



Headline from the Boston Globe at the time of the silencing.

simple, direct and all but irresistible. If you met him on the street as a stranger, his first question would be: “Are you a Catholic?” If you were not, he would invite you to become one. If you were unresponsive, he would try to get you to recite the Hail Mary with him. (Father routinely used to drive to the home of Dr. Paul Dudley White, the eminent heart specialist who treated President Eisenhower, just to have the physician recite the Hail Mary with him. Dr. White came into the Church before his death.)

If, on the other hand, you answered that you were a Catholic, Father would next inquire if you attend Mass and receive the sacraments regularly. Should you answer that you don’t, he would likely take you aside to hear your confession on the spot. The sight of

Father hearing someone’s confession in a doorway along some city street was not an unusual one.

Never have I known or heard of a priest challenging total strangers so directly, and yet so paternally. My own first meeting with Father Feeny will never be forgotten. I was one of a dozen guests being entertained, one Sunday afternoon, by Brother Francis on the lawn at St. Benedict Center’s Still River Monastery. Father by then was old, and the dulling effects of Parkinson’s Disease to his mind were immediately recognizable. Yet, when he came among us, his first words to us were: “Did you all go to Mass today?” With a collective voice, the group answered, “Yes, Father.” His next question, “And did you all receive Holy Communion?” likewise



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received an affirmative group reply. But the dear priest wouldn't settle for a collective reply this time. So great was his love of the Blessed Sacrament, and so essential to the life of every soul did he hold it, that he polled each and every one of us in that group to make absolutely certain all had received our Eucharistic Lord.

If I may be allowed another digression to show the lovingly simple heart of this priest, I'll mention a charming encounter that Brother Robert Mary, the member of our Third Order* who authored *Father Feeney and the Truth About Salvation*, had with our founder

about three years after my own just mentioned one. I've known him as Bob for 35 years now, so I'll address him by that name here.

Bob was then working for a non-profit educational organization in a Boston suburb, but had moved near Still River so he could attend lectures at the Center. His youngest son was also a student in the Center's high school at the time. Bob attended Mass at every opportunity. But this was a weekday morning, and he was already late for work, some thirty miles hence, when he was dropping his son off for school at St. Anne's House.

As he began to pull away in his car, he saw our elderly priest, escorted by another Religious, coming down the drive. Respectfully, Bob stopped to bid him "good morning." Father, taking the man to be a stranger, asked if he were coming to Mass. Bob explained his situation, telling Father Leonard (as he was affectionately known among us) that he was on his way to work and, unfortunately, could not attend that morning. Disappointment unmistakably evident on the old priest's face, he inquired where this "stranger" worked. When Bob

*Our Third Order members (Tertiaries) are laymen and women who participate in the work of Saint Benedict Center. They are not Religious consecrated by vows, as are the Brothers and Sisters who live in the Monastery and Convent respectively. However, they do consecrate their lives to the Immaculate Heart and commit

themselves for life to defending our doctrinal crusade by a promise. When they act on behalf of the Center (such as when they write for publications), they are entitled to use their Third Order names, beginning with the title "Brother" (or "Sister"), and followed