

In Loving Memory

Father Edward Mathias Robinson, O.P. ~ May 13, 1914 - March 29, 2012



On April 2, the seventh anniversary of the death of the “Pope of Life,” Blessed John Paul II, we laid to rest a noble champion of the unborn, the enormously gifted yet supremely humble “Patriarch of the Pro-Life Movement in Dallas,” our beloved, “saintly” Father Edward Mathias Robinson, O.P., at the age of 97.

Father entered the Dominican order in 1935 and was ordained a priest in 1941. He moved to Dallas in 1966 and began teaching at Bishop Lynch High School, and later taught at Cistercian Preparatory School as well. Among his fellow faculty at Bishop Lynch was Patty Sherrrod, now-CPLC Director of Ministries and Project Gabriel, and Father Paul Weinberger, pastor of St. William Parish, was one of his many students.

Father’s keen mind and his understanding of science helped form his profound appreciation for the dignity and wonder of the human person from conception until natural death, and prepared him to make a vigorous defense for life when the Supreme Court issued its unjust *Roe v. Wade* ruling legalizing abortion throughout America on January 22, 1973.

When the U.S. Bishops issued the *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities* in 1974, Father Robinson was appointed by Bishop Thomas Tschoepe as the first Diocesan Pro-Life Coordinator for the Diocese of Dallas, and was instrumental in the founding of the Catholic Pro-Life Committee in 1993 under the leadership of Bishop Charles Grahmann.

For the last 38 years, wherever the pro-life movement was in Dallas, there was Father Robinson. In addition to his devoted service to the CPLC, Father Robinson supported the work of the Greater Dallas Right to Life, White Rose Women’s Center, Texans United for Life, Operation Rescue and the Dallas Pro-Life Action Network. In 1984, when Laura Weston retrieved the bodies of more than 900 aborted babies and arranged for them to be buried at Calvary Hill Cemetery, Father was there. And most recently, Father established the website unbornperson.org to help people understand the dignity of the unborn through science and natural law.

Father knew and loved everyone, including those who came out of the abortion industry – like Carol Everett, and Norma McCorvey, the “Jane Roe” of *Roe v. Wade*, whom he instructed and brought into the Catholic faith in 1998. She was one of many who came to him regularly for spiritual direction.

Father Robinson attended the very first Bishop’s Pro-Life Dinner in 1994 – where he was honored as the first Pro-Life Person of the Year, a tribute for his then-20 years of dedicated pro-life ministry. Despite his physical frailty, Father never stopped living, serving, and trying to protect – as he so eloquently called them – “our brothers and sisters who are waiting to be born.”

Father Robinson was laid to rest at Calvary Hill Cemetery, facing the resting place – just a few feet away – of the precious unborn children to whom he devoted so much of his life. Rest in peace, good and faithful servant of the Lord. We miss you and will forever hold you in our hearts! Please pray for us as we pray for you. - Karen Garnett, CPLC Executive Director



Father Robinson at the 2011 Cemetery of Innocents Memorial Service at Calvary Hill

We invite you to share your special memories of Father Robinson at prolifedallas.org/FatherRobinson.

“Uncle Ed”
Eulogy by Paul Robinson – April 2, 2012

I know most of you know this special person whose life we are celebrating as “Father Matt,” but to me he has always been “Uncle Ed.” I have known my Uncle Ed for my entire life and he has always been special to me. He was born in 1914, the 4th of 10 children to Charles and Mary Robinson. He grew up in the same town I did, the oftentimes frozen tundra known more commonly as Duluth, Minnesota. He grew up in a house his father built at 719 West 6th Street. Each summer Uncle Ed would come home for the summer and stay with his elderly widowed mother. It was an easy walk for my brothers, sisters, and our cousins, to go to Grandma’s house to see Uncle Ed. It seems we visited every day. You see, going to see Uncle Ed just wasn’t like going to see any of our other uncles or relatives, and trust me, that’s saying something; we had a lot of special relatives to choose from. Each day when we arrived, class would begin, except, we really didn’t realize that it was class because it was so fun. We learned a ton without even realizing it or without having a single textbook. Sometimes the subject was Math, sometimes Biology, other times it was Physics or Engineering, and of course Religion always played a major role no matter what the subject. Uncle Ed had many other students in his summer school; every kid who lived in the neighborhood attended – children of all ages. The other students called him “Father Robinson.” That made us Robinsons feel extra special, because to us he was Uncle Ed. I am sure he must have at times looked like the Pied Piper leading his band of children through their course work and on field trips. Uncle Ed seemed to have a rare quality for an adult: he was an expert in keeping a child’s attention. Discipline was not required; he always had the respect of everyone and I don’t ever remember him raising his voice. He seemed to be an expert on every subject – in addition to the academic subjects, he taught us much about nature and conservation, how to predict the weather or even how to predict the climate for the upcoming winter by looking at the leaves and berries on the trees. He made a sundial in the back yard and showed us how to tell time without a clock or watch. You didn’t have to wind it and you never had to change the batteries. It didn’t work too well at night, but all in all it was a pretty amazing gift from God. They could have really used Uncle Ed on that Apollo 13 Mission. I am sure you are wondering how a man who had taken the vow of poverty could afford to finance all of this, but he did. Supplies consisted of things like discarded blocks of wood, nails, scraps of paper, old newspapers, broken wristwatches, broken radios, and other common household items that most people would have thrown in the trash. From them items such as cribbage boards, wood puzzles, nail puzzles, kites, and many other items were constructed and we would learn the mechanics and principles of operation of each item. Our Uncle Ed was also a master chef, or so we thought. His peanut butter and jelly sandwiches were legendary and appreciated by the class as if we were being served by the head chef in the best Five-Star restaurant in town.

