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FATHER FIDELIS OF THE CROSS, C. P., THE ROSECRANS FAMILY, KENYON COLLEGE - SOME OBSERVATIONS

By Herman E. Mattingly

Passionist Father Norbert M. Dorsey is the author of an article in the January 22, 1979, English weekly edition of L'Osservatore Romano on Father Fidelis of the Cross, C.P., a renowned convert, priest, scholar, lecturer, preacher, and saintly person. Father Dorsey's article prompts a rereading of Katherine Burton's excellent biography of Father Fidelis, No Shadow of Returning. It also gives rise to some observations not only on Father Fidelis, but also on the Rosecrans Family and on Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio.

As is well known, the first Bishop of Columbus, Sylvester Horton Rosecrans, attended Kenyon College. He spent the first three years of his college years there. Having decided to become a Catholic, he then went to St. John's College, Nyack, New York, the present Fordham University.

Greatly talented, Sylvester Rosecrans did well at Kenyon. Dr. Thomas A. Greenslade, archivist at the college, reports "that he was easily the outstanding scholar of his class," and that "the old grade books record that his scholastic record was almost perfect." The young Rosecrans entered Kenyon in 1843 at the age of 16. He was graduated from St. John's, New York, with great distinction in 1846, the year after he became a Catholic.

It was much later that James Kent Stone, the future Father Fidelis of the Cross, C.P., came to Kenyon. Born in Boston in 1840, he studied in private Latin schools before entering Harvard University. He took time out to spend two years at Gottingen University in Germany, and was graduated from Harvard with the class of 1861.

James Kent Stone's scholarship, which was of the classical, literary and philosophical quality, became widely known. He was offered a professorship at Kenyon and came there in 1863. He later became president of the college for one year. This was the scholastic year of 1866/67. His love of traditional theology led him to resign at the end of that year.

James Stone was not to remain idle. He became president of Hobart College, Geneva, N.Y., where he remained for several years. But his inherent sincerity and his constant search for truth and peace of soul, caused him to leave Hobart and prepare himself to enter the Catholic Church. He was baptized Dec. 8, 1869, the opening date of the First Vatican Council.

During this time Sylvester Rosecrans had gone to Rome where he earned a Doctorate in Sacred Theology, and where he was ordained July 16, 1852. Returning to Cincinnati, he taught in the Seminary there, and was named president of Mt. St. Mary's College when it was founded in 1859. The college continued for one year. Thereafter Dr. Rosecrans taught theology in the Seminary. He was consecrated Auxiliary Bishop of Cincinnati March 25, 1862, and became the first Bishop of Columbus six years later.

It is not likely that James Kent Stone, first as professor and later as President of Kenyon College, 1863-1867, was unaware of the alumnus of his college who had in 1862 been consecrated Auxiliary Bishop of Cincinnati. It is not known that they met each other during this time. When Bishop Rosecrans came to Columbus Dr. Stone was already president of Hobart College. Nevertheless, the two scholars were to meet later in life.

It is worth noting here that R. C. Gleaner (1) in his weekly nationally read column, the "Catholic Viewpoint," in the Catholic Columbian of October 13, 1916, made some observations about the founders of Kenyon College. He wrote: "In the September issue of Ave Maria appears a very interesting paper concerning the eminent English convert, Lady Chatterton, who was the author of thirty-nine works, the product of a prolific pen, with which she wrote so well as to elicit the admiration and commendation of Cardinal Newman. Of interest to Ohio readers, Scannel O'Neil, in the Milwaukee Citizen, records that: 'Lady Chatterton was a niece of Lord Gambier, who gave the money to found Gambier Hall at Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio, and whose name was given by Bishop Chase (2) to the village on which the College stands out of gratitude to the noble donor. It is also interesting to know that the great-grandson of Lord Kenyon, after whom this Episcopalian College is named, is, like all his family, a Catholic'."

