



Rev. Otto Andreas Koltzenburg

October 20, 1950 - May 30, 2023

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Leavenworth, Washington

It is with love and gratitude that we gather here today to commemorate a humble human being that gave us a personal vision into the friendship of Jesus Christ. It is God that brought Otto Andreas Koltzenburg to the priesthood. The letter to the Hebrews explains, "No one takes this honor upon himself but only when called by God" (Heb 5:4). Indeed God also called Father Otto to heaven May 28, 2023 on Pentecost Sunday, commemorating the Holy Spirit descending upon the apostles- how fitting for this holy, and beloved Catholic priest.

So where did this gift from God to all of us come from?

Father Otto wrote about it in his book- "Leading to life: Religion in the German Eifel Through The Centuries", The town Rohr, in the Eifel region in Germany, where I was born, has been most influential in my religious formation through my parents, our extended family and the people who have been intimately devoted to God.

(Rohr is about thirty miles from Cologne.)

His father was Karl Emil Koltzenburg from Ludwigshafen and mother Gertrud (her maiden name Schnichels is from the Eifel area). Karl was a fine electrical mechanic. His skill saved his life in World War II as he was taken from the train that was on the way to The Battle for Stalingrad for he possessed the skill to repair machinery.

Later, captured by the Americans, in a German POW camp in Texas he built a clock with what little materials were available. Father Otto's Grandfather Fredrich Koltzenburg died as a soldier in the hospital in Bad Durkheim as it was bombed. Father's Uncle Otto fell in the Sowjet area which is now Ukraine. His maternal grandmother was from Switzerland.

Karl and Gertrud had five children, Karl (who died at 6 months), Konrad, Bernd, Otto, and Alois. Only brother Konrad survives and lives in Cologne. Konrad wants you to know that as a child he was sent to an aunt to live while brother Bernd was studying away at college, that it was Otto who lovingly cared for their brother Alois who suffered from permanent brain damage during his birth. Through the years Father Otto would travel from America to Germany to visit Alois. Bernd's daughter Claudia needs special care and is Father Otto's heir.

Father Otto is survived by brother Konrad and his sons Alexander and Maximilian, and his late brother Bernd's daughters Claudia and Beate.

It should be noted that Alexander, while working for the Red Cross in war torn Ukraine, has stepped forward to help in this memorial to honor the entire Koltzenburg family and his Uncle Otto. His expired passport does not permit him to be here with us today.

Childhood memories were idyllic as Konrad, Bernd, and Otto enjoyed a loving brotherhood. They built little ships from long grass and sailed them in the Nekar River. They were close knit and mother Gertrud saw to it that they were

enriched with Christian values. They were sent to uncles and aunts during summer holidays and Otto was the lucky one as Ernst Koltzenburg was a candy salesman.

Otto completed school as an industrial clerk. He studied business and administration prior to entering the seminary in Wurzburg, Northern Bavaria. He continued his education at Louvain, Belgium.

Father Otto was once quoted, "I was led to the priestly vocation mostly through the deep faith of members of my family, including aunts and uncles. They lived out the truth that our lives are directed towards heaven and that we can be firm in our awareness of God's call." He also credits devotion to the Blessed Virgin including recitation of the rosary as part of his upbringing.

Personal friendships brought him to the United States.

He was ordained at St Charles, Spokane, in 1991. He assisted at other parishes in the Diocese of Spokane including St Francis Xavier, St Augustine, and St Mary. He also served as chaplain at the Newman Center at Washington State University in Pullman.

Father was assigned to Assumption-The Blessed Virgin Parish in Walla Walla. The parish had both an elementary and high school. He was the pastor for fourteen years. Movie Nights were special when he would entertain parishioners with his special video projector that produced films on a grand scale. He introduced beautiful statues of Mary and Joseph to adorn the altar. He also presided over the installation of a huge stained glass window covering one full side of the church depicting Pentecost with the apostles kneeling beneath the Holy Spirit, a theme that seems to be omnipresent throughout his life. He is remembered by parishioners as the most gentle and kindest priest

ever.

As a European Intellectual he wanted his next assignment to be in an urban setting. When his request was denied he reached out to Pope John Paul II at the Vatican and was rewarded with an assignment to St. Mark's Parish in Seattle.

Father Otto was embraced for his genuine devotion to the parish and its members. He installed a state of the art sound system designed by world class engineers. He started a popular St Mark's Boy's Choir similar to those in Europe. He escorted a group of parishioners to Germany for a grand tour of his homeland. He oversaw church bells from the Holy Land ringing The Angelus through the community before Mass. Through The Knights of Columbus, of which he is a Fourth Degree Knight, he established one of the largest memorials in the world to the Right to Life. "The Affirmation of Life" is an outdoor, sixty-four square foot Venetian glass mosaic built to last more than a thousand years. His imprint at the church lives on forever. A legion of devotee's have continued to honor him to this day and beyond. 'Ottofest' birthday celebrations have been held every year and enthusiastically attended by former parishioners from everywhere.

Father went on to Holy Family Parish in Auburn. Every Monday night he would give well attended lectures on a different saint. He infused the Knights of Columbus. He initiated a choir after the 11am Mass for young adults. He got people involved with a connection of love and respect. Think of the people you have come to know and lasting friendships by way of Father Otto touching your life.

Perhaps most remarkable of all is how The Almighty used Father Otto to exhibit the lessons of the gospels. He was placed into a time of great upheaval in the Catholic Church. The bishops were struggling with child abuse

and demanded adherence to an unusual strict edict. It is in this setting that Father Otto, while not being accused of anything related to moral conduct was persecuted for innocently 'not following rules' of the bishop. He was mistreated and placed in a false light of innuendo that compounded.

