

The Rev. William M. Lewers, C.S.C.

Led by Grace and Conviction

A Paper for the 2018 Holy Cross History Conference

May 31 – June 2, 2018

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2/23/2018

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by

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Scope

This paper will address significantly less than half of Father Lewers' remarkable trajectory through life. The three main constraints are his years as provincial superior, service at the U.S. Catholic Conference, and director of the Notre Dame Law School Center for Civil and Human Rights. Each constraint has an archive associated with it. I have found some interim relief by interviewing colleagues and friends from the USCC and CCHR days, which allows me to begin those stories. However, his provincial administration years simply have to wait.

What I would like to present to you today is a much-summarized version of work done thus far on a book length biography.

Crossing the Tiber

Bill Lewers enters our story as a young man, for we know essentially nothing of his youth and upbringing. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in law from the University of Illinois in 1949 and then enrolled in the Law School there as an LL.B. candidate. It makes you think that he was born to be a lawyer. In addition to those two landmark occasions, he experienced in quick succession further very important events, one of them apparently dramatic. He recounted that in that same year he had a direct experience of God. His good friend, Father Richard Warner, C.S.C., believes that it happened when he worked for a brief time for the U.S. Department of the Interior as a park ranger.

Years later, while working at Notre Dame and finding himself little enthralled by several of the residents of Alumni Hall where he lived and served as prefect, he said (half) jokingly that the soul is infused with the baccalaureate degree. Maybe he spoke autobiographically of his religious experience. However, that was not even the half of what was yet to come.

During his two law school years, he lived with several fellow students who, eventually with spouses, proved to be life-long and dear friends who celebrated life, marriages, baptisms, an ordination, and Illinois football together. The students lived in what they called Baker Street House, in honor of Sherlock Holmes. A little known fact about Bill is that he was a lousy Hearts player. Whenever they played, his pals jockeyed for the seat to Bill's left, certain that, when they passed cards, that person could expect to be left in pretty good shape.¹

Among his housemates, Vince Wasilewski and Bud Vonachen, typically attended weekday Mass two or three days a week and every day during the six long weeks of Lent. Their housemate took notice. Consequently, he set himself to learning about Catholicism, which culminated with his conditional baptism in 1952, after conscription and a brief stint in the U.S. Army during the Korean War.² His conversion shocked his widowed mother, Myra McIntyre Lewers. We do not know, however, if the shock was born of surprise that he "came to Jesus" or of dismay that they she now had a Catholic in the family.

¹ James C. Craven, "Personal Interview (December 15, 2007)" (Notre Dame, 2007).

² U.S. Army, "Report of Separation from the Armed Forces of the United States" (Fort Belvoir: U.S. Department of Defense, 1951).

He enrolled in the Yale Law School as a graduate fellow in order to begin work on the LL.M. degree, which usually leads to an academic career. Now twenty-five years old, we can easily imagine this extraordinarily intelligent young man taking in everything of civil, religious, and legal interest. Moreover, he characteristically appreciated and ceaselessly nurtured his growing network of friends and colleagues.

Father Lewers had a powerful intellect that noticed and digested not only secular events, but also those emanating from the Catholic *magisterium*. On more than one occasion he told people that, in addition to the significant influence of those law school classmates mentioned above, it was the Church's social teaching that had contributed substantially to his conversion.

Church Social Teaching

Everybody knows about Pope Leo XIII and *Rerum novarum*. It stands as the foundation of modern Catholic social and economic teaching. Likewise, we all know about Vatican II, and can name at least two or three of its documents. Obviously, Bill knew about Vatican II, which convened after he became Catholic and adjourned shortly after his ordination. Surely, at some point, he would have become familiar with *Rerum novarum*. However, what about the in between years, when Bill was asking questions and finding answers? Clearly, we have to highlight briefly Pope Pius XII in order to appreciate something of the robust environment of those influential years.

The first third of his nineteen years as Pope Pius XII covered World War II. Now, I am not suggesting that Bill must have been precociously interested in the earlier years of his pontificate. What does seem plausible, though, is that his

awareness grew. Consider for a moment the amount of press coverage that the pope received. A ProQuest® search limited to the period 1939 to 1958 and the pope's name in the *New York Times* resulted in 3,464 "hits." Similarly, in the *Chicago Tribune*, his name appears 1,571 times. In the same time span, Pius delivered an annual Christmas message. His 1942 message offers a vision of the future. He proposed five "milestones" on the way to post-war recovery. "These are (1) dignity of the human person, (2) defense of social unity, (3) dignity of labor, (4) the rehabilitation of juridical order, and (5) a Christian conception of the state. With the possible exception of the fourth, all of these have been important and recurrent themes in Catholic social teaching."³ We can readily imagine the impact on Father Lewers.