It should also be observed that Kenyon College has always been highly regarded for its scholarship. The Kenyon Quarterly, nationally respected classical journal, was published at the College for many years. It has been more recently revived.

But to return to James Kent Stone, our Father Fidelis. He earned a Master's degree at Harvard, received a Doctorate in Theology, and was ordained an Episcopalian Deacon. Because of his talents he was in demand as a preacher and lecturer.

Dr. Stone married Cornelia Fay, of Boston, in 1863. To them were born three daughters. Cornelia died a few months after the birth of the third daughter. And the second daughter died at the age of four.

Dr. Stone dearly loved his wife and children. Yet it was during these years of sorrow that he was also struggling within his soul about where to find true theology and peace of mind. He eventually ended the struggle by entering the Catholic Church. But this turned out not to be enough. He wanted to be a priest, for which he seemed eminently qualified.

Meanwhile there were his two daughters to be considered. He had placed them in a convent boarding school in Boston. A decision about their future was to come later.

Dr. Stone was personally acquainted with Father Isaac Hecker, founder of the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle. He was, however, more inclined to the more strict Order, the Passionists. But the Paulists, like himself, were all converts at that time. When he first approached them Father Hecker was in Rome attending the First Vatican Council. Bishop Rosecrans of Columbus had requested him to be his representative at the Council. Evidently the pressing duties of organizing his new Diocese, the task of building the new Cathedral, and the heavy burden of providing funds to meet payments, were sufficient reason for the young Ordinary of Columbus to be excused from attending the Council.

Dr. Stone decided to enter the Paulists. Meanwhile Father Hecker had returned from Rome, and Dr. Stone went to consult him about entering the Society. As has been mentioned, he would have preferred a stricter community, but he had his children to consider. Father Hecker knew and understood all this. He accepted Dr. Stone; but there was an understanding that later, if circumstances permitted and he still wished to do so, he could leave the Paulists and join the Passionists.

General William Rosecrans of Civil War fame, and brother of Bishop Rosecrans, had retired to California with his family. It was from there that his son, Louis, came to New York to join the Paulists. It is interesting to note that when it was time for young Louis to be ordained in 1872, his uncle, Bishop Rosecrans came from Columbus for the ceremony. The Bishop came two days early and officiated at the conferring of minor orders on Thursday and Friday, March 23 and 24 (3). Among those receiving minor orders was Mr. James Mary Magdalene Stone, lately known as Rev. James Kent Stone, D.D., of the Protestant Episcopal "persuasion."

Louis Rosecrans was ordained a priest on Saturday, March 25, 1872. The young Father Rosecrans was well liked, and gave much promise. His health was poor, however. He was sent to California with the hope of regaining his health in that climate. But it was not to be. He returned to New York where he died in 1876, having been a priest just four years. Again, his uncle, Bishop Rosecrans, came to officiate, this time at his nephew's funeral.

Surely during these visits Bishop Rosecrans came to know Father James Kent Stone, the future Father Fidelis of the Cross, C.P. This is all the more certain since Father Stone and the young Father Louis Rosecrans were friends.

It was during 1871 that James Kent Stone, while a candidate for Orders with the Paulists, realized that he must do something to provide for the future of his two small daughters. He had discussed the situation with the Paulist Fathers. They knew his worry. It was about this time that the young Louis Rosecrans went to Dr. Stone with a proposal. There was a Mr. and Mrs. Michael O'Connor, well-to-do, devout Catholics who lived in California, and who were desirous of adopting some children. It was this couple that Louis Rosecrans suggested to Dr. Stone as suitable and willing to take his two little girls and become their adopted parents. At the time, Nellie, the older of the two, was eight years of age, and Mary Frances was three.

But there were great sacrifices to be made by Dr. Stone. His daughters would be living in far away California. There was another stipulation also, just as heart-rending. If the O'Connors were to adopt the children, Dr. Stone

would have to give up all rights as a parent; and since he was entering the ecclesiastical state, he would give up all natural as well as legal ties with his children. This was the great sacrifice he made in his burning desire to reach the holy priesthood. The agreement was made.

