

DR. DONALD A. DOYLE – A EULOGY

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[Note: Don Doyle was the first president of the SCSS's NYC Metro Chapter.]

I first met Don Doyle some forty-five years ago when we were young teachers in the same social studies department at a new Long Island school. It was readily apparent that he was a serious-minded, scholarly member of the profession as were many of our colleagues. What really singled out Don for me was overhearing a certain discussion he was having with another faculty member after classes one day. The other gentleman considered himself a “progressive” Catholic. He was engaging Don in a debate on Church teaching, and was citing certain well-known dissenters to bolster his argument. Don countered with a brilliant explanation of the Church’s doctrine and its conformity to the Natural Law. The “progressive” was dumbstruck. With a straight face, he asked “What law was that? When did the Vatican pass that law?” Case closed! Don shook his head in disbelief, broke in a smile, and said to his adversary, “I’ll pray for you.” From that moment on, I knew that Don and I would be friends.

There would be other examples of Don’s defense of Church teaching where I witnessed Thomistic logic in action. I don’t know any layman better able to explain and invoke the Natural Law in Catholic apologetics than Don Doyle. Regrettably, I must admit that I can’t think of too many Catholic clergymen who were his match in such matters.

Our friendship blossomed as the years went on. We had so much in common: young families, graduate studies, mortgages. When he and his wife, Arlene, bought a house in Commack where my wife and I were raising our family, we became fellow parishioners at Christ the King. Our professional association developed in a social friendship.

Upon retirement from the school district, Don took a full time position at Molloy College in Rockville Centre, Long Island, where he had been an adjunct for several years. Hundreds of students were the beneficiaries of his well-prepared, incisive lectures on the American political system and our nation’s founding documents. Several of his students told me they never appreciated the meaning of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution until they took Dr. Doyle’s course. Later, I joined Don at Molloy as an adjunct in the history

department. I will always treasure our weighty conversations during the drive to-and-from the campus and our Commack homes. It was like taking a course in Catholic doctrine and social teaching.

My admiration for Don grew when I saw how he extended himself within the Right-to-Life movement on Long Island where he and Arlene took leadership roles in promoting the culture of life. That same dedication was visible as a member of the Faculty for Life organization. And when the Society of Catholic Social Scientists was launched in the early 1990's, Don, along with Dr. Joseph Varacalli, was instrumental in establishing the Long Island chapter. Among a glittering array of Catholic scholars committed to the Church's Magisterium, Don labored to increase the membership and to expand the Society's influence. No member enjoyed more respect than Don.

Above and beyond all the wonderful contributions he made to the world of scholarship was the life Don led as a *paterfamilias*. His love for Arlene and his children was evident in his words and deeds. You could not miss his fatherly pride whenever he spoke about his children allowing as how blessed he was to have "such great kids." He gave all the credit to Arlene, but their success as parents was built on their love for, and devotion to, each other. And there was no prouder grandfather than Don. His love for his grandchildren knew no limits, and their many pictures adorned his campus office. He would speak of their impending visits with an undisguised excitement and anticipation.

I remember how my dear, saintly grandmother characterized a respected person, one who exhibited decency and goodness in his everyday actions. She called such an individual "un Christiano." It is a term that describes Don Doyle perfectly.

And so, until we meet again, we say goodbye to Donald, one of God's noblest creations, and echo the words found in St. Matthew: "Well done, good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of thy Master."