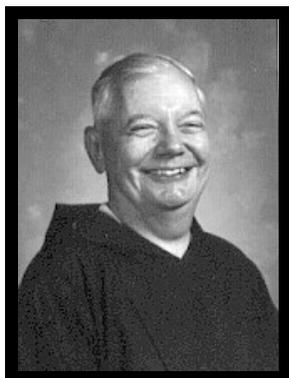


Neerology

Douglas Bode

1942 - 2010



John Douglas Bode was born on 13 June 1942, in Port Washington, Wisconsin, on the shores of Lake Michigan, the son of George Bode and Dorothy Bostwick. Doug had one brother, Stewart. He was baptized on July 4 of that same year at St. Mary's Church in Port Washington. His grade school years were spent at St. Mary Elementary School.

One story from his childhood that he related to Eugene Wolf: One day Doug went to the store with a friend. The friend picked out some candy and said to the checkout lady, "Charge it!" Doug thought that was pretty cool, so he did the same thing. He got some candy and said "Charge it!" His folks were not amused when they got the bill from the store!

In 1956 he entered St. Lawrence Seminary, the beginning of a love affair with Calvary that lasted his entire life. With the rest of the freshman class he plunged into nine periods a week of Latin, taught by Gratian Zach, who was rector at that time. His transcript shows A's in most subjects (including Latin), with a smattering of B's.

Doug graduated with the high school class of 1960, and applied for admission to the Capuchin novitiate at St. Felix Friary, Huntington, Indiana. In his application he stated that he wanted to become a Capuchin because "I feel that I can best save my own soul and best accomplish God's will and glory as a Capuchin priest."

In August 1960 Doug journeyed to Huntington and on a hot Indiana summer day was invested with the Capuchin habit, taking the name Brice. There were 21 in the novitiate class, 19 of whom made simple profession on 1 September 1961.

Then on to Crown Point, Indiana for philosophy. The new St. Mary Seminary had been completed several years earlier, and at that time it was the largest Capuchin community in the world, with well over 100 friars in residence. Life for the clerics was strictly regimented, and, in addition, the seminary was working toward accreditation, which increased the academic load. After two years the pressure-cooker intensity of Crown Point became too much for Brice, and he asked to transfer to the non-cleric brothers.

He was sent to Baraga, which was the brothers' novitiate at the time, and according to the regulations then in force, was required to make another novitiate. Another novitiate, another name: he now became "Peter." During this year he evidently went through some questioning of his vocation and consultation with superiors, because in June of 1964 he informed the provincial minister of his decision to remain in the order and renew his vows for another year. In addition, he asked permission to change his name from Brice to Stuart! This is a bit puzzling, since he had a brother named Stewart.

From Baraga Brice/Peter/Stuart/Douglas moved on to St. Anthony, Marathon, for two years of "professorium," as the lay friars' formation program was called. He professed perpetual vows on 1 September 1966.

In January 1967 Doug received his first ministry assignment. He was called to Detroit to serve as business manager of the Mission Office and, later, mission procurator and provincial delegate of the Seraphic Mass Association. During his ten years in Detroit he showed his great dedication to the work of the Capuchin Missions.

In 1977 Doug began to consider moving into another ministry. At the same time he expressed a certain degree of fear and ambivalence—he never found change easy! He moved to St. Patrick's Parish in St. Paul, where Crispin Weinberger, who had been vice-rector during Doug's Calvary years, was pastor. Lloyd Thiel, provincial minister at the time, referred to his position at St. Patrick's as a "quasi-sabbatical experience." During his years in Minnesota Doug ministered in the parish and also completed the necessary courses for an undergraduate degree in theology at St. Catherine College.

It was during this period of his life that health problems began to surface, a cross that he was to bear for the rest of his life. He suffered from Krohn's Disease and a number of other ailments. I remember visiting him once at Calvary and asking him how he was doing. "You don't want to know," he replied. And then in his good-natured way he proceeded to give me the litany of his ailments, medical procedures and medications.

In 1981, Doug was transferred to St. Lawrence Seminary, where he spent the last thirty years of his life. That statement is almost literally true. Doug never learned to drive, and he seldom left the Hill. While his parents were alive they were frequent visitors; they loved the Capuchins and St. Lawrence almost as much as Doug did. After their deaths George and Dorothy Bode were cremated and at their request their remains are buried at St. Lawrence. Doug remarked that he could see the spot from his classroom window.

For thirty years Doug taught theology at St. Lawrence Seminary. He shared with generations of students the results of his wide-ranging reading and study, and

attempted to communicate to them his love of the church and the scriptures, and his zeal for social justice. He had a deep knowledge of—and commitment to—the theology of Vatican II.

In some ways Doug was a throwback to an earlier era of scholarship. He never typed or used a computer. Everything was handwritten, and then copied on the photo copy machine. He found anything to do with technology nearly impossible, except for the VCR and the photo copier.

Dennis Druggan, St. Lawrence Seminary rector, related the following:

Several of Doug's students in spiritual direction became ordained priests in the last decade. They felt very affectionate toward Doug. I used to tell him he was our 'priest-maker', which would send him howling. Two of these young priest-alumni were at his funeral at Mount Calvary and talked about his kindness and care.

Besides teaching, Doug had two other passions—movies and sports. He would record movies on cassettes, and ended up with a collection of over 5000 videos. He would recommend movies to different friars along with a perceptive review, tailored to the particular friar's interests. His love for movies apparently runs in the family: Doug's brother Stewart mentioned that his son Brad has a degree in communications with an emphasis on TV and film from Syracuse University.

His other passion was sports, especially the Brewers and the Packers. In the evenings during the baseball season he could most often be found in his "man cave," the TV room in the basement of the friary, watching the Milwaukee Brewers and correcting papers at the same time. However he was strongly opposed to the tax that helped pay for Miller Park, and so he refused to see any Brewers games there.

In his later years Doug became something of a hermit. He did not participate much in community life, perhaps because of his poor health. However if someone sought him out, he was always engaging and fun to visit with. His laugh was unmistakable and infectious.

During the friary renovation he refused to move to St. Felix. Instead, he took a room in the student infirmary. As a result he became well acquainted with the seminary kitchen staff, the young student supervisors, and the nurse. He enjoyed those relationships and made some good friends.

He very much enjoyed the students and teachers who would visit every other year from St. Lawrence's sister school in Germany, the Collegium Johanneum Schloss Loburg. One year Ed Dziedzicko talked Doug into going along to help chaperone the Calvary students on their return visit to Germany, and after he overcame his reluctance to travel, he enjoyed the trip immensely.

Doug's last days were difficult. He was determined to make it to the end of the school year, when he planned to retire. During his last week several friars noticed how sick he looked, and pressed him to see a doctor, but he refused. He wanted to finish out the semester, which would be over in a few days. Finally Neal Plale found him passed out in the TV room. 911 was called, and surgery for a bowel obstruction followed. Joachim Strupp anointed him, and Ron Smith also visited. He passed away a little after midnight on Friday, 3 December 2010 with friary nurse Mary Growe and her husband Mark at his side.

In 2011 Doug would have celebrated 50 years of Capuchin life and 30 years as a teacher at St. Lawrence. He is buried at Mt. Calvary, the place where he made his home for so many years. Now he is at home with the Lord he served so faithfully.

— Randolph Graczyk

(Grateful for help from Dennis Druggan, Werner Wolf, Eugene Wolf, John Celichowski, and Stewart Bode.)