On December 21, 1872, six months after Louis Rosecrans was ordained, Dr. Stone himself became a Catholic priest. He showed great promise and his talents caused Father Hecker to name him master of novices in 1874. But in September of the following year Father Stone became determined to join the stricter Passionists. He was to leave during 1876. He regretted the move since the Paulists suffered a great loss on May 11 of that year in the death of Father Rosecrans.

During his years as a Paulist Dr. Stone had written occasionally to Miss Lilly Rosecrans, sister of Father Rosecrans, and governess of his children for the O'Connors. But Miss Rosecrans was very guarded about mention of their father to the girls. Hence they grew up knowing little about their parents, and nothing of what their father was doing.

It may be inserted here that two sisters of Father Rosecrans, and nieces of Bishop Rosecrans, entered the Ursulines. Mary Louise Rosecrans joined the Ursulines of Brown County, Ohio, and was the excuse for many visits to the Brown County convent by Bishop Rosecrans. Known in religion as Sister St. Charles, she died as a young religious. Her tombstone in the little cemetery at the Brown County convent reads: "Mary Rosecrans, in religion Sister St. Charles, died Mar. 2, 1878, in the 26th year of her age and the 3rd of her religious profession." The youngest of the three Rosecrans girls, Annie ("Menza"), became Sister Kostka of the Ursulines in California.

But to return to Father Stone. He pronounced his vows as a Passionist on August 11, 1877, receiving the name Father Fidelis of the Cross. Father Dorsey quotes him as writing: "The last ten years have made an old man of me. The anguish of religious doubt, the loss of an earthly paradise, these were but the beginnings of sorrows." But now he had found the true Cross, and his new name seemed most appropriate, Father Fidelis of the Cross.

Father Fidelis spent a long and distinguished career as a Passionist. His talents as a preacher and orator made him in great demand. An example of this is evident from the fact that he preached in 1889 at the opening ceremonies of the Catholic University of America. The invitation to do so indicated the universal esteem of his scholarship.

During his years as a Passionist, Father Fidelis had established his Order in Argentina, where he labored for 12 years and founded a number of monasteries. He also spent several years in Rome, and a great deal of time in Mexico and other Latin American countries. When he died in 1921 an account of his death in the Catholic Columbian of October 21 was headlined: "Father Fidelis Noted Convert Dead." The Passionist Order had lost "one of its most eloquent preachers."

In his later years, feeble in health, Father Fidelis retired to the Passionist monastery in Chicago. It was there one day that he received a letter which began, "My dear Father." It was from his daughter Mary Frances in California who had learned the identity and address of her real father. Eventually she came to visit him in Chicago, and arranged to take him back with her for a visit. He was there able to see his other older daughter, Nellie. However, his health gave way rather suddenly, and he died in the arms of his

daughter October 21, 1921, aged 81.

Father Fidelis of the Cross was brought back to St. Louis for funeral services. Throngs viewed his body in St. Anne's church there. He was buried in the Passionist plot of Calvary cemetery, in Normandy, St. Louis, a short distance from the present Cardinal Newman College, named after another famous scholar and convert.

It needs to be added that Father Fidelis was the author of two books. While reflecting on his position before becoming a Catholic, he wrote The Invitation Heeded, the story of his conversion. It went through seventeen editions and was translated into a number of foreign languages. During his final years, while old and in failing health, his active mind produced in 1920 another book, An Awakening And What Happened. He retold the story of his conversion, making it, in effect, an invitation to others to seek the peace and security of soul and, indeed, the holiness that he had found.

Published posthumously, Bishop Rosecrans was the author of a lovely little book, The Divinity of Christ. This along with Father Fidelis' two volumes could well be treasures in the archives of Kenyon College.

(1) R. C. Gleaner was the pen name for Father L. W. Mulhane, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Church, Mt. Vernon, Ohio, just a few miles west of Kenyon College.