Matthew 26:57-27:10

"The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward."

Father wrote of the missteps of the bishops in his book "Führer of the Faithful - Popes and Bishops in History" "Tertullian had observed this inconsistency of the Roman government which persecuted Christians without considering them criminals. He asked this simple question- "If Christians are not criminals, then why are they punished?"

It's like priests who are being punished in our modern society without having done anything criminal. We observe the consistency of inconsistency and the overwhelming awareness that Christianity may very well be as much in jeopardy today as it was in the third century."

This persecution would follow him to the grave. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:44

He embraced becoming a martyr and monk living in Leavenworth saying Mass every morning. He never waivered in his belief in the Roman Catholic Church. He knew its history of martyrs, trials, and tribulations and that 'The Gates of Hell Shall Not Prevail Against It'. He wrote twelve books and became a renowned scholar on the saints that included the authorship of a multi volume set- "Heaven at Heart: Saints for Every Day". Another major work was

"About Christian Brotherhood". For years, he wrote weekly newsletters that were distributed all over the state via a computer network.

His internationally distributed book - "The Secret Code of The Monks" contains an impressive tribute to him by Monsignor Pedro Loez-Gallo, Proto-Notary Apostolic of His Holiness.

"Our personal darkness has grown to become a clamorous noise. We now all need to absorb the silence of caves and deserts where hermits and monks found themselves. The divine loneliness and solitude will be filled with the celestial melodies that only God can bestow. This is the purpose of Father Koltzenburg's book: to teach us to crack the Secret Code of The Monks and learn to live in it"

Remembering Father Otto brings a smile and a warm heart. Everyone benefitted from his kindness. He was known by Catholics and non-Catholics alike for responding to those in distress, even if it was 3 o'clock in the morning. Indeed, a parishioner from Holy Family credits Father with having saved his life when he was on the verge of suicide. This was a man who walked the walk. He humbly set an example for all. This writer remembers seeing a lonely figure, on a hot summer day with sleeves rolled up, on knees with bucket and scrub brush cleaning the entry doors of St Marks church - it was Father Otto.

His sense of humor was so logical and light-hearted. He was down to earth and rock solid. He was being shown 'Google Earth' and how it could show where his house was, He said, "Why do I need to know that? I am standing here right now". He had a curtain covering his computer monitor. He genuinely cared about everything and was considerate. Always answering in the affirmative "Yes, Yes" with his signature smile.

He was a friend to the animals. Once, a bear came to his kitchen window and peeked in at him. The birds flocked to his care. The night after he died two full grown deer came to the door looking for him. He lived amongst God's creatures and they loved him too.

Living a frugal life, he left the majority of his estate to the Wurzburg Seminary in Germany.

The news of his passing came as a shock to everyone. Father Otto was so dependable and steady and so needed in our shaky world. We knew that Father was always there, a very special consciousness for us all. He is being honored today. Inside the cherry wood casket made by the Trappist Monks, with a carving of the Knights of Columbus, he is wearing his black clerical garments and celebratory white vestments originally sewn by his mother with scapular and rosary.

He is now surrounded by angels and saints- those he wrote about and knew so well. They must be overjoyed to have him in perfection.

We remain here, thanking God for the gift of Father Otto in our lives. He is in our hearts forever and waiting for us in heaven.

Tribute Wall

KS

“ *Otto molested my family member. So he is not a martyr*

Kristi Smith - August 16, 2023 at 06:40 PM

BF

“ *Father otto was my priest growing up in assumption church my grandmother was his neighbor, he was genuinely a good soul an honest an godly man he was a role model , and I received my first communion from him 30 yrs ago he helped send me to world youth day in Denver Colorado, I have found memories of him as he was an amazing role model*

Brian fullen walla walla Washington

Brian Fullen - August 04, 2023 at 12:33 PM

OE

“ *Rev. Otto Andreas Koltzenburg*

Oehrlein - June 27, 2023 at 01:16 PM

OE

“ *In dankbarer Erinnerung in der Verbundenheit unsres christlichen Glaubens und des priesterlichen Dienstes - an Rev. Otto Koltzenburg von Rev. Klaus Oehrlein/Diözese Würzburg. Gemeinsam haben wir im Herbst 1974 das Theologie-Studium in Würzburg begonnen und im dortigen Priesterseminar gelebt. Ich erinnere mich gerne an die gemeinsame Zeit dort im 3.Stock des Borgias-Baus - an die Primiz in der Heimatgemeinde von Otto in der Eifel, wo ich die Predigt übernehmen durfte - an den Besuch in Spokane und den nächtlichen Riesen-Trip per Auto mit seinen beiden Neffen nach San Francisco - und das letzte persönliche Treffen am 29.Oktober 2014 in Franken am Untermain (mit PR Klaus Simon) - sowie unsre letzten eMails im März 2023. "Zum Paradiese mögen Engel dich geleiten, die heiligen Märtyrer dich begrüßen und dich führen in die heilige Stadt Jerusalem. Die Chöre der Engel mögen dich empfangen, und durch Christus, der für dich gestorben, soll ewiges Leben dich erfreuen. "*

Oehrlein - June 27, 2023 at 01:15 PM

SP

“ *The Clock of Life*
The clock of life is wound but once. AND no man has the power to tell just when the hands will stop - At late or early hour. Now is the only time you own Live, love and toil with a will. Place NO faith in time. FOR THE CLOCK MAY SOON BE STILL!

s.f. Pangerl - June 24, 2023 at 07:56 PM