Additionally, early in his pontificate, Pius issued the encyclical *Sertum laetitiae*, which he addressed to the bishops in the U.S.⁴ He challenged and prodded them to work on social issues as well as specific topics of Catholic life. Furthermore, America's bishops, now more capably aided by the National Catholic Welfare Conference, added their voice to the public discourse. Even a cursory examination of the table of contents of *Our Bishops Speak*, the 1952 compendium of national pastorals and annual statements of the hierarchy of the United States and of resolutions of episcopal committees and communications of

³ John P. Langan, S.J., "The Christmas Messages of Pius XII," in *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations*, ed. Himes, O.F.M., Kenneth R.; Charles E. Curran, ; Thomas A. Shannon (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 175–90. P. 183.

⁴ Pope Pius XII, "Sertum Laetitiae" (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1939). Available on the Vatican web site.

the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, underscores the breadth and depth of their effort. Again, one can easily imagine Father Lewers taking up this book at some point and letting it inform him.

Contact with Holy Cross and Priesthood

Bill's law school classmates had little inkling of his religious leanings. Some thought that he was an atheist, others an agnostic. In any case, his Baptist upbringing seemed mostly transparent to them. Nevertheless, he became a co-religionist.

Novitiate experiences tend to tax and stretch a person. Just about all of us here have a common bond in that regard. For Bill, however, the taxation stretched him beyond the breaking point. We must remember here that Bill was the oldest of his novitiate classmates, having already turned 31 when he started. He never suffered fools lightly, which must have added to the strain.

At about the three-month mark, Bill took his turn waiting the novice master's table. One day, a fly landed on the table. Father Craddick, the novice master, summoned the waiter and pointed out the trespasser, which Bill dispatched with a swift flick of the napkin that he had folded over his arm and brushed it on to the floor. However, Father Craddick had not yet finished the lesson. He instructed his elder novice to fetch a dustpan and broom and to remove the fly from the dining room.

This affront to his dignity was the last straw. He very soon thereafter left the novitiate. Fortunately, however, he returned on August 15, 1960, again under Father Craddick. He pronounced his first vows one year and one day later.

Civil Rights Work

Father Lewers' civil and human rights work unfolded over two principal periods. They bookended his six years as provincial. Early on, he and some law school classmates staged a restaurant action, which preceded his more strictly legal work. Collaborating with a number of friends and a black couple, they started by going into a restaurant. The wait staff would not serve the black couple. The restaurant staff came to understand that the other customers would not order until they served the black couple.⁵

More than a decade later, Byron De La Beckwith, a member of the White Citizens' Council, assassinated Medgar Evers on June 12, 1963.⁶ This gained national attention that led to a string of White House conferences, one of them for lawyers that included the Notre Dame Law School Dean Joseph O'Meara. From it arose the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law (LCCR), which, by the way, is still active today.

Mississippi

The most dramatic work took place in Mississippi, in the years after the Kennedy Administration responded to the atrocities that took place there and in Alabama and Arkansas. You may recall here scenes of state governors blocking school doors and of police with batons swinging, dogs with fangs bared, and fire hose water streams knocking people off their feet, pushing back freedom marchers.

⁵ James C. Craven, "Personal Interview (December 15, 2007)."

⁶⁶ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medgar_Evers. Retrieved March 24, 2018.

The LCCR arranged for volunteer lawyers to spend brief spells in Mississippi, providing legal assistance to civil rights workers, such as those engaged in voter registration drives, targeted by local law enforcement and courts for arrest, unnecessary pre-trial detention, and imposition of jail terms and fines for the most trivial of infractions, such as walking on city grass. By legal means available to them under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, these attorneys generally succeeded in having cases removed from state courts to the federal court system, where they concluded more sensibly. Father Lewers worked on site over two summers, in 1965 and 1966. In addition to his 1965 LCCR work, he advised Bishop Richard O. Gerow on legal matters relative to the Church's participation in the national "War on Poverty." Furthermore, he provided other *pro bono* services during the school year.

