

St. Anthony of Padua R.C. Church

160 Court Street, Buffalo, New York 14202

TRADITIONALLY SPEAKING by S. Casarotto 3/8/09

BLESSED BE GOD

Fr. Tarcisio Rubin was a Scalabrinian missionary in Switzerland and Germany, professor in the seminaries of the order in Italy, and again missionary in Argentina. He was called "Padre Vangelo" (Fr. Gospel). Someone also said that he was born not with the original sin but with the sin of originality.

I still remember his flowing beard, his witty remarks, his laughs, and especially his hum-lity and extreme poverty. His companions of journey were a worn out Roman cassock, a pair of sandals, a poncho, the bible and the rosary. When he was assigned to the missions in S. America, he asked his superiors to allow him to make a retreat in a holy place. He told them he would be away for a while. Several days went by and, not hearing from him, his confreres became alarmed and informed the police. There was no trace of Father and the worse was feared. Where was he?

Fr. Tarcisio was on a long pilgrimage. From Milan, he hitchhiked his way to the border with the former Yugoslavia. As he tried to enter that Communist country then ruled by Tito, Father showed the border police his only document: the Cross! Then he went to Greece with the same international document and stayed a few days in the Orthodox monastery on Mt. Athos. Then on to Turkey and down to the Holy Land where he withdrew to the desert. Weeks went by while the search for him continued.

Eventually Fr. Tarcisio resurfaced, three months later. As he had said, he did go for a long retreat in a very holy place! Soon after, Father sailed to Argentina. When he arrived in Buenos Aires, his confreres went to meet him and offered to carry his baggage, but he was carrying only his Cross and a bible! Fr. Tarcisio began in earnest his missionary work especially along the border in the Andes where he assisted the migrants and the refugees from Chile and Bolivia. One day, Father decided to discuss their plight with President Peron. To the police at the Presidential palace, again he showed the Cross. Needless to say, Father was allowed in. When the dictator extended his hand to greet the poor missionary, Fr. Tarcisio took out his Cross and told him to kneel down. President Peron did kneel down! This intrepid missionary died among the Indians in the Andes and, after 25 years, his tomb is always decked with fresh flowers. The process for the canonization of Fr. Tarcisio has been recently introduced in Jujuy, Argentina.

"To evangelize the poor, one has to live as the poor, suffer what they suffer, eat what they eat, sleep where they sleep, accompany them to the place where they work. Only then one can say that he is evangelizing." (Fr. Tarcisio Rubin, CS, +1983)