Bob Doyle, S.J., continued

My introduction to Father Bob Doyle was back in September 1975. We had just returned from our 10th semi-annual CLC convention in Amherst, Massachusetts. It was then that I learned the Queen's Work building where we had our national CLC offices was being sold and we had to move. We were there rent-free and with our finances being the way they were where would we go? For me there were several sleepless nights. I recall getting in touch with Fr. Jack Campbell in St. Louis and he suggested I contact Fr. Bob Doyle. If memory serves me correctly, Bob and I spoke on the phone a number of times before we finally met. At the time he was the Treasurer for the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus and had the job of telling all of the tenants in the building about the sale. We were not the only ones to have to move. Along with file cabinets, desks and office supplies from one office area, we had to clear out a huge basement that literally held tons of pamphlets and books that were written years ago by the Jesuits who were part of the Queen's Work publication house. My question to Bob was, "How can I get a truck to move the printed materials from the basement?" He put me in touch with Brother Hank, S.J. With the help of many CLCers in St. Louis and Brother Hank, we cleared the basement of about 15 TONS of paper, and most of it was recyclable.

Bob then made it possible for us to move our offices into Fusz Memorial, other offices of the Jesuits and the Jesuit scholastics. The many files and books of our archives were put in the upper garage of the Province Office. That is another story.

I would not have been able to get the job done and in a sane manner if it weren't for the gentleness and confirming way of Bob Doyle. I think in some ways through this experience he became in touch with us in CLC and later was part of our Nicholas Owen CLC in St. Louis. He helped us in all of our financial situations by keeping us honest and up-to-date. You will be missed by us, Bob, but I am so thankful for the gift of knowing you and being a part of my life in CLC.

Marie Schimelfening

(Marie was Executive Director of the National Office of CLC from 1971-1981.)

"And how's Josh?"

In every conversation I had with Bob Doyle, whether about CLC finances or regional or national affairs, he would always ask about my son, Josh, now a 17-year-old. When Josh was an infant, Bob gave him a stainless steel drinking cup with Dumbo engraved on it. It is something I still treasure.

The last conversation I had with him a few weeks before he died was especially heart-warming. Part of that was probably due to the fact that neither of us had an official role to play, and we weren't in a meeting situation. I had stopped in to visit and seek some words of wisdom about a situation in our parish. I'm sure another part of it was that we both realized his time was limited and so this visit was precious. He had come to a real sense of peace, and even humor, about the fact that his heart would not continue much longer.

The inevitable question arose, "And how's Josh?" And all I could say was, "O, Bob, he's seventeen!" Bob shared his frustration that he had a 17-year-old great-nephew who just didn't seem to like him no matter what he did. I assured him that it was nothing personal — the kid was just being 17. He seemed to find some consolation in that as we commiserated about adolescent males.

Bob's concern and interest in Josh always touched me. Along with his business sense, his down-to-earth wisdom, his dry wit, he also had the ability to touch people at a personal level. It's easy to understand why his heart gave out first. He used it so much.

Pat Carter