During his second summer there, James H. Meredith was shot as he marched from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi. This attracted so much attention that Martin Luther King Jr. felt compelled to go to Canton, Mississippi. While the whole story is too much for this brief overview, Father Lewers was one of those who met with Dr. King and others to work out a solution to the chaos and standoff between the demonstrators and city officials. Afterwards, John J. McGuire of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice (NCCIJ) wrote to the Holy Cross provincial, Father Howard J. Kenna, to thank and commend Father Lewers for his efforts—efforts that clearly contributed to the prevention of a bloody outcome.⁷

⁷ John J. McGuire, "McGuire, J. J. Letter to Howard J. Kenna. July 26, 1966." (New Orleans, 1966).

The Anti-Miscegenation Case

Immediately thereafter, during his first semester on the Notre Dame Law School faculty, Father Lewers undertook drafting an *amicus curiae* brief in the *Loving v. Commonwealth of Virginia* case⁸ that A.C.L.U. lawyers successfully placed before the U.S. Supreme Court.⁹ One of five *amicus* briefs, this one, proposed by the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, was one of four supporting the appellants, Richard and Mildred Loving.¹⁰ In addition to the N.C.C.I.J., the brief represented sixteen Catholic bishops and apostolic administrators. Bishop John J. Russell of Richmond coordinated the effort, which unfolded urgently in order to meet filing deadlines.

It seems highly likely that the brief stands out for its list of texts that augment legal cases and statutes, beginning with Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, and ending with the United Nations *Declaration of Universal Human Rights*.¹¹ It concurred with the A.C.L.U. defense based on the Fourteenth Amendment, but added justification based on the First Amendment, this latter more likely the work of the co-author, William B. Ball, described by Ambassador Douglas W. Kmiec as "God's litigator."¹² The Supreme Court unsurprisingly relied on the Fourteenth Amendment in its unanimous opinion to reverse the Virginia

⁸ "Loving v. Virginia (Full Text) :: 388 U.S. 1 (1967) :: Justia US Supreme Court Center," *U.S. 388*, 1967, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/388/1/case.html>.

⁹ Philip J. Hirschkop, "Telephone Interview (February 23, 2018)" (Notre Dame, 2018). The 2007 film, *Loving*, portrays the story.

¹⁰ The fifth brief, filed by the State of North Carolina, urged upholding the decision of the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals.

¹¹ Brief for John J. Russell et al. as Amici Curiae, *Loving v. Commonwealth of Virginia* (1967).

¹² Douglas W. Kmiec, "'God's Litigator': A Review Essay of Mere Creatures of the State?: Education, Religion, and the Courts: A View from the Courtroom," *Notre Dame Law Review* 70, no. 5 (1999): 1247.

Supreme Court of Appeals and thereby put aside the last of the Jim Crow laws.¹³ Even though his brief played a minimal part in the case, Father Lewers most certainly would have felt some degree of satisfaction in the outcome.

First Assignment at Notre Dame

Father Kenna assigned the newly ordained Father Lewers to Notre Dame in 1965, where he taught in the Law School; he further served as a prefect in Alumni Hall. As a member of the Holy Cross community, he naturally participated in community events and conversation. A proposed reorganization of the governance structure of the province's two universities, Portland and Notre Dame, quickly became the "hot topic"

The Second Vatican Council called for broader participation of the laity in the Church's mission. The Congregation of Holy Cross took the mandate seriously. Father Paul Waldschmidt was the first to see the implications for the University of Portland. Father Theodore Hesburgh was on a parallel track concerning the University of Notre Dame. The provincial, Father Howard J. Kenna, had given the matter serious thought.¹⁴ (Although Father Germaine Marie Lalonde, superior general, supported the transition, I have no knowledge of how active he was in the preparatory stage.)

In his December 13, 1966, letter to the community, already cited, Father Kenna said

First, it is my personal opinion, and that of most of those with whom I have discussed the matter, that such a sharing of basic

¹³ Douglas W Kmiec, "E-Mail Communication (October 7, 2017)" (Malibu, 2017).

¹⁴ Howard J. Kenna, C.S.C., "Open Letter (December 13, 1966)" (South Bend, 1966).

responsibility in administration with laymen should be done. In point of fact, such sharing has already been done in practice by putting laymen into administrative positions and accepting their advice and utilizing their experience. But it has been done on a permissive basis as a result of the free choice of the Holy Cross administrators. It should now be done in a juridic manner so that from henceforth the laymen will have a legal right to share in the administration. My reasons for this opinion should be summarized here.

The basic reason, to which all others are subordinate, is the preservation and increasing effectiveness of our apostolate in the universities. To be justified, such a change must either aid us to avoid obstacles and dangers in our work or it should make that work more successful. I believe the change suggested will do both.

