

FROM OUR PASTOR



I write to you this week with a **heavy but hopeful heart and an appeal for your prayers.** My younger sister and her husband, **MARY AND JEREMY SCHUTT** have been blessed with a beautiful and quite lively three year old daughter, my niece Anneliese Therese. Several months ago we were all ecstatic at the news that they are expecting their second daughter, due in late March 2021. Like many families who bear a heavy cross, we have come to understand that little **"BABY SCHUTT"** has several severe developmental disabilities (Downs Syndrome, Cystic Hygroma and also a heart defect) and has a 1% chance of survival prior to birth. **We are all praying for a miracle, and I invite everyone to add your prayers to ours, particularly seeking the intercession of SERVANT OF GOD FRANK PARATER.**

I became aware of Frank Parater while I was Director of Vocations for our Diocese during which Frank Parater became a "Servant of God", the first step on the road to being declared a saint. In 1919, Frank became a seminarian for the Diocese of Richmond when Northern Virginia was still a part of that Diocese. So we can rightly claim him as one of our own "native sons". Below is a brief description of his life followed by an intercessory prayer.

Early Life

- Born October 10, 1897, to Capt. Francis J. Parater, Sr. and his second wife, Mary Raymond.
- Baptized at St. Patrick's Church on Church Hill, Richmond, Virginia
- Attended daily Mass and served as Altar Boy at the Monastery of the Visitation.
- Educated at the Xaverian Brother's School and Benedictine High School in Richmond.
- Graduated in 1917, top in his class and valedictorian.



Seminary: In 1917, Frank began studies for the priesthood at Belmont Abbey Seminary College in North Carolina. He kept a journal detailing his devout life: daily Mass and Holy Communion; praying the Rosary and Memorare daily, and weekly confession in accord with a Rule of Life he had drawn up for himself. His stated goal was: "*To strive by every possible means to become a pure and worthy priest, an alterus [sic] Christus.*" While at the college seminary, Frank decided that there was such a great need for priestly ministry in his native Virginia that he would forego his desire for monastic life in favor of the diocesan priesthood, where he could offer direct service to the people of God. In the Fall of 1919, Right Reverend Denis J. O'Connell, D.D. sent him to study at the Pontifical North American College in Rome.

Act of Oblation to the Sacred Heart: In December 1919, a completely healthy Frank Parater wrote an Act of Oblation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus which was sealed and marked to be read only in the event of his death. He expressed his motivation in making his offering in this way: "*I have nothing to leave or to give but my life and this I have consecrated to the Sacred Heart to be used as He wills ... This is what I live for and in case of death what I die for. Since my childhood, I have wanted to die for God and my neighbor. Shall I have this grace? I do not know, but if I go on living, I shall live for this same purpose; every action of my life here is offered to God for the spread and success of the Catholic Church in Virginia. I shall be of more service to my diocese in Heaven than I can ever be on earth.*" This Act of Oblation was not discovered until after Frank's death, when a fellow seminarian [later Monsignor] Frank Byrne, also of the Diocese of Richmond, went through his effects and found this testament.

Illness and Death: In late January 1920, Frank came down with rheumatism then rheumatic fever, causing him tremendous suffering. He was taken to the hospital in Rome. The spiritual director of the college, Fr. Mahoney, administered the Last Rites. With devotion and unafraid of death, he knelt on the bed and made his last communion. On February 6, Msgr. Charles A. O'Hern, rector of the college, offered the Mass of the Sacred Heart for Frank. Frank Parater died on February 7, 1920. He was buried in the College Mausoleum at Campo Verano, Italy.



Loving Father, your servant Frank Parater sought perfection as a student, scout and seminarian. He offered himself to you completely through the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Through his intercession, may young people answer your call to follow Jesus as priests, deacons and religious. Grant, as well, the favors I seek, so that your Church will recognize his holiness and proclaim him Blessed. Grant this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Perhaps our Lord will grant a miracle for "Baby Schutt" through the intercession of Frank Parater and thus further his cause toward canonization. I thank all who are able to join us in these prayer efforts. ~ Fr. Bashista