



July 14, 2019

Mr. Nally Remembered.

Mr. Nally was my Latin teacher in High School and his presence remains on with me to this day. Why? He was a teacher among teachers. One of his phrases was "Latin won't learn itself." Essentially you have to make an effort to study, being lazy won't get it done. To students who used to ride a bicycle to school and were late he would say "The wind was against you."

Some of the things that stand out from his teaching style are as follows:

He always showed respect for his students, knowing that they would respond to his gracious manner and kindly voice.

He himself never tired of learning and my recollection was to see him in the local library continuing to study even into his later years.

Patience was a virtue that he demonstrated with students that found it difficult to learn, being always willing to encourage.

He had a reverence for the history of language and indeed was a historian of European history himself.

When he spoke to his students, he would sit up on a front desk and speak as if to children, trying to excite them to a curiosity of the world.

In our Latin studies, he brought the Gallic Wars of Julius Caesar alive through the words of Cicero. (Gaul is the old name for France and hence the name Gallic)

Virgil and the Aeneid was much more of a challenge, yet undaunted Mr. Nally lead us forward.

Then there was the Roman history that Mr. Nally introduced us to. Clearly he had some admiration for the Roman legal system and the roads that they built all over Europe, not to mention the buildings that they erected.

The Punic wars were a source of great interest to him, together with the strategies used by the combatants, Carthage and Rome. (Carthage is in North Africa directly south of the isle of Sicily.)

I still remember his reference to the Toga that was help up by the Roman official Fabius as he spoke to the Carthaginians, "is it war or peace?" he asked and then dropped his toga and said "it is war."

Anthony and Cleopatra were brought alive for us in the classroom.

Finally no words can summarize the life of this great teacher. I was present at his retirement as a Teacher and saw him cry for the first time. It was a humbling experience.

Some years later I met him in Dublin as he walked the streets. He did not immediately recognize me, but when I spoke he asked me to identify the year of my graduation. When I told him he was able to place me among my classmates. He much appreciated being singled out from the crowd. Whatever interest I have in reading and study comes from Mr. Nally. May his soul rest in peace.

Father Martin

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