His letter, of course, covers much more ground over its more than seven single-spaced pages. A particularly apropos point in those pages is that conflict in the university is typically between the faculty and the administration or between students and the administration. Accordingly, it serves the apostolate well to put some space between the administration and the religious congregation.

In a letter to Father Kenna, Father Lewers indicated his support for the proposed amendment of governance. Furthermore, he added, "I believe that several seats on the Board should be given over to faculty representatives elected by the faculty (both lay and clerical). This has been done at at least one university with which I am familiar, and the results have been beneficial to all parties. Certainly if the proposed Board is to deal with matters of academic or education policy, then the faculty should participate, and this not just as a matter of sufferance."¹⁵ Ultimately, the parties concerned created a two-tiered board at Notre Dame. Father Lewers supported the two-tiered board, yet probably

¹⁵ William M. Lewers, C.S.C., "Lewers, W. M.. Letter to Howard J. Kenna, C.S.C." (Notre Dame, 1967).

regretted the disappearance of his recommendation for intentional faculty representation.

Not every Holy Cross religious at Notre Dame supported the proposed change, to be sure. When one of those members persisted with his public critique after provincial chapter, general administration, and Vatican approvals, Father Lalande recommended to him more productive use of his energy.¹⁶ Father Lalande further manifested his approval in a letter to Mr. Paul Helmuth, when he said, "You can be sure that I am very happy with the evolution of the University of Notre Dame. I am certain that this step forward is in the best interests of the University and will be very helpful for the future."¹⁷

In a different vein, Father Lewers, and a few other members of the Law School faculty, had an additional concern. It featured Dean Joseph O'Meara. First, though, I would like to acknowledge that Dean O'Meara raised the stature of the Notre Dame Law School in a major sense.¹⁸

In 1952, as a candidate for the deanship, he said to Father Hesburgh, "You have a night school operating in the daytime." Sixteen years later, it was the difference between night and day. He situated the Law School in the Christian tradition and insisted that its graduates should possess "a fierce partisanship for justice."¹⁹ There was no light between him and Father Lewers on that point,

¹⁶ Germaine-Marie Lalande, "Lalande, G.-M. Letter to Louis J. Thornton, C.S.C. March 31, 1967" (Rome, 1967).

¹⁷ Germaine-Marie Lalande, "Lalande, G. M. Letter to Paul Hellmuth. April 8, 1967." (Rome, 1967).

¹⁸ David T. Link, "Dean Joseph O'Meara--A Personal Reflection," *Scholalrly Works, Paper 222.*, 1984.

¹⁹ Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., "Dean Joseph O'Meara," *Notre Dame Law Review* 59, no. 15 (1984).

judging from a recollection of one of his earliest students on the first day of class: “Gentlemen, the purpose of law should be to enable men and women to live and work in a just society.”²⁰

The episode that brought Father Lewers and several of his colleagues to challenge their dean took place at a faculty dinner.²¹ In his remarks, Dean O’Meara took issue with draft resisters and civil rights activists, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, which provoked Father Lewers and several colleagues to leave the room. The Dean published his thoughts later in the *American Bar Association Journal*.²²

Province Leadership

The Provincial Chapter of 1970 selected Father Lewers as one of two elected provincial counselors for the final three years of Father Kenna’s time as provincial.

For the 1973 chapter of election, the superior general, Father Germaine Marie Lalande, C.S.C., put forward four religious as nominees for the office of provincial superior: Fathers Nicholas Ayo, William Lewers, Thomas McDonough, and N. Father McDonough suffered a heart attack on his way to the chapter, and therefore withdrew his name from consideration.

The complex issues of the time require much more research and thought than possible for current purposes. I plan, however, to begin unfolding them as

²⁰ John R. Pusey, “Personal Interview (November 8, 2007)” (Notre Dame, 2007).

²¹ Richard F. Hennessey, “Personal Interview (January 3, 2008)” (Notre Dame, 2007).

²² Joseph O’Meara, “No Mm Is Above the Law,” *American Bar Association Journal* 53, no. December (1967): 1107–10.

feasible in the book length biography in progress. (Check with your local bookseller in about two years.)

