

THEODOSIUS SCHELICH, O.F.M.

July 18, 1932 – August 31, 2016

The Broadway Musical “Wicked” has been performed in theaters all over the country for some years now. One of the songs from the musical is entitled “For Good.” Several verses from the song give us a glimpse into the life of our brother, Theodosius Schelich, O.F.M., who died at the end of August. The words are as follows:

**I’ve heard it said, that people come into our lives for a reason –
bringing something we must learn.
And we are led to those who help us most grow –
if we let them and we help them in return.
Well I don’t know if I believe that’s true,
but I know I’m who I am today because I knew you.**

The writer of the song goes on to ask the question.

Who can say if I’ve been changed for the better?

And the response –

**Because I knew you, because I knew you –
I have been changed for good.**

Those of you who knew Theodosius far better than I, can attest to the words of the song and, without a doubt, are able to say that because you knew him, your life has been changed for good.

Anthony Schelich was born on July 18, 1932, to Francis and Mary (Whelan) Schelich. Two days after his birth, he was baptized at St. Francis Borgia Parish in Washington, Missouri by Fr. Arsenius Gatzemeier, O.F.M.. Anthony grew up with two brothers and two sisters, all who are deceased. He attended the parish grade school.

Since the Schelich family were members of St. Francis Borgia, a Franciscan parish, it made sense for Anthony to begin his high school years at St. Joseph Seminary in Westmont. He left for the seminary in 1946. Those of you who were his classmates or even his teachers may remember that he was an excellent softball pitcher. In 1952, Anthony entered the Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart as a novice and received the name Theodosius. He made his Solemn Profession in 1957 and was ordained a friar priest on June 24, 1959.

According to an article from the Washington Missourian newspaper entitled: Fr. Theodosius Schelich to Say First High Mass, it states the following:

Fr. Theodosius will say his first Solemn High Mass at St. Francis Borgia Parish this Sunday, June 28. Officiating at the Mass with him will be Fr. David Eckelkamp as deacon, Fr. Campion Clarahan as subdeacon, and Fr. Thomas Cashman, pastor of St. Francis Borgia, as archpriest. Fr. Jerome Baum will give the sermon.

Theodosius, later known as Ted, would talk about having three careers as a friar priest. For the first sixteen years of his priesthood, Ted was stationed at three parishes as both assistant and pastor – St. Francis Solanus in Quincy, IL, St. Francis of Assisi in Oakville, MO, and Sacred Heart in Indianapolis, IN. The people he served described him as compassionate, loving, prayerful, and a true follower of St. Francis, a shining example of God's love.

In 1976, Ted became an Addictions Counselor at the Hyland Center, an alcoholic treatment center affiliated with St. Anthony's Medical Center in St. Louis. The St. Louis Post Dispatch announced the opening of the Hyland Center as "A Dream Come True." Describing the work of the staff, the article states:

Hyland Center staff members have been putting the finishing touches on their new program design for several weeks. Now, they open their doors to patients who will be trying to recover from alcoholism. The staff will work with each patient for a three-week inpatient treatment period to achieve that goal. The patient will attend aftercare sessions twice weekly for nine weeks at the center. The staff will also provide extended outpatient care to each patient and his or her family, and to other persons with alcohol problems.

This was the work of our brother, Ted, for thirteen years as he ministered to those addicted to alcohol. Ted was also instrumental in putting together a statement for the province in pursuit of the Administration's decision to say something helpful in the matters of intervention. The statement was published to the province in July of 1988. Ted began the statement with the following words:

The Province Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse offers the following thoughts as an educative tool for those friars who might find themselves in situations of substance abuse. In facing a situation of such abuse, the key factor must be intervention, not confrontation.

Ted believed this was a way to point out a problem and offer a solution. "I believe, brothers, we have to at least try. This is our fraternal responsibility. We are responsible **to** our sick brother, not **for** him."

Following his thirteen year stint as a counselor, Ted took a much needed sabbatical.

Finally, Ted's third career brought him to Litchfield, IL, when the position of Chaplain opened up at St. Francis Hospital. The hospital had only 25 beds but offered many different services and programs. It didn't take long for Ted to endear himself to all of the hospital staff and patients he visited daily. Reminiscing about his early years at St. Francis Hospital, Ted said: "At the time, I didn't even know where Litchfield was, but I'm sure glad I found it."

Ted served as the hospital Chaplain for 23 years. Over the years, Ted offered consolation for families who had lost loved ones and he presided over services when he was needed. Until November, 2011, he offered a Sunday Mass each week in the hospital's chapel. In an article entitled: "Father Ted Shares Joy At St. Francis," he states the following: "I make myself available to people, I wasn't ordained for me. God called me to this service. I've never been an unhappy priest, not for a minute. I've loved every job I had. And my job is to help people."

When Ted felt he could no longer continue his ministry as a Chaplain at the age of 81, he moved to St. Clare Friary in Alton, IL. In 2014, he went to live in the infirmary of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis in Springfield, IL. He died there on August 31st. His death certificate lists the cause of death as "natural."

A prayer service was held on Saturday, September 3, at the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis in Springfield followed by another service on Tuesday, September 6, at St. Francis Hospital in Litchfield, IL.

Another visitation was held on Wednesday, September 7, at 9:00am followed by the Mass of Christian Burial at 10:00am at St. Anthony of Padua Church in St. Louis, MO. Provincial Minister Bill Spencer, O.F.M., presided at the Funeral Liturgy. The readings chosen for the Mass were Job 19:1, 23-27; 2Corinthians 4:14-5:1 and Luke 24:13-16, 28-35. Charlie Hart, O.F.M., preached the homily.

In his homily, Charlie said that "like Jesus, Fr. Ted encountered Christians who were on the road from one place to another and he helped them and blessed them on their way." After listening to so many of Fr. Ted's colleagues talk about the impact he made on their lives, an image came to his mind of Fr. Ted helping people to find one or the other missing pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. He went on to say that "Fr. Ted never claimed to be the missing piece of the puzzle, he simply filled in until the missing piece was found. I don't know that

Fr. Ted would have described himself as another Christ. I think he would have described himself as the hem of Christ's garment, a simple point of contact for persons who struggled, wanting to change their lives - to find some comfort and relief in Christ."

It was the hem of Christ's garment that people touched when they encountered our brother Ted Schelich, O.F.M., in his years as a Franciscan, a Parish Priest, an Addictions Counselor and a Hospital Chaplain. Anyone who was touched by his life could easily answer the question: "Who can say if I've been changed for the better?" Because we knew you, Ted, we have been changed for good.

Ted Schelich, O.F.M., is survived by several nieces and nephews and his Franciscan family. He was buried alongside his confreres at Sts. Peter and Paul Cemetery in St. Louis, MO.

In closing, let us prayerfully read the "Serenity Prayer" in full - a prayer that our brother, Ted, prayed for many years.

**God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.**

**Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
As it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right
If I surrender to His Will;
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
And supremely happy with Him
Forever and ever in the next.**

Amen!

John Dombrowski, OFM

In your kindness please consider making a donation in memory of Ted Schelich, O.F.M., to the Development Office of the Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart.

Please send your charitable contribution to:
St. Anthony Friary
3140 Meramec Street
St. Louis, MO 63118-4399