(2) Bishop Chase was the Episcopal Bishop of Ohio, and the founder of Kenyon College and Theology School.

(3) General Rosecrans' Papers, Special Collection Number 663, U.C.L.A. Research Library, Los Angeles, California. Box 107, Folder 8.

A HISTORY OF ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH
JERSEY TOWNSHIP, LICKING COUNTY, OHIO
(Continued)

Sacramental Records

Unfortunately records of baptisms and marriages for the early years at St. Joseph's Mission Church, Jersey, are missing. Some few scattered records which apparently belong to the Jersey Mission are to be found at St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark; at St. Patrick's, Columbus, and at the Cathedral. This is to be expected since the Mission was attended from these places in the early part of its existence. However, seldom was any notation made that the baptism or marriage occurred at Jersey.

In some of the St. Patrick's records may be found the notation, "at Beech Woods, Licking County." This undoubtedly refers to the Jersey church. The 1875 Atlas of Licking County shows a place in Jersey Township labeled "Beach P.O.", and located on the map a short distance southwest of St. Joseph's.

It could be expected that there would have been a special book of records for the Mission as early as 1850 when the first church was built. No book for this period exists. Nor is there one found for the period following the building of the frame church in 1871. Records of St. Joseph's, now kept at the

Church of the Ascension, Johnstown, begin only with the year 1880. Even these records are incomplete, some of the loose pages having been lost. Those remaining, fortunately, have been re-copied, but with a few evident mistakes.

Records given here, therefore, are taken, first of all, from St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark; then from St. Patrick's and the Cathedral, Columbus. The records preserved at Johnstown will be given last.

JERSEY BAPTISMS

St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark:

1845

1st. Johnstown. I have baptized this boy son of [no further data].

J. SENEZ, Priest.

1861

GORY, Joseph James, b. (?), of John Gory & Regina. Sprs: William Gory & Anna Carr. Bapt. Jan. 10, 1861.

St. Patrick's Church, Columbus:

1854

COSH (Cush?), Austin [no birth date] of Daniel Cush and Catherine Carr. Sprs: Nicholas How (Haugh?) & Mary Purcell. Bapt. Sept. 23, 1854.

1855

PHELAN, Juliah, b. of Lawrence Phelan and Honora Ryan. Bapt. Sept. 10, 1855.

1864

GOREY, Agnes, aged 7 weeks, b. of James Gorey & Cara Canine. Sprs: John Gorey & Helen Wickliff. Bapt. Feb. 4.

GOREY, Mary Isabel, b. March 11, of John Gorey and Rach. McCraney. Bapt. April 7 "ad Sylv. + ag."

GOREY, Joseph, b. Sept. 4, of William Gorey and Delia Crampton. Bapt. Sept. 1. At Beech Woods.

1865

PHELAN, Catherine Anastasia, b. March 16, of James Phelan & Alice Ryan. Sprs: Roderick Hannigan & Honora Fitzgerald. Bapt. April 2. At Taylorstown.

VAN CAMP, Mary, 10 years old, of Samuel Van Camp & Mary Dearth. Sprs: Daniel Cush & Emelia Cush. Bapt. April 6. At Beech Wood, Licking County.

CARR, Francis. Mother: Catherine Carr. Bapt. April 6. [No further data] At Beech Wood, Licking County.

WICKLIFF, Mary A., b. June 11, 1852, of Richard Wickliff & Helen Darby. Bapt. May 13, 1865. At Beech Wood, Licking County.

BOSTON, Louis Francis, b. April 20, 1864, of Israel Boston & M. A. Dean. Bapt. Sept. 14, 1865. At Beech Wood.

HAUGH, William, b. Aug. 22, of Nicholas Haugh & Mary Purcell. Sprs: William Lafferty & Mary Doyle. Bapt. Sept. 14. At Beech Wood.