Rejuvenation

The second three years of his term as provincial proved especially taxing, to the point of leading him to reconsider his vocation in Holy Cross. As one might expect, however, he approached the question carefully and worked out a way to discern the answer. He took the first step in his August 1978 newsletter that contained notification that he would not leave his name for consideration of the possible follow-on three-year term. "I have given much thought, reflection, and prayer to the question of whether I should make myself available for renomination, and I have discussed the matter thoroughly with my spiritual director.... I have reached a final decision, and I wish to advise you that I have formally notified Fr. Barrosse that I will not accept renomination to the office of provincial superior."²³

Following a trip to the Holy Land and Greece, accompanied by Father Paul Marceau, C.S.C., he went to Chile. There, he spent a pivotal year with the small Trappist community at La Dehesa. Afterwards, he returned to the U.S. for a year at Casa Santa Cruz in Phoenix, Arizona, and then to the novitiate in Cascade, Colorado, to join the staff now led by Father Marceau. It turns out that what was churning was an attraction to the contemplative life.

²³ William M. Lewers, C.S.C., "Newsletter to the Priests and Brothers of the Indiana Province from the Provincial (August 25, 1979 [sic])" (South Bend, 1978).

In June 1980, shortly before the General Chapter at which he was a capitulant, he wrote letters to the Carthusians in Vermont and the Camaldolese in California to inquire about pursuing the contemplative vocation. Father Raphael Diamond, prior at the Carthusian foundation, wrote,

My feeling in this is, as is so often true of professed religious of other Orders or Congregations who apply to us, that the desire you feel for our life is not in fact the Holy Spirit's indication that he wishes you to change to our Order, but rather it reveals a movement of the Spirit to an interior orientation, one of inner solitude and deeper prayer, which is meant to enrich the life you already lead and give it to bear even greater fruit. I feel very confident in saying this, and wonder if you would not present this idea to God and ask Him if this is not what He is really asking.²⁴

Father Bruno Barnhart, prior at Big Sur, offered the opportunity for a visit, which Father Lewers accepted, and a slightly different thought in his response to the letter of inquiry:

We have been very concerned that each candidate—regardless of age and background—enter fully into the spirit of the community, and this involves also entering into the “spirit of community,” especially in the beginning stages. This is bound to be a challenge for someone like yourself, and perhaps a disagreeable one if one has come seeking solitude first and foremost.²⁵

In a unique “journal moment,” to coin a phrase, Father Lewers wrote a few months later, “Basically I think this is a time for ‘waiting on the Lord,’ waiting and hoping that his will for me will become clearer to me, while trying to deepen and strengthen my relationship with him.” However, he saw that he was a

²⁴ Raphael Diamond, O. Cart., “Diamond, R. Letter to William M. Lewers, C.S.C. (June 26, 1980)” (Arlington, VT, 1980).

²⁵ Bruno Barnhart, Cam. O.S.B., “Barnhart, Cam. O.S.B., B.. Letter to William M. Lewers, C.S.C. (July 2, 1980)” (Big Sur, CA, 1980).

planner, and not a waiter. It brought on a certain bleakness, which heightened his need for friends, whose absence he felt deeply.²⁶

Judging from a rough typescript on the back and front side of a piece of Casa Santa Cruz letterhead, though annotated as “copy 4-6-81,” he was also thinking about the possibility of returning to La Dehesa. In this letter to the prior there, Father Richard, O.C.S.O., he acknowledged that he had been looking for an American version of La Dehesa, but did not find it.²⁷ Unfortunately, the record does not have the response.

Furthermore, in the letter to Father Richard at La Dehesa, he indicated that he had arranged for a 30-day retreat in Guelph, Ontario, at Loyola House.²⁸ The retreat began on November 3, 1981; it brought light and blessed closure. He wrote some weeks later, “I continue to view the 30-day directed retreat in Guelph as one of the best things that ever happened to me, and I remain comfortable and at peace with the decision I made there. I think that this decision has been confirmed (Jesuit terminology) in many ways....”²⁹

Rights Activist Redux

The civil and human rights activist of the 1950s and 60s returned to the field when he accepted in 1983 a job offer from the U.S. Catholic Conference as Director of the Office of International Justice and Peace. In some ways, it seems

²⁶ William M. Lewers, C.S.C., “Lewers, W. M.. Note to Self (October 21, 1980)” (Phoenix, AZ, 1980).

²⁷ William M. Lewers, C.S.C., “Lewers, W. M.. Letter to Father Richard, O.C.S.O. (April 6, 1981)” (Phoenix, AZ, 1981).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ William M. Lewers, C.S.C., “Lewers, W. M.. Letter to Richard V. Warner, C.S.C. (January 20, 1982)” (South Bend, IN, 1982).

like the job was created for him. The work at the time entailed heavy involvement for various reasons with Central and South America and South Africa. The South African piece fell into place in light of his commitment to racial justice. In South America, he played a key role in improving communication with the North.

