

Monsignor Edward J. Ryle

Good Afternoon,

We gather today to pause for an hour to honor the life of ED. As we look around the room, we represent many different walks of life, unique backgrounds and so many of life's stories that it would be hard to catalog them with modern technology, and yet, as ED walked through these halls, and in the community, he knew each and everyone of us. He knew your families story, spoke with joy of your accomplishments, often focusing on your children or grandchildren, and was also there when something wasn't going so well.

Our stories of ED would sound familiar to all of us, He knew you as a person, your interest, when you were with him he focused on you and you alone. He moved about saying hello to everyone, seemingly having an infinite amount of time, seldom rushed, but always somewhere to go. He could stand here today, and look up at all of you, call you by name and speak to something only you and he knew of. ED gathered people together, all people, despite societies labels, and stereotypes, ED saw goodness in everyone, and encouraged all of us to be kinder with one another.

He would drop suggestions with you, provide commentary and observation, sowing the seeds of new and different ways of viewing issues and creating opportunities to improve the lives of everyone. He was so subtle, gentle, that you began to think that this new view was the product of your own thinking. Recently I had an opportunity to speak to issues impacting seniors at our national Catholic Charities Convention held here in Phoenix in September. I spoke not of specific programs, but the overall impact of the federal deficit and debt on future funding for programs like Medicare and Medicaid. ED put his arm around me, said what a great paper, and then gently stated, next time add tax policy to the document.

His social titles included:

- Priest for 49 years
- Holder of several advanced academic degrees
- Professor and College Dean
- Author
- CEO of Catholic Social Services
- Lobbyist

ED believed in and was consistently guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church, but most often spoke of Catholic Social Teaching. In short:

- The Dignity of the Human person, all life is sacred
- Common Good
- Preferential Option for the Poor and most Vulnerable, including physical, social, moral and financially vulnerable.
- Rights and Responsibilities of the community to its members, and its members to the community
- Role of Government as an instrument to promote human dignity and build the common good
- Economic Justice
- Stewardship of the earth
- Promotion of Peace
- Participation of all in the life of the community
- Global Solidarity

As you think of any conversation with ED, these themes and bases for his views were clear and consistent.

Sometimes we refer to really gifted people as encyclopedias, but an encyclopedia is a collection of facts. This man, with his sweet unassuming gentle face, this lovable and humble appearing cherub of truth, charity, justice, and peace was a true intellect. In a single conversation he felt at ease referring to Socrates, Plato, Nietzsche, Greenspan, or Church encyclicals, letters, the scripture, and integrated the highest thinking over the centuries in a coherent, rationale, and positive way, providing historical tidbits, and word origins from Greek, and Latin.

His memory was keen and he could become the professor within a moment. You knew when the hands went up and his head went back, it was time to listen. These were great learning moments for those of us he engaged.

We all broke bread with ED and how many times during those meals, just as you thought you were staying up with him in conversation, you suddenly realized that he was being kind and waiting for you to catch up. You were glad he was on your team as you listened to his in-depth knowledge on your areas of expertise, and he connected your issues in logical and practical ways with so many others you hadn't begun to imagine. He listened to every word, read your body language like a golfer sizing up a putt, and knew everyone in the room no matter where you were. He was a brilliant writer, and yet, no one could read his hand writing. And finally, how many times did any of us have the courage to say no to him.

Ed was my friend, my priest, my mentor for twenty years, we spoke almost daily, had our own traditions where he patiently tried to educate me. Twenty years ago, when my youngest son Timothy, who is experiencing Down's Syndrome, was born Kathy and I were in the ICU with him. ED was the first one there, when my mother passed, ED was there, when our kids were married, ED was there, when Tim was baptized, ED poured the water and said the prayers. Tim prayed for ED at the hospital and told him how Jesus loved him and how happy he would be in heaven and how he looked forward to being with him again. And I know your stories of ED's presence in your life are similar.

I never heard him speak ill of any person, sometimes he did wonder how we came to some of the conclusions and decisions we made, and "What are they thinking" he would say with that crackling voice and knowing innocent smile.

From a State Capital perspective let us reflect about the reality of the so called "9th floor." Governors come and go, 9th floor chiefs, advisors, and cabinet officers, come and go, but since Bruce Babbitt, ED RYLE has been on the 9th Floor welcoming each administration in his own unique way. He was in fact the only permanent staff on the 9th floor for portions of the last four decades. Governor, you face uncharted waters ahead.

In closing, my heart is heavy but my soul rejoices for this dear man who gathered us all to table, who loved each of us, and wanted us to be all that God intended for us. As ED would often say "Pray Harder."