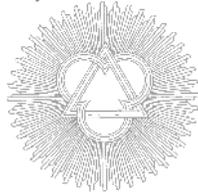
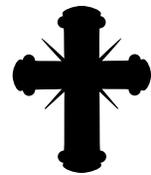

Most Holy Trinity Seminary Newsletter



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Requiescat in Pace

Father Anthony Cekada

September 11th, 2020

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

My dear Catholic people,

It is with the greatest sadness that we announce the death of Father Anthony Cekada, who passed away on September 11th. He was home at the rectory of St. Gertrude the Great Church in West Chester, Ohio, where he had practiced his apostolate since 1989.

Father Cekada was the one who urged me to found the seminary in 1995. Bishop Dolan had been consecrated in 1993, and it was time to organize a place in which to train priests. We began in a section of our school in Warren, Michigan, and later moved it to our present facility here in Brooksville, Florida.

I told Fr. Cekada that I could not do the seminary all by myself, as I was at that time teaching in our school in Michigan. So he volunteered to come up for one week per month to teach certain courses to the seminarians. This he did faithfully up until November of 2019.

In December he cancelled his trip, complaining of feeling ill. No one knew it then, but this “illness” was the beginning of what would prove lethal to him. For it was at this time that he began to have a series of small strokes which would eventually take his life.

The diagnosis of the stroke was not made until January of this year. Although significantly set back by the stroke, he was still much in control of himself, and looked forward to a complete recovery. He gradually improved. We were all very hopeful. He even did some online classes for the seminarians in the spring. He announced that he would definitely teach the seminarians for the fall trimester — which would have been now — but God had other plans for him.

From June until August there was a gradual deterioration, until finally in early September he was taken to the hospital with yet another stroke. As well, there was suspicion of the return of his cancer. He was also suffering from atrial fibrillation (*afib*), a condition in which the heart beats very quickly. One of the dangers of this disorder is, precisely, strokes. The doctors considered him beyond treatment or cure, and sent him home. He died a few days later.

A friend of forty-five years. I first met Father Cekada in the spring of 1975, a few months before

my ordination. The then seminarian Daniel Dolan and I traveled from Ecône to Fribourg, Switzerland, to see the then monk Anthony Cekada. They had known each other previously in a Cistercian monastery in Wisconsin. Daniel Dolan had quit the Cistercians and went to Ecône. Anthony Cekada stayed with the Cistercians, and was sent to Fribourg for further training.

The purpose of the trip was to convince Anthony Cekada to quit the conservative *Novus Ordo* Cistercians and to come to Ecône. It worked. Anthony Cekada entered Ecône in the fall of 1975, and was ordained in June of 1977.

The years from 1976 to 1978 were the “hard line” years of Archbishop Lefebvre. In May of 1976, he was suspended *a divinis*, meaning that he could no longer lawfully exercise his priestly and episcopal orders. Up to that time, the Archbishop was pursuing a policy of reconciliation with the modernist inmates of the Vatican. In 1976, he did a complete about-face, justifiably angered that while the modernist heretics were given free rein in Paul VI’s new religion, he would be singled out for punishment.

Those of us who had been through the horrors of the *Novus Ordo* seminaries were, of course, delighted with this turn of events, since we wanted no compromise with the modernists.

However, in the summer of 1978, Paul VI died and Wojtyla (John Paul II) was elected in October. Everything then changed for Archbishop Lefebvre, since he had the hope again of reconciling with the modernists.

This change in orientation was the beginning of our conflict with the Archbishop. By the spring of 1983, the “Nine” were no longer with Archbishop Lefebvre.

After his ordination in 1977, Fr. Cekada was sent to Armada, Michigan to help me with the seminary. I was all alone at that time at the Armada facility. He was there for about a year but then went to Oyster Bay Cove, in a then recently acquired property on Long Island.¹ From there he published, together with the then Fr. Kelly and others, the publication called *The Roman Catholic*.

¹ In the search for the property on Long Island, Fr. Kelly was looking in the Oyster Bay area for large homes which could possibly serve as a rectory and church. One of these homes was a former Rockefeller estate in Oyster Bay. Fr. Cekada, forever the humorist, said: “If we get this place, we’ll have to call it *Oysters Rockefeller*.”

I was in regular contact with Fr. Cekada during this time, because I was expected to contribute to the magazine.

Then 1983 hit. Nine American priests of the Society of Saint Pius X were thrown out because they objected to changes being made which were preparatory to absorption of the Society by the Novus Ordo. Because we were sitting on a number of corporations as directors, lawsuits followed, since we refused to resign from these positions for as long as there was the intention of reconciling with the Novus Ordo.

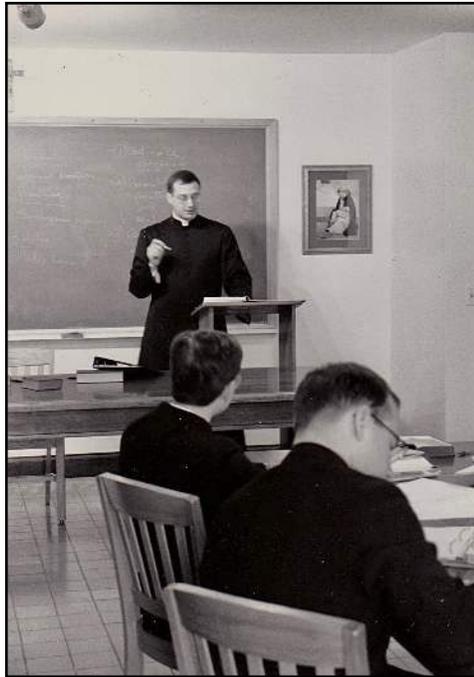
It was during this lawsuit period, from 1983 to 1988, that Fr. Cekada and I interacted a great deal. Not only was there strategy to talk about, but also many theological issues came up.