In Central America, the Reagan Administration worked to support opponents of left-leaning revolutionary governments. The U.S. bishops favored non-intervention and lobbied Congress. Father Lewers shepherded Conference notables on a trip to Nicaragua and El Salvador. The travelers included the polar opposite Cardinals O'Connor and Bernardin.

He knew of Father Richard Warner's work on the peace pastoral and, although not exactly an international issue at the Conference, provided some input on the economics pastoral. We see here someone whose initial attraction to Catholicism took a different form. Now, he affected policy and action at a new level. His network of friends continued to expand, consequently. For example, a staff member in the Justice and Peace Office of the Archdiocese of Chicago and a Notre Dame alumna entered the Notre Dame Law School at his insistence. Today Mary I. Yu serves as an associate justice of the Washington State Supreme Court.

Following his work at the Conference, Father Lewers returned the Notre Dame Law School as the director of the Center for Civil and Human Rights. Before illness began taking its toll, he successfully transferred important documents out of the hands of authoritarian governments for safekeeping in the event of human rights violation trials at the International Court of Justice. Academically, he designed and initiated two new degree programs: an LL.M. and

a J.S.D. in international human rights. Both of those programs continue to enroll students; the future of the Center, however, seems murky.

An early student in the LL.M. program, Garth Meintjes, became an associate director of the Center and a dear friend. In fact, Garth, probably more than any other individual, walked those last miles with Bill until April 19, 1997.

Communion of Saints

While not diminishing that encomium of Garth, countless others stood by him, too. I have fat files of letters and get well cards, including one from my own mother. Let no one doubt the efficacy of the communion of us workaday saints.

Clearly, much work remains. You surely noticed that I scarcely touched his years as provincial. Additionally, I have done nothing more than indicate areas for further research on his time and impact at the USCC and the Center for Civil and Human Rights. So, for now, let me conclude this presentation with a few remarks from others among the workaday saints.

Jerry Gerard Powers, a former student and now faculty member at Notre Dame, said that:

Bill was so effective at shaping individuals for the same reason he was so good at shaping institutions: his personal gifts. Bill was somebody whose views on life (or just the issue at hand) seemed to matter. He led a remarkably balanced life, working very hard on his many commitments yet carving out lots of time for nourishing his spiritual life and for his many, many friends.

Bill's influence, especially on the Holy Cross Order and Notre Dame, has been widely noted. Yet his greatest influence-and the thing about which he would be most proud-has been on a small

army of people like myself who hold a deep respect for him as a mentor, a friend, a teacher, and a man of faith and integrity.³⁰

Garth Meintjes wrote the year after Bill's death:

Most importantly, Bill taught me about faith. Believing injustice is not wholly the same as believing in God. Being committed to social justice requires you to examine the relationship between individuals and society or government, but not necessarily between yourself and God. On the other hand, to believe in God certainly compels us to reflect upon our commitment to social justice as well. Bill's life until his death exemplifies this understanding—one that he referred to as the illumination of the heart and mind, but that I now call grace.³¹

At the funeral Mass, Father Richard Warner, his good friend and successor as provincial superior, included these words in his homily:

The Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross, by which Bill and many of us try to live our lives, remind us that "God has breathed his very breath into us. We speak to God with the yearning and the words of sons to a Father because the Spirit has made us adopted children in Christ." And in another place they state that "Resurrection for us is a daily event...."

As we thank God for the life of Father Bill Lewers, the moment is right for us not only to celebrate his life but also to remember those threads that are woven and intertwined into the fabric of each of our lives.³²

Word count: 5,093 (incl Bibl.)

³⁰ Gerard F. Powers, "In Memoriam for Fr. William Lewers, C.S.C.," *Notre Dame Law Review* 73, no. 3 (1998): 775–76, doi:10.3868/so50-004-015-0003-8.

³¹ Garth Meintjes, "Dying with Style and Grace," *Notre Dame Law Review* 73, no. 3 (1998): 777–80, doi:10.3868/so50-004-015-0003-8. This was the single thing that confirmed my choice of title for the book, *Led by Grace and Conviction*. Thank you, Garth.

³² Richard V Warner, C.S.C., "[Funeral Homily]" (Notre Dame: USPA 2011/24 Box 1 Folder 4, 1997).

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