My Uncle Ed was a major inspiration in my life and helped develop my interest in Math and Science and how it could be applied in the field of medicine. I remember the summer after 7th grade, he worked intensively with me on Algebra and Physics. I am sure he couldn’t have helped being impatient with all of my stupid questions because I just didn’t get a lot of it, but he NEVER showed it and he NEVER gave up. Before long he managed to get even me to understand the principles of the subjects.

Of course in our family each one of us has our special recollections of our dear Uncle. That’s one thing that made him extra special. I checked the family tree which was last updated in 2007, so I am sure there have been several new members added to the family since then. I found that there have been 217 people legally entitled to call Uncle Ed “Uncle.” Of course that counts the 70 people he is Great Uncle to, the 96 people he is Great-Great Uncle to, and the 11 people he is Great-Great-Great Uncle to. When you add in spouses the total number is significantly greater. Now one might think it would be easy to get lost in such a crowd, but not with my Uncle Ed. He had the very rare gift of having the ability to have individual relationships with very large numbers of people. I think everyone here understands what I mean by that. He had individual relationships with everyone. He always made everyone feel special.

This is a sad yet also a special week for me. Of course I am saddened by the loss of my Uncle, yet, it is special because I have learned such an incredible amount. My Uncle Ed has played A LOT of different roles to A LOT of different people. He was a teacher, a spiritual advisor, a mentor, a trusted friend with whom one could talk in confidence, a Priest, a fishing buddy, a master psychologist, an expert in just about everything it seemed. I truly believe that my Uncle Ed could have become whatever he wanted to be. He was a person with A LOT of interests. He was a poet, he was an artist, a scientist, an avid outdoorsman, a published author. He was incredibly modest and caring, always more concerned about the other person instead of himself. He rarely talked about himself. He was a vibrant person that lived life to the fullest and was never afraid of a challenge. When Fenwick High School in Oak Park, IL needed someone to learn to be an amateur radio operator and teach that to interested students after World War II, he stepped up to the plate and did it. Learning Morse Code was required for his summer students in Duluth... dit dah, dit dah, dit dah dah dit. I think he was a person without limits. If he had decided to become a scientist, he would have been world renowned; if he wanted to be a journalist, he would have won the Pulitzer Prize... You all understand what I mean. Fortunately, Uncle Ed decided to give his life to God. The side benefit of this was that ALL of us and a WHOLE LOT of other people not able to be here today got to know, learn from, and be inspired by him.

This is a sad yet also a special week for me. Of course I am saddened by the loss of my Uncle, yet, it is special because I have learned such an incredible amount. I have been truly amazed this week and have begun to comprehend for the first time just how many lives my Uncle Ed impacted in his almost 98 years on planet Earth. Thanks to the wonder of things like cell phones, and text messages, and e-mails, I have heard from countless people who were touched and inspired by my Uncle. In addition to many relatives, I heard from many of his former students, some as far back as the Fenwick Class of 1961. Think about it, that’s 51 years ago. How many of us can remember the names of their teachers from 20 years ago, much less have a continuing personal relationship with them? I know I can’t. I heard from Priests whom my Uncle had mentored. I heard from about a couple dozen people who wanted me to deliver personal messages to him. I know he heard every one of them, and if I know my Uncle, he was a bit embarrassed by all the attention.

Lastly and perhaps most importantly I saw the outpouring of affection and the grief of those in this community. I am sure my Uncle would not delight in seeing everyone so sad. He would remind you that he is still with us as he is also with our Heavenly Father. Someday we will all be reunited, so don’t be sad. I believe that he is right, and I know that he is with us today. I have realized this week that even though when I look at the family tree that reflects 200 and some people in my Uncle’s branch, it is sorely inaccurate. It really should include all of you here today as well as the thousands of others, both born and unborn, whose lives he has impacted.

I, now, for the first time in my life, fully understand a lesson that my Uncle told me over and over again throughout the years: “We are all God’s children; we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.” Many of you have expressed sympathy to my father and me in the past few days, and we appreciate it, but I also want to return it to you, for you have lost a great friend, a great teacher, a great man. We share your loss. Let’s just remember it’s temporary and it’s a physical separation. He will remain with us in spirit. Uncle Ed, you have done your work, you have reached the goal, you have overachieved. We thank you for being you, and we thank God for sharing you with us and letting us keep you for so long.