



Mazzuchelli

NEWSLETTER

HOW I MET FATHER SAMUEL MAZZUCHELLI

by Father Mike Klarer

Among the hills of the Mississippi River Valley, near immigrant settlements in what are now Grant and Jo Daviess counties, I can imagine young Irish men in back-breaking labor as they mined iron ore with sledgehammers, picks, and shovels. It was brutal work, yet a better living than they had in Ireland, where people were starving.

These immigrant men worked hard, and, likely, they played and drank hard. Many were merely kids, raised by their parents as Catholics firm in the faith—but that faith and that Church were far away, a distant memory. They may have said of their new home, “It’s not the end of the world, but you can see it from here.”

I can imagine one chilly day when these Irish laborers looked up from their picks and shovels to see a short man approaching—dressed in the dark clothes worn by men of religion back then. The stranger watched until one broke the silence.

“Would you like a drink?”

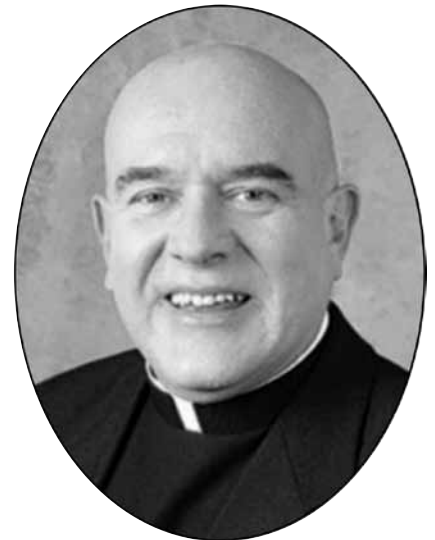
“No, thank you,” the man said. “But I would like to talk.”

The work stopped. After the laborers heard his strange name, they settled on “Father Matthew Kelly.”

To these men and their families, Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, OP, brought not only the Gospel, the Eucharist, and sacraments, but also culture and civilization. He built not only their churches but their public buildings. He opened schools for them. He laid out streets

and avenues. He assisted those who would govern and helped citizens vote. He took in orphans. He saw civil war and condemned it.

*How is it then that so late in my life I came to know Father Samuel?
How is it that I came so late to understand his holiness and his brilliance?*



Father Mike Klarer

I was born in Monroe, WI, a bit too far east to have our Green County parish be founded by him. The nearest church founded by Father Samuel was St. Joseph in Gratiot. I heard of him from relatives in Lafayette and Grant counties; I heard of him from my seminary teacher, Father William Seipp, who had relatives in the Dominican Order. I did know also that there was something very special and holy about the faith of the people in the parishes of the tri-state area.

An older priest once told me, when I was a young deacon in Platteville, that the faith of the people of southwestern Wisconsin was as deep as the topsoil, and “here that is very deep.” He went on, “That is because of Father Samuel, our saint.”

In 2007, I was diagnosed with rectal cancer. Later, it was determined by the Veterans Administration that this cancer was most



Father Mike Klarer

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TREASURED MEMORIES FROM THE MOUND ARCHIVES



Mary Jane O'Brien Cavanaugh

Sinsinawa Dominican Sister Ellen Shannon, OP, uncovered some treasured memories of Father Samuel Mazzuchelli which were recorded for the St. Clara Academy Alumnae Reunion of 1935. The recollections of Benton Academy days are those of Mrs. Mary Jane O'Brien Cavanaugh:

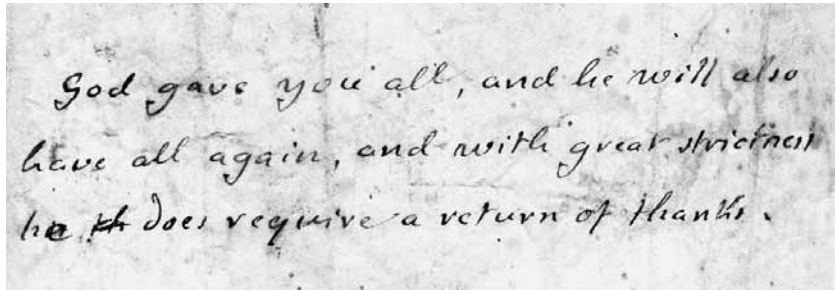
When I was about 9 years of age, my little brother was born and my father went to

