

TUESDAY, JULY 3, 2012

Rev. Mr. Harold Hughesdon: RIP (1920-2012)



Church of St. Agnes in Saint Paul, USA. Yours truly with H.H.H.

In your charity pray for the repose of his soul. He was one of the first of the permanent deacons. Truly, saintly. Today was his funeral.

He once told me how when he was an altar boy in London in the 1920s, when he was just 9, he had the honor to hold the amice in Westminster Cathedral for Francis Cardinal Bourne as he vested. It was an impressionable moment in his life, and in ours, after he recounted it.

He taught us the Roman rite. The Lord reward him. The famous Fr. Z has a nice tribute to him:



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"To get things started, please pray for the repose of the soul of Rev. Mr. Harold Hughesdon, a dear friend. He was a permanent deacon. He died at 91. Born in London, and a great gentleman, in his life he had been in the Westminster Choir School, an RAF pilot in WWII, a chemistry professor, a VP of 3M, and had built all the liturgical ceremonies of what became my home parish in St. Paul, MN, which so drew me, first, in curiosity to the Church and, then, in faith into the Church. Harold played an important role in my conversion. *Requiescat in pace.*"

He was a WWII pilot who spent the war in Canada. It was Fr. Walter Peters, studying in Rome, whom he met in London and invited him to the city of Saint Paul, in Minnesota.

Harold was a gentleman from the old school. End of an empire. During my junior year in high school, Monsignor Schuler, the pastor, asked me to be in charge of the altar servers. It was a great honor. Every Sunday we worked together making sure the Sunday High Mass went smoothly. Harold loved the Roman rite. He taught me the same. He was the guest speaker at my graduation ceremony.

Harold was the Master of Ceremonies at the fabled Saint Agnes parish. He wrote the rubrics for the *Novus Ordo*, sung in Latin. From the foundation of the previous pastor, *peritus* Monsignor Bandas, he and the next pastor, Monsignor Schuler, paved the way for the world with an authentic interpretation of the rubrics of the sung Mass in the *Novus Ordo*.

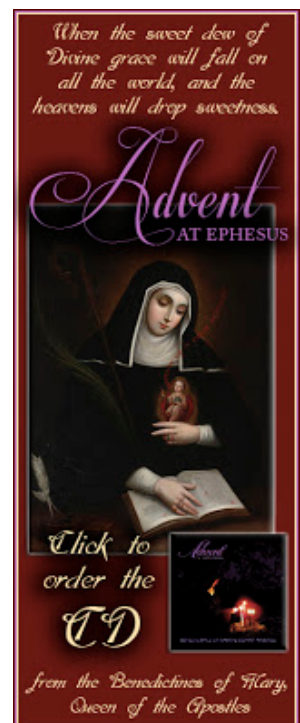
He taught us that being an M.C. is most effectively done through a patient and gentle M.C. I never once saw him cross with the boys. Never once angry at mistakes the young servers made. Except maybe once, after I accidentally destroyed the lovely pattern of extinguishing the altar candles at *Tenebrae* one year, but I guess he later scolded Bryan instead. He always timed the *Tenebrae* each year.

I will always remember him pulling up for vespers in his Cadi. And his brown bomber jacket I always envied him for. His smiling, waiting wife in the walker near the elevator. She was always charming. He always had a smile and a chuckle. They had joy. His annual Holy Week reading of the chariots and charioteers. His yearly trips to Hawaii and back to London to stay at the old RAF house. And we always did wonder if it was true - that he's the guy who invented the post-it note (according to a fabled Reader's Digest article).

Harold, I will always remember the time you showed up with the new Gammarelli sets from Rome that had just arrived. You and Monsignor had me be the first to try on the new, white, crisp fiddleback. It was a proud moment. Thank you for your support and smart liturgical eye. You will be missed. You were the nicest to me when I left the seminary. Thank you. Yours sons are many. You carried the torch, and passed it on.

And as I led the processions at St. Agnes, I always looked forward to your gentle nod and wink to assure that all was well and according to plan.

To the Queen! And to the Roman Rite!



Go with God and His angels.

AT 11:25 PM 

2 COMMENTS:



Tancred July 4, 2012 at 9:32 AM

I had no idea you were a Dominican. ;)

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Anonymous July 4, 2012 at 10:27 AM

His home library on Portland was phenomenal.

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