

Wrestling with Angels

A Secular Franciscan-type guy, stumbling along the Path.

Monday, October 25, 2010

Rest in peace Father Robert Giuntini, AKA, "Deacon Bob"

Father Robert Giuntini passed away this weekend. I knew him primarily as Deacon Bob when he was assigned to New Hyde Park's Notre Dame parish in the 1970's before his ordination to the priesthood.

I remember it was the year before my First Communion. I had already firmly established my role as the "CCD Geek" in my class; I loved going to religious instruction, loved learning about the faith, and was endlessly fascinated with the Church's rituals and ceremonials. One Sunday, I noticed that a new priest - or so I thought - was helping Father Uris at the altar. His clerical garb differed slightly from Father's; they both had that white robe on, but the newcomer's stole went from his shoulder to his opposite hip, instead of around the neck like I was used to seeing. I asked my dad why that was.

Dad said "He's not a priest, at least not yet. That's *Deacon Bob*. He'll become a priest next year after his studies are finished.

Unfortunately, I'd misheard Dad; when he said Deacon Bob, I distinctly heard **Dick and Bob**. I was immediately confused; how could there be two of them if I only saw this guy and Father Uris? Was this along the lines of that Trinity "3-in-1" thingy they'd had been trying to teach us this year? I deduced there must be a second guy somewhere behind the scenes. I concluded that the guy at the altar with Father Uris was "Dick"; the guy somewhere behind the scenes therefore must be "Bob". I kept quiet about my little dilemma and we left Mass.

A couple of weeks later, Dad took me to Baskin Robbins for some ice cream. As we waited, I noticed that the man from Church was a few customers ahead of us, in his black clerical suit. Looking around, I couldn't find a second guy in a black suit; there was only "Dick". The elusive "Bob" had yet to make an appearance. I asked Dad if we could go over and say hello. He nodded and we both walked over.

I confidently stepped up to shake his hand and greeted him -

"HIYA, DICK!!! I'M TOMMY ROONEY!!!!"

It took several minutes for Dick and my Dad to stop laughing; apparently they were mightily amused by something I said, but I couldn't figure out what. I mean, all I did was say "Hi". Then I thought that perhaps this was "Bob", and "Dick" was the man-behind-the-scenes. That didn't seem to warrant such an outburst, though. A moment later, through his tears, Dick re-introduced himself to me, "Hello Tommy. My name's Bob. I'm a **DEACON**." I blinked in thought for a moment, and finally had my A-HA experience for the day; I got the joke and laughed along. I shook his hand again and said, "It's nice to meet you, DEACON Bob!"

Blog Archive

- ▶ 2012 (18)
- ▶ 2011 (41)
- ▼ 2010 (49)
 - ▶ 12/05 - 12/12 (1)
 - ▶ 11/21 - 11/28 (1)
 - ▶ 11/07 - 11/14 (1)
 - ▼ 10/24 - 10/31 (3)
 - Elections and Catholic citizenship -
 - On the lighter side...from my Aunt Joan
 - Rest in peace Father Robert Giuntini, AKA, "Deacon..."
 - ▶ 10/17 - 10/24 (2)
 - ▶ 10/03 - 10/10 (2)
 - ▶ 09/26 - 10/03 (1)
 - ▶ 09/19 - 09/26 (1)
 - ▶ 09/12 - 09/19 (2)
 - ▶ 09/05 - 09/12 (2)
 - ▶ 08/29 - 09/05 (3)
 - ▶ 08/22 - 08/29 (1)
 - ▶ 08/08 - 08/15 (2)
 - ▶ 07/25 - 08/01 (2)
 - ▶ 07/11 - 07/18 (1)
 - ▶ 07/04 - 07/11 (2)
 - ▶ 06/27 - 07/04 (1)
 - ▶ 06/13 - 06/20 (1)
 - ▶ 05/30 - 06/06 (2)
 - ▶ 05/23 - 05/30 (2)
 - ▶ 05/16 - 05/23 (1)
 - ▶ 05/09 - 05/16 (1)
 - ▶ 04/25 - 05/02 (1)
 - ▶ 04/18 - 04/25 (1)
 - ▶ 04/04 - 04/11 (1)
 - ▶ 03/28 - 04/04 (1)
 - ▶ 03/21 - 03/28 (3)

I was relieved to have this thing cleared up. That "2-guys-in-one" thing had me flummoxed. [Author's note: The Trinity "3-guys-in-one" thingy still flummoxes me from time to time, but that's neither here nor here.]

Deacon Bob had been assigned to Notre Dame for his pastoral year. He visited our classrooms frequently, teaching us different ways to remember how to pray the Rosary, a sung version of the Our Father, not to mention a sign language version of the same, if memory serves. He often preached the homily at the 9am Family Mass and would invite all us pre-Communion kids up to the altar. Deacon Bob could always explain the Gospels and readings in language we could understand. I looked up to Deacon Bob. I knew I wanted to be "holy" like him. During his assignment to our parish was the first time I ever thought I might like to become a priest when I grew up.

He was ordained to the priesthood on my birthday in 1976 and served various parishes along the Island. Father Robert Giuntini passed away on Friday October 22nd 2010, shortly after he celebrated his 34th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. Unfortunately, I never saw him again after he left Notre Dame.

Thank you, Father Bob, for being someone who will forever hold a place in my heart by shaping and nurturing my faith, for being an icon of what it means to embody Jesus the Servant in the diaconate. Most of all, thank you for having a sense of humor. I knew you for only a short period, but you still left an indelible mark on me, and I will miss you. Pray for us!

Daily Mass Readings

- Ephesians 4:32-5:8
- Psalm 1:1-4,6
- Luke 13:10-17

Posted by Thomas at 5:32 PM 

2 comments:

DONNA WRIGHT October 31, 2010 at 3:55 PM

Hi Tom. When I read about Father Bob's passing in our church bulletin from St. Peter's in Port Washington today, I was shocked. I also remember Father Bob as Deacon Bob at Notre Dame. I was telling my 13 year old son that Deacon Bob played an important role in the lives of my brothers Joe and Pete (Sirabella). I was too young to appreciate Father Bob, but I remember that he spent a lot of time with my brother Joe and his friends. It was 1976 when our father passed away so he definitely knew who we were. Your story is a classic and I'm sure Father Bob told that same story throughout his years as a priest. I can picture his face ... and in my mind he is still that young guy! Thanks for sharing your story. Donna (Sirabella) Wright - my email - donnawright107@yahoo.com

Reply



Unknown February 18, 2020 at 5:33 AM

I remember father bob the child molester

Reply

- ▶ 02/28 - 03/07 (1)
- ▶ 02/21 - 02/28 (1)
- ▶ 02/14 - 02/21 (3)
- ▶ 01/31 - 02/07 (1)
- ▶ 01/03 - 01/10 (1)
- ▶ 2009 (47)



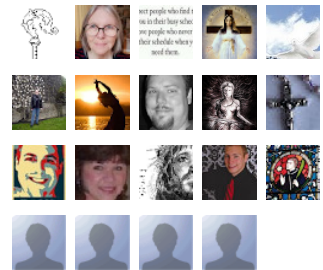
About Me



[View my complete profile](#)


Followers

Followers (19)



[Follow](#)

Enter your comment...

 Comment as: ▼

Notify me

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

Watermark theme. Powered by [Blogger](#).