Mass at New Diggings and asked Father Samuel where he should take the baby to be baptized. Father answered that he would be at Benton the next week and that he would pass by our home [New Diggings] on his way to Shullsburg, and he would stop and baptize the baby. When he came, he was very kind and jolly, and we all loved him forever. He asked me if I would like to go to his school at Benton. I said I would, but seven miles is too far to walk every day. He laughed and said we must arrange for that.

When I was almost 10, I went to St. Clara to attend Father Samuel's school where I was very happy. My father took me with our horse and buggy, with my

little, white, horsehair-covered trunk behind the seat. When we drove to Father Samuel's house near the church, he came out and, taking my hand, said: "We will go to the school," and we went across the street to meet the Sisters. . . . His kindness and tenderness captivated me at once and remains with me to this day.

Sister Ignatius, who was our cook, would worry if Father did not arrive on time for his meal, so she would ask some of the little girls to call him. She always asked two of us at a time as one was not supposed to cross the street alone. When we reached his door, he would take our hand, one on each side, and talk to us until we reached the front door of the Academy where we left him.



An Epiphany card from Father Mazzuchelli, given to Mary Jane O'Brien.

SIGHTINGS AND CITINGS—FATHER SAMUEL IN THE NEWS

Articles about Father Samuel Mazzuchelli have appeared in recent months in various publications. The Knights of Columbus magazine, *Columbia*, featured him as "Man of the Month" in its February issue. A long article about him, written by Chuck Roelant, appeared in the spring issue of *Lambs' Quarterly*, a publication of the Companions of Christ the Lamb (Paradise, MI).

In September, a full-page article in the *Catholic Weekly*, the newspaper of the Diocese of Gaylord, MI, entitled "Mackinac Island is rich in Catholic history," told of the early history of the Catholic presence at Mackinac. Part of the article described the arrival of Father Mazzuchelli in

November of 1830; he was the first resident priest there at St. Anne's since 1765.

Closer to home, Father Don Lange, local area pastor-emeritus and Academy Apartment resident, wrote an inspiring full-page article for a February issue of the Madison, WI, diocesan paper, the *Catholic Herald*.

If you see an article about Father Samuel, send us a copy or let us know how we can access it. His holiness and remarkable ministry on the American frontier are the subjects of study—often in places distant from the tri-state area.

MAZZUCHELLI CAUSE DONATION FORM

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Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Amount I can donate at this time: \$ _____

Please charge my credit card. Visa Mastercard Discover

Card # _____ 3-digit security code _____
(on back of card)

Expiration date ____ / ____ Signature _____

Please enclose this form with your check and mail to
MAZZUCHELLI CAUSE
 Sinsinawa Dominican Development Office
 585 County Road Z
 Sinsinawa, WI 53824-9701

OR donate via credit card online by going to www.sinsinawa.org and clicking on "Mazzuchelli" then clicking on "Donate to Cause."

WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION WITH FATHER SAMUEL MAZZUCHELLI?

Let us know, because the next issue of this newsletter will contain more shared "connection" stories, and our Archives Department will keep a record of all the information we receive. You may e-mail your reflections to marypaynterop@gmail.com

or send a note to
 Sister Mary Paynter, OP
 2011 Jefferson Street
 Madison, WI 53711

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likely caused—as was the case of many of the Marines I had served as chaplain in the U.S. Navy—by our exposure to the oil well fires and the burn pits during Desert Storm, the first Gulf War.