In 1989, Fr. Cekada moved from Oyster Bay to St. Gertrude's, at that time in Sharonville, Ohio, a suburb of Cincinnati. A few years later the present facility was built in West Chester, Ohio, where he stayed until his death.

From 1995 on, I would see Fr. Cekada regularly for his monthly seminary visits. I also worked on a number of articles with him for the Internet. We also appeared together on True Restoration's *Francis Watch*, analyzing the outrageous statements and actions of Bergoglio.

A fighter and a researcher. Anyone who knew Fr. Cekada would know that he was an indefatigable fighter. He was never anyone to just roll over when challenged, contradicted, or attacked. Adversity did not depress him; it motivated him.

In his theological battles with others, I always noticed that if you were respectful with him, he would be respectful in return. This was true even if you totally disagreed with him. But if you displayed what he called "attitude," that is a snarky, belligerent, and disrespectful presentation of your argument, he would return the fire with a withering satire and sarcasm.



Twenty-five Years Ago

Father Cekada teaches his course in the first year of operation of Most Holy Trinity Seminary, 1995-1996

Father Cekada never thought of himself as a deep thinker either in philosophy or theology, but he was an excellent researcher. He always took the trouble to find the original sources of any quotations which were used as arguments against him.

His masterpiece of research was his book, *Work of Human Hands*, which exposed the entire liturgical movement from its origin, showing how, since 1948, there was a step-by-step process, under the leadership of the freemason Bugnini, to destroy the Roman liturgy. Father Cekada's forte was the sacred liturgy, and I rejoice that he has left us this book, a permanent testimony of accusation against the New Mass. It is indeed his legacy, more than anything else.

A keen sense of humor.

Father Cekada is both fondly remembered and sorely missed for his sense of humor. He was the most quick-witted person I have ever met. He kept us all laughing, lightening up our spirits in this endless and depressing problem in the Church.

Asceticism. Fr. Cekada always enjoyed a good meal, but during Lent he practiced a medieval asceticism at the table. He would completely refrain from meat on all the fast days, and would not touch solid food until late in the day. He ate only vegetables. Few people know this, but I observed him when he was here at the seminary.

A general has fallen. Father Cekada can say with Saint Paul: "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*" (II Timothy IV: 7) Father gave his entire life over to the fight against Modernism. He gave it everything he had. He utilized all his capacities in this gargantuan effort that we undertake every day to undo Vatican II and its effects.

It is hard for me to even conceive of the traditional movement without Father Cekada. Together we made a good team, each contributing

our talents to the production of a common product: the preservation and defense of the Catholic Faith against the onslaughts of the modernists. We also had to defend our positions against the criticisms of fellow traditionalists of all persuasions.

His passing is, of course, a source of great sadness to us, but we are consoled by the circumstances of his death. Fr. Cekada was no fool, and as he deteriorated from month to month, I am sure that he knew that he was dying. This realization gave him the wonderful opportunity to prepare for death. He was constantly assisted by Bishop Dolan and other clergy, in regard to both his spiritual needs and material needs. He died peacefully in the presence of his family and close friends.

Although no one is perfect, I think that we have a solid hope of the eternal salvation of Fr. Cekada. He died a good death, by all external means of judging. Only God is his judge, however, and we should never cease praying for the repose of his soul. Even St. Paul said: *"For I am not conscious to myself of any thing, yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me, is the Lord."* (I Cor. IV:4) Priests have faults just like anyone else, and these faults, if not expiated in this life, must be expiated in the next, that is, in Purgatory.

Most Holy Trinity Seminary. Fr. Cekada was very devoted to the seminary, and will be missed very acutely. He was a specialist in the areas of Canon Law and liturgy, having done years of research in both of these fields. We who are left now have to fill in the blanks, and it will be no easy task.

He took a special interest in the seminarians, making a point to take a walk outside with each of them every time he came. During his classes there were often roars of laughter. He always kept his courses interesting by inserting humorous remarks. Fr. Cekada used to joke about himself, saying that his monthly visit to the seminary "was like the circus coming to town." The seminarians loved him, and will miss him terribly.

An inspiration to young men. When Our Lord left this world by ascending into heaven, the angels said to the Apostles, who were awe-struck, gazing into the sky: *"Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen Him going into heaven."* It is as if to say: *"He is not returning for a long, long time. Why are you staring up at an empty sky as if He will return soon?"*

In other words, Our Lord's work on earth was done. So is Father Cekada's work done, and he has gone to another world. We will not see him again until the last day.

Just as the Apostles, therefore, had to put aside their joy over the physical presence of Christ, and had to give over their lives to the building of the Church, so our young men should not spend a long time gazing at and weeping over the grave of Fr. Cekada, but instead, seek to carry on the work of Fr. Cekada by becoming priests, by becoming the great fighter that he was, the great researcher, one of the generals in our battle against modernism.

If Fr. Cekada could tell us anything from the grave, I am sure that he would urge young men to sign up, to bear spiritual arms against the modernist enemy, to work tirelessly, as he did for the restoration of the true Faith.

A word about the Reading, Pennsylvania property. The meeting of the Planning and Zoning Board of the City of Reading took place on September 9th. Everything was very positive. I did not sense any opposition on the part of the Board members, or on the part of the neighbors. I fully expect a favorable decision. But we will not know until October 14th. Thank You for your prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Donald J. Sanborn
Rector