



An excerpt from

TREASURE IN CLAY

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF FULTON J. SHEEN

"I resolved also to spend a continuous Holy Hour every day in the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament...The Holy Hour. Is it difficult? Sometimes it seemed to be hard; it might mean having to forego a special engagement, or rise an hour earlier, but on the whole it has never been a burden, only a joy....The purpose of the Holy Hour is to encourage a deep personal encounter with Christ. The holy and glorious God is constantly inviting us to come to Him, to hold converse with Him, to ask for such things as we need and to experience what a blessing there is in fellowship with Him...I have found that it takes some time to catch fire in prayer. This has been one of the advantages of the daily hour. It is not so brief as to prevent the soul from collecting itself and shaking off the multitudinous distractions of the world. Sitting before the Presence is like a body exposing itself before the sun to absorb its rays. Silence in the Hour is a tête-à-tête with the Lord. In those moments one does not so much pour out written prayers, but listening takes its place. We do not say:

*"Listen, Lord, for Thy servant speaks,"
but "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."*

*"We don't need a voice that's right when everybody else is right;
but we need a voice that's right when everybody else is wrong."*

PRAYER TO OBTAIN A FAVOR THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF THE SERVANT OF GOD ARCHBISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN

Eternal Father, You alone grant us every blessing in Heaven and on earth, through the redemptive mission of Your Divine Son, Jesus Christ, and by the working of the Holy Spirit. If it be according to Your Will, glorify Your servant, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, by granting the favor I now request through his prayerful intercession (mention your request). I make this prayer confidently through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE CANONIZATION OF THE SERVANT OF GOD ARCHBISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN

Heavenly Father, source of all holiness, You raise up within the Church in every age men and women who serve with heroic love and dedication. You have blessed Your Church through the life and ministry of Your faithful servant, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. He has written and spoken well of Your Divine Son, Jesus Christ, and was a true instrument of the Holy Spirit in touching the hearts of countless people. If it is according to Your Will, for the honor and glory of the Most Holy Trinity and for the salvation of souls, we ask You to move the Church to proclaim him a saint. We ask this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

For prayer cards or for information about the ARCHBISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN FOUNDATION, to share any personal knowledge of the Archbishop (letters, photos, life experiences), to report any spiritual or physical favors granted through his intercession, or to offer financial support for the work of the Cause of Canonization, please write to:

**The Archbishop Fulton John Sheen Foundation
PO Box 728
Peoria, IL 61652-0728
www.archbishopsheencause.org**

"There are Two philosophies of life: the Christian and the secularist. The Christian philosophy is: 'first you fast, then you feast.' The secularist is: 'first you feast, then comes the hangover.'"

THE LIFE OF THE SERVANT OF GOD

ARCHBISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN (1895 - 1979)



Pope John Paul II embraces Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen at St. Patrick's Cathedral saying to him, "You have written and spoken well of the Lord Jesus! You have been a loyal son of the Church."



1917 graduation photo from St. Viator's College, Bourbonnais, IL.

HIS EARLY YEARS

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen was born to his parents, Newton and Delia (Fulton) Sheen, on May 8, 1895 in El Paso, Illinois. This oldest of four sons was baptized Peter John, but growing up he became known by his mother's maiden name, Fulton, a name he favored. At his Baptism, his mother dedicated him to the Blessed Virgin Mary, a dedication he renewed at his First Holy Communion. He attended Catholic grammar and high schools in Peoria, Illinois, and always showed keen interest in reading rather than in manual work on his father's farm. He later attended St. Viator College in Bourbonnais, Illinois, where he laid the groundwork for his future preaching and writing by joining the school's debate team and newspaper staff. Turning down a significant scholarship for graduate studies, he followed his desire to become a priest, and entered St. Paul's Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Despite some health problems along the way, he was ordained a priest on September 20, 1919. At this time, inspired by a young Chinese girl's heroic love for Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, he made his famous promise to spend a "holy hour" each day before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, a promise he kept faithfully throughout his whole priestly life!

After Ordination, he first pursued post-graduate studies at Catholic University in Washington D.C. He then went on to the University of Louvain in Belgium, where he eventually earned the highly respected "Aggrage" degree with outstanding distinction. During this time, he also studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, the Angelicum in Rome and taught Dogmatic Theology at St. Edmund's College near Ware, England (1925). He was to receive

"The greatest love story of all time is contained in a tiny white Host."

"If you do not live what you believe, you will end up believing what you live"

many honorary degrees and distinguished awards throughout his long and fruitful life. When he returned to the United States, his Bishop, fearing that his fame and success in Europe might have filled him with pride, to test him sent him to an inner-city parish in Peoria. Within nine months, his pastoral dedication and dynamic sermons had turned St. Patrick's into a thriving parish! His Bishop then assigned him to the faculty of Catholic University where he first briefly taught Theology, then Philosophy and Religion for twenty-four years (1926-1950).



Archbishop at the NBC microphone in 1930's

HIS YEARS AS A MEDIA PIONEER

His fame and influence as a preacher, writer and teacher of the Faith began to grow immensely. All forms of media were available to him. In 1926, he began his first radio program from an overcrowded St. Paul's Church in Manhattan. These talks were broadcast in the New York City area. He later went onto the airwaves nationwide with his "Catholic Hour" broadcasts (1930-1952), which ultimately reached an estimated listening audience of four million every Sunday afternoon. These broadcasts had a solidly Catholic content. His greatest success in media came, however, when he went on television with his series "Life is Worth Living" (1952-1957). Despite being opposite the very popular Milton Berle ("Mr. Television" at the time), the archbishop's show had an estimated viewing audience of thirty million people and earned him an Emmy in his second year! These TV shows were generally more ecumenical in content, as he reached large numbers of non-Catholic viewers.

Through this time, he was doing a great deal of writing, authoring 64 books and 65 pamphlets, as well as two weekly

"There are no plains in the spiritual life; we are either going uphill or coming down"

newspaper columns and a huge amount of personal correspondence. One result of all this "media evangelization" was that he attracted large numbers of converts to the Catholic Faith. They included the rich and famous, like Clare Booth Luce and Henry Ford II, as well as a great number of ordinary people. In 1950, the Archbishop's work began to take a new direction. He was appointed the National Director of the Propagation of the Faith, a position he held until 1966. His popularity was a great asset, helping him to raise large amounts of money (including his own TV salary) for the support of the Church's foreign missions. As he would often say, "My greatest love has always been the Missions of the Church." With Blessed Pope John XXIII, he co-consecrated several missionary bishops in 1960 and 1961. He himself had been consecrated a bishop in Rome by Cardinal Piazza in 1951. He was to become the first Latin Rite bishop ever to offer a Solemn Byzantine Rite Mass in English.

HIS LATER YEARS

He participated in Vatican Council II (1962-1965) and was appointed to the Commission on the Missions by Pope Paul VI. His insights on the missions as well as on the importance of the role of women in a changing world were very farsighted. In 1966, Pope Paul VI appointed him Bishop of the Diocese of Rochester, NY (1966-1969). At age 75, he submitted his resignation to Pope Paul VI. As he put it "I am not retiring, only retreating!" The Pope named him Archbishop of the Titular See of Newport [Wales]. He spent his last years preaching and writing. Toward the very end, he suffered from heart trouble. God took him to his eternal reward on December 9, 1979.

The impact of his life was summed up in the beautiful words with which Pope John Paul II greeted him in St. Patrick's Cathedral on October 3, 1979: "You have written and spoken well of the Lord Jesus! You have been a loyal son of the Church!"



In his study a short time before his death