After chemotherapy and radiation treatments, I had major surgery to remove the cancerous area. Before that, my family, friends from the Beadle family, Father Frank Steffen; Father Seipp; Sister Christiane Althaus, OP; and others encouraged me to travel to Sinsinawa Mound to pray with Father Samuel's chain and seek his intercession on my behalf. I did, and also received the sacrament of the sick, and then I was off to the VA Hospital in Madison for my cancer surgery.

It did not go well. During the surgery, my blood pressure and heart rate became erratic. It appeared that I was in deep trouble. The surgery was stopped, and I immediately came out of the nosedive. A later surgery was successful. Even though my cancer has spread, it is very slow-growing and as controllable as a chronic disease. I have since retired from the pastorate of St. Clare of Assisi Parish in Monroe, but I am in

good enough health to continue to assist my brother priests, especially my good friend and successor, Father Larry Bakke.

I believe I am here today because of Father Samuel's intercession. Because of that, I have come to know much better this man who called out to those Irish miners.

As a priest, he is a model for my priesthood and an inspiration for all priests and seminarians. He is a priest who loved this land and its people. He is a holy one who brought the presence of Christ to frontier country and planted the faith in this rich soil. We rejoice in the bounty of that harvest today.

I wonder what Father "Matthew Kelly" said to those Irish miners on that chilly day. Whatever it was, he challenged them and changed their hearts; their faith still lives on in us. Saints, I believe, come among ordinary people and change them—often with only a few kind words and faithful presence. Mazzuchelli was a priest who not only walked among the people of the Mississippi River Valley more than 150 years ago; he is a saint among us today.

SAMUEL

- S** is for the Sacred Priesthood
bestowed by God's right hand.
He was ever true and faithful
to a calling O so grand!
- A** is for the "Always" he served,
a Dominican through and through.
To that ancient joyful Order
Samuel was always true.
- M** is for Mary, the Mother of us all,
She was ever at Samuel's side;
and in all his undertakings
she was his faithful guide.
- U** is the Unfailing Love
that marked his labors here.
His were Christ's hands to bless us,
to comfort and to cheer.
- E** is for Christ's Everlasting Words
that Father Samuel lived—a plea:
"If you do this to my least ones,
you have done it unto Me."
- L** is for his Love of God,
his love for Scripture, too.
His message of the Gospel
was down-to-earth and true.

Six letters full of meaning!
It's your name in heaven above.
You lived God's call with heartfelt "Yes,"
So keep us in that love.

As I end this little verse,
let me now sincerely say,
"You were one of the greatest priests
God ever sent our way!"

Sister Therese Marie, OP, is a cloistered Dominican nun of the Monastery of the Blessed Sacrament in Farmington Hills, MI. She composed this poem after reading the last issue of the Mazzuchelli Newsletter.

PLANNING FOR SESQUICENTENNIAL UNDERWAY

February 23, 2014, will mark the 150th anniversary of Father Samuel Mazzuchelli's death in Benton. Priests, Sisters, parishioners, and others from the many parishes and schools he founded have gathered to begin planning. One such meeting took place last summer and a follow-up meeting was held at the Mound this April. A meeting of representatives from the Congregation's sponsored institutions will occur in June. The sesquicentennial celebration will extend from February 23 to November 4, 2014.

The meetings focused on suggestions and plans to be developed in local settings. Also, the Sinsinawa Sisters will provide brochures, posters, and other materials to assist parishes and schools with local commemorations. Various tours of Mazzuchelli sites will be offered in the summer of 2014, and a collection of Father Samuel's actual materials (the original *Memoirs*, his account books, writing desk, etc.) will be available as a travelling exhibit to be shown in local parishes and schools.

If you are interested in obtaining more information about the sesquicentennial events or if you wish to have brochures or posters, please contact Sister Betty Kugi at Sinsinawa via e-mail at bkugi@sinsinawa.org or call the Sinsinawa Dominican Archives at (608) 748-4411.

PRAY FOR THE CAUSE

During this hope-filled Easter Season, we need to continue our prayers for the Beatification of Father Samuel Mazzuchelli. Currently we have learned that the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints has not accepted the special case proposed as a miracle from the Diocese of Madison in late 2008.

