

HAMISH FRASER - A VALEDICTORY

As we say this last earthly farewell to our dear relative and friend Hamish, we are still under the shock of his sudden departure from us. Some of you have known him as a beloved husband, father and relative, and only you can say what his absence is going to mean to you, his family. But you have also known him as an apostle, a crusader for Christ and His Church, and here you share him with so many others throughout the world who have been privileged to work alongside him in the cause for which he fought so long and so hard. For us too his passing is a blow and a sorrow. He was more than a colleague, more even than a leader (though that he certainly was); for many of us he was an elder brother, someone who understood our human difficulties. His encouragement and his example helped us to do better than we had thought we were capable of, and his very existence prevented some of us from losing hope.

Now his presence has been taken from us, and we are bound to feel a sense of loss. But we must think of him too. He has fought right up to his last breath for the good cause, and with God's grace he has earned his rest and his eternal reward, we may feel sure. We can feel sure, too, that he will now be praying for all of us. But he can help us in another way - in the memory we have of his life, in the example of Christian living he has given us: his unwearying search for and defence of the Truth; the honesty and humility with which he was able to admit his mistakes and start again, even to the point of re-casting his whole life; the courage and dogged perseverance that enabled him to maintain his apostolate despite hostility, slander and incomprehension; his readiness to sacrifice material gain and worldly success; above all, his unflinching faith in Our Lord, His Church and His Blessed Mother. We are not all Hamishes, but we shall not go far wrong if we try, in our own different ways, to model ourselves as closely as we can on the example he has set us.

Hamish would be the last person to accept any personal credit for the man he was or the work he achieved; he knew the power of God's grace, and sought it constantly in prayer and the Blessed Sacrament.

I know that Hamish would reject any comparison between himself and St. Paul. But two things they have in common: both began as sincere fighters against the good cause and later became its firmest champions, and both '*withstood Peter*' when the latter was wrong. And I believe that, without anticipating God's merciful judgment, we can apply to our departed friend and brother the words of that great saint: '*I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*' God bless him, and us.

Geoffrey Lawman.

(HAMISH FRASER, obiit 17th October 1986 - St Ignatius of Antioch, sepult. 21 October.)

### HAMISH FRASER

When I first met Hamish Fraser - in his catholic days - I saw at once that here was an honest man. He had the look of a child who always tells the truth.

That impression was quickly confirmed. Hamish's aim from youth onwards was to discover the truth, practise it, spread it, and defend it. He fought in battle for it in the Spanish Civil War when he thought Marxism was truth.

By the Providence of God he found that truth is personal, the Second Person of the Trinity, Christ the Son of God. Ever afterwards his special feast was that of Christ the King. All his fighting powers, which were phenomenal, were in Christ's cause. When modernism came out into the open with the Second Vatican Council, he combated it at every turn, wherever it came from - Popes, bishops, priests - never failing in respect for

the Office, but never sparing lies, double-talk and culpable silence. Many bishops must have sighed with relief - in vain: there is still God! - on hearing of Hamish's death and guessing that 'Approaches' was finished.

For all his immense capacity for work (he phoned me and others the evening before he died, and that same day sent me a letter which I received the day after his death) he never seemed hurried. He made time for everyone seeking help from him. And in conversation he was pleasant, kind, witty (with his own brand of sharpness), and relaxed. He was a comfort, in company or at a distance. You could count on him: he would never let you down.

*"The friend thou hast, and his adoption tried,  
Grapple him to thy soul with hoops of steel."*

The hoops, thank God, are still in place.

William Lawson, S.J.

### STILL IN HEART AND CONSCIENCE FREE

*(This appreciation was written by a new and young friend who is not a Catholic. We thought it worthy of inclusion).*

I was grateful for the thought of a friend in London to tell me about Hamish Fraser, who lived in our area. Hamish was a former communist, turned Catholic. He had been active for the Communist Party in Clydeside and during the Spanish Civil War had risen to the rank of officer in the Secret Police.

One morning I had the compelling thought:

*'See Hamish Fraser soon'.*

The following morning I thought.

*'Phone Hamish Fraser tonight'.*

Remembering two lines from a hymn,

*'With a child's glad heart of love,  
At thy bidding may I move',*

I realised this was God's guidance and obeyed. Hamish warmly invited me to his home for a time the following day.

I was quite unprepared for the giant of a man who strode into the living room at the Fraser's home in Saltcoats. There was a firm handshake from Hamish followed by, *'You'll have to excuse me. I've just had them on the phone from Rome. They want some information and I can't put my hands on it'*. He proceeded to flick through a large volume written in French.

Mrs Fraser took up the conversation by enquiring about our mutual friend in London. I mentioned a recent visit I had made to a party political conference in England. Immediately the book slammed shut and Hamish wanted to know all about it. Two hours of fascinating conversation followed.

Hamish talked little about himself but poured out his thinking on all manner of subjects. He was committed to his Church and to helping it fulfil its role in the world. His personal outreach was to people in all corners of the globe. Within the Roman Catholic Church, bishops, parish priests and fellow laymen all had the benefit of Hamish's mind on their activities. Outside the Church he respected and criticised men of other faiths and many public figures.

With a particular clarity of speech, reflecting a similar quality of mind, Hamish delivered statements which dealt squarely with the sentimentality adorning much modern theology.

*'We must not judge people. God will do that. But we must judge facts and actions. That is true charity.'*

The focal point of his own concern was on the interface between secular and religious thinking. Hamish did not entertain any theory which was designed to find common ground between Christianity and Marxism.

*'Communism is the greatest evil the world has ever seen. Socialism and Christianity are irreconcilable.'*

We were, as a nation, according to Hamish, being lulled to sleep by the concept of consensus. You only had to look at television to see how most people tailor their remarks to fit the consensus view. This represented a lack of real leadership and what was needed were people who would stand up and speak out for what was right. Hamish was such a man.

All his outpourings were not given at the cost of his own humility. Hamish asked repeatedly: *'What can we do about it?'*

I guess, however, that this was a rhetorical question. Hamish demonstrated the answer as he gave his best to me, a much younger man whom he had never met before. Like all true revolutionaries he sowed the seeds of ideas, not by argument, but by sharing his convictions. He left the rooting and growth of those ideas to God.

My first attempt to leave was greeted with: *'You're not going yet, sit down and talk'*.

He seemed to have all the time in the world. I left laden with reading material, much of it written and published by Hamish.

Two days later, at his home, Hamish died suddenly. I was touched to be told of the funeral arrangements by one of his daughters.

St Mary's Star of the Sea was packed with several hundred mourners on the morning of Hamish's funeral. The Latin mass was as Hamish requested. The priest, paying tribute to him said:

*'Hamish would have been surprised by the number present. He was, essentially, a humble man.'*

The chorus of the last hymn of the mass was a fine epitaph.

*'Faith of our Fathers, Holy Faith.  
We will be true to thee till death'.*

I had to turn to God for the words to say, to a family I knew so little, about a man I was grateful to have known. They came to me.

*'Jesus shall reign!  
Deepest regret at the passing of a new friend and  
fellow fighter.'*

Dr. Roger Watson

October 1986.

#### EDITORIAL NOTE

Only those articles or Supplements which are Editorial, or by the Editor or Contributing Editor, G. A. Lawman, or Guest Editorials, can be taken as expressing Editorial opinion.

Although all articles and Supplements are published in order to increase readers' awareness and understanding of the problems confronting us in the contemporary world and in what the late Cardinal Benelli called '*the post-Conciliar Church*', this does *not* imply that we necessarily agree with all that is contained in some of them.

H Fraser.