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Dedication

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DEDICATION

We dedicate this issue of our *Journal* to the memory of Father William Lewers, C.S.C., who died this past spring after a long bout with cancer.

Born in 1927, Father Lewers earned an undergraduate degree and a law degree at the University of Illinois. He then pursued graduate work at the Yale Law School, after which he practiced law in Kansas City, Missouri, then taught law at the University of Kentucky and at the University of Illinois. In 1960, he joined the Congregation of Holy Cross and was ordained a priest five years later. He then taught law at Notre Dame and at the Catholic University of Chile, devoting much of his time to civil rights work in Mississippi and in California. In 1973, he became the Provincial Superior of the Indiana Province of the Holy Cross Fathers, and in 1983 he became the Director of the Office of International Justice and Peace in the United States Catholic Conference. In 1988, he returned to Notre Dame where he became the Director of the Center for Civil and Human Rights, a position that he held until shortly before his death.

Even as brief a sketch of Father Lewers' life as I have just given suggests the range of his interests and influence, but no account of his life could begin to capture the intensity of his commitments or the persistence with which he pursued them. For Father Lewers it was never enough to care deeply for a cause; it was always necessary to turn that care into effective action. For that reason in each stage of his adult life, he could be found first strategizing with pains-taking deliberateness, then acting with consummate intelligence and boundless perseverance. The crowning accomplishment of his life, from my perspective, was his transformation of Notre Dame's Center for Civil and Human Rights into a school for human rights attorneys from all over the globe. This was his vehicle for affecting the political lives of people on every continent and for internationalizing the ethos of the Notre Dame Law School. It was in that Center that concern for civil and human rights was transformed into effective action tending to vindicate those rights, and, for so long as his health allowed, Father Lewers served as both the mind that structured the Center and as the heart that animated it. The Center is his legacy both to Notre Dame and to the human rights community.

During the last six months of his life, Father Lewers knew he would soon be dead. It was characteristic of him that he used the physical diminishment that preceded his death as an opportunity to say farewell to his many friends, to accept the support of his religious community, and to entrust his soul to his Divine Redeemer. Millennia ago, after the philosopher Plato had witnessed the death of Socrates under circumstances quite different from those that surrounded Father Lewers' death, he said of Socrates that he was "a man of whom we may say that, of all whom we met at that time, he was the wisest and justest and best." Much the same could be said of Father Lewers.

John H. Robinson

Director

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