We will continue to examine reports of special favors received through the intercession of Father Samuel. Meanwhile your prayers for the eventually successful completion of the Cause for Beatification are requested—especially as we approach 2014 and the 150th anniversary of Father Samuel's death in Benton on February 23, 1864.

ANOTHER FAVOR OBTAINED THROUGH MAZZUCHELLI'S INTERCESSION

The following is from Walter H. Maass' account of a healing in July 1994.

“After surgery for a detached retina . . . and treatment for a subsequent massive choroidal detachment of the left eye, Dr. W. . . . told me that there was nothing which might be done at that time to eliminate or correct the problem. . . . There was an almost complete loss of vision.

“During the period of extreme pain, I found comfort through the night by saying the rosary and offering up this pain for my wife and children. I became resigned to the fact that the loss of an eye would not hamper me; I would accept this burden.

“On July 1, we were driving to Wisconsin, and I was riding in the right front seat. En route, we said the rosary. I was saying some prayers to myself when for some reason, I recalled we were about directly north of Benton. (Previous to this, when first moving to Wisconsin, we had stopped outside of Benton to read the roadside state historical marker about Father Samuel. Also, when relocating to Prairie du Chien, we joined St. Gabriel parish which had been established by Father Samuel.)

“As I thought of Benton and Father Samuel, I said a prayer, asking Father to intercede on my behalf with our Lord and ask for healing of my left eye. Immediately after, I felt a warm sensation, an immediate warming about the left eye. When we arrived at home, my wife changed the dressing on the eye. Upon removal of the bandage, I noticed that there were no longer any black areas to either side of the eye. I said nothing. The following morning when the bandage was again changed, the dark areas of my vision were also gone.

“I returned to the doctor later in July, and there was evidence of continued improvement. On September 6, I was examined by Dr. C. . . ., who was delighted that my vision was almost perfect.

“I continue to enjoy good eye sight, and I feel that Father Samuel asked our Lord for this favor.”



Father Mazzuchelli's tombstone at St. Patrick cemetery in Benton, WI.

Sinsinawa Dominicans
Mazzuchelli Cause
585 County Road Z
Sinsinawa, WI 53824-9701

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The Mazzuchelli Cause seeks to promote **the Beatification of Venerable Samuel Mazzuchelli, OP**, missionary builder of the Church in the Midwest and founder of the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters. Those who wish to ask prayers for their intentions and those who receive favors through the intercession of Venerable Mazzuchelli, please write to the address above.

mazzuchelli@sinsinawa.org
www.sinsinawa.org
(Click on "Father Mazzuchelli" link)

April 2013

Editor: Sr. Mary Paynter, OP
Vice-Postulator
marypaynterop@gmail.com

NOVENA PRAYER

Four times a year, a novena to Father Samuel Mazzuchelli is prayed. If you wish a person to be prayed for during the novena, please complete this form and send it to Sinsinawa Dominicans, Sr. Christiane Althaus, 585 County Road Z, Sinsinawa, WI 53824-9701, or e-mail your intention to *mazzuchelli@sinsinawa.org*. I wish the following person to be prayed for:

_____ because of (name illness or special intention)

Can we list this person's name on our next novena?

Yes No

Your name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

E-mail _____

Would you like us to e-mail you the novena list?

Yes No

PRAYER FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF FATHER SAMUEL MAZZUCHELLI, OP

LORD JESUS, you called your servant, Samuel, even in early youth, to leave home and all for a Dominican life of charity in preaching your holy gospel. You gave him abundant graces of Eucharistic love, devotion to your holy Mother of Sorrows, and a consuming zeal for souls. Grant, we beseech you, that his fervent love and labors for you may become more widely known, to a fruitful increase of your Mystical Body, to his exaltation and to our own constant growth in devoted love of you Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit live and reign one God, world without end. Amen.