1866

HAUGH, Mary, b. Dec. 4, of Nicholas Haugh & Mary Haugh. Sprs: Lawrence Phalen & Anna Carr. Bapt. Jan. 15, 1866. At :Fagetum", Beech Woods, Licking County.

CARR, Anna, b. March 10, of John V. Carr & Anne Toole. Sprs: James Burns & Katherine Toole. Bapt. April 1, 1866.

1868

HAUGH, Elizabeth M., b. Aug. 17, of Nicholas Haugh & Bridget Haugh. Bapt. Sept. 3.

St. Joseph's Cathedral [Marriages only found]:

1877

HINES, Patrick D. & Mary E. Malloy. Witnesses: Thomas Hines and Belle Milloy. May 2, 1877. At Taylorstown [A mission with Jersey].

1884

HINES, Thomas & Belle Milloy. Witnesses: John Milloy & Mary (wife). Sept. 18.

St. Joseph's Church, Jersey:

1880

HILL, Margaret Blanche, b. April 17, of James Hill & Anna Haugh. Sprs: William O'Connor & Bridget Haugh. Bapt. May 6.

HOY, Mary Angelina, b. May 6, of David Hoy and Mary Hillan. Sprs: Austin Cush & Margaret Leuterber. Bapt. May 7.

HAUGH, Evelina, b. April 4, of Nicholas Haugh, Jr., and Mary Haugh. Sprs: Austin Cush & Catherine Haugh. Bapt. May 25.

TIPPY, Anne Mary, b. April 25, of Frank Tippey and Amelia Robinson. Sprs: Frank Cush & Kate Norton. Bapt. May 27.

EGAN, Frances Margaret, b. Aug. 31, of Thomas Egan & Lucinda Egan. Sprs: Charles McKinney & Nora McKinney. Bapt. Oct. 3.

CUSH, Margaret Herratti, b. Sept. 5, of Frank Cush & Mary A. Wickliff. Sprs: Daniel Cush & Amelia Denmon. Bapt. Oct. 3.

1881

LAFFERTY, William Earl, b. Dec. 31, 1880, of William Lafferty & Catherine. Sprs: James Lafferty and Joanne Loar. Bapt. Jan. 7.

McKINNEY, Austin Joseph, b. March 24, of John E. McKinney & Eugenie McKinney. Sprs: Frank Cush and Mary Wickliff (wife). Bapt. April 16.

CLARKE, Joseph Gerard, b. May 12, of Thomas E. Clarke & Anna E. Fis—. Sprs: Thomas Egan & Lucinda Mattingly (wife). Bapt. May 15.

MATTINGLY, Romanus Joseph, b. Aug. 29, of Paul Mattingly & Eliza J. Clark. Sprs: Austin Cush and Teresa Clark. Bapt. Sept. 4.

HOY, Margaret Teresa, b. Aug. 9, of David Hoy and Mary Hill—. Sprs: Charles McKinney & Eugenia Cush. Bapt. Oct. 2.

ROWE, Francis Joseph, b. Dec. 1, of Andrew Rowe & Mary Dinan. Sprs: D. A. Clarke & Hannah Sheedy. Bapt. Dec. 10.

1882

CUSH, Daniel Edward, b. Feb. 21, of Frank Cush & Mary Wickliff. Sprs: Emmett McKinney & Eugenia Cush (wife). Bapt. Feb. 26.

TIPPY, Margaret Effa, b. Feb. 15, of Frank Tippy & Amelia Robinson. Sprs: Jerome Carr and Catherine Lafferty. Bapt. March 25.

MCKINNEY, Florence Honora, b. March 30, of Charles & Hanna Mart---. Sprs: Dennis McKinney & Eugenia Cush. Bapt April 9.
 GOREY, Agatha Eygenia, b. Feb. 5, of John Gorey and Rachael Crany. Sprs: Samuel Gorey & Eugenia McKinney. Bapt. May 18.
 EGAN, Thomas Clarence, b. Dec. 1, 1881 (April 9, 1882?) of Thomas Egan and Lucinda Mattingly. Sprs: Jerome Cush & Margaret Egan. Bapt. July 9.
 CUSH, Thomas Mary, b. Sept. 15, of Jerome Cush and Eugenia McKinney. Sprs: Edward McKinney & Orlena McKinney. Bapt. Oct. 8.
 CUSH, Leo & Louis [Twins], b. Oct. 5, of James Cush and Anne Wickliff. Sprs: James Cush & Margaret Wadsworth; William Lafferty & Eugenia Cush McKinney. Bapt. Oct. 29.
 HAUGH, Cecilia, b. Oct. 20, of Nicholas Haugh, Jr., & Mary Haugh. Sprs: James Haugh & Cecilia Conlon. Bapt. Oct. 29.

1883

HILL, Isaac Raymond, b. Feb. 5, of James Hill & Anna ----. Sprs: James Haugh & Katie Haugh. Bapt. March 4.
 CONLON, Francis Leo, b. Jan. 21, of John Conlon & Mary Riff. Sprs: Edward Phalen & Cecilia Conlon. Bapt. March 4.
 HOY, James Raymond, b. March 5, of David Hoy & Mary Hillar---. Sprs: William & Katie Lafferty (wife). Bapt. March 24.
 MCKINNEY, Catherine Isabel, b. May 8, of Emmett McKinney and Eugenia C---. Sprs: D. A. Clarke & Philomena Cush. Bapt. May 24.
 ROBERTS, Dolores Evangelia, b. Aug. 8, of W. Roberts & Julia Phalen. Sprs: Lawrence & Emma Phalen. Bapt. Sept. 16.
 CLARKE, John Claud, b. Oct. 13, of Thomas Clarke & Ann Fisher. Sprs: Frank & Mary Cush. Bapt. Nov. 2.
 PHELAN, Bernard Aloysius, b. Oct. 11, of Joseph Phelan & Ella Lafferty. Sprs: William Phelan & Mary Lafferty. Bapt. Nov. 18.

1884

BUTT, James Howe, b. Nov. 26, 1883, of William Butt & Margaret Howe. Sprs: James Howe and Anna Hill. Bapt. Jan. 1.
 EAGAN, Josephine Cecilia, b. Jan. 31, of Thomas Eagan & Lucinda Mattingly. Sprs: Dennis & Lizzie McKinney. Bapt. March 16.
 LAFFERTY, Joseph Ambrose, b. March 15, of William Lafferty & Catherine Phelan. Sprs: Jerome Carr and Eugenia McKinney. Bapt. April 4.
 CUSH, Josephine Cecilia [Joseph Cecil?] b. March 12, of Frank Cush and Mary Wickliff. Sprs: George Wickliff & Mena Cush. Bapt. April 28.
 HOY, Michael Goodwin, b. May 19, of David Hoy & Mary Hill---. Sprs: Jerome Carr & Bridget Howe. Bapt. June 3.
 CUSH, Honora Agnes, b. Sept. 26, of James Cush & Agnes Wickliff. Sprs: Arza (?) Carr & Martha Carr (wife). Bapt. Oct. 13.

1885

HILL, Mary, b. Nov. 27, 1884, of James Hill & Anna Haugh. Sprs: Fanny Haugh & Joanne Lafferty. Bapt. Feb. 13.
 LAWLER, John, adult, aged about 90. Sprs: Andrew Rauch & Mrs. Emelia Tippy. Bapt. Feb. 22.
 TIPPY, Frederick Joseph, b. Oct. 29, of Francis Tippy & Emelia Roberts. Sprs: William Perry Fowler & Mary Haugh. Bapt. Feb. 23.
 PHELAN, Ernest Joseph, b. March 18, of Edward Phelan and Clara Mary Myers. Sprs: Bernard Phelan and Anna Phelan. Bapt. June 14.

(To be continued)