

IN MEMORIAM:
PATRICIA BUCKLEY BOZELL
1927–2008

Many readers of *Communio* will know that Patricia Buckley Bozell died July 12, 2008. A longtime copyeditor and beloved friend of *Communio*, Trish and her husband, Brent Bozell, parents of ten children, were the founders of *Triumph* magazine and well-known for their unstinting public witness to the Catholic faith in America. We dedicate this issue of *Communio* to her memory, and wish to provide an introduction to some small part of her goodness and grace to our readers who may not know of her and her extraordinary life. Since I myself first encountered that life in a special way through the history of her correspondence with a friend of mine, I will begin by explaining that connection.

The following brief note by Patricia Bozell appeared in the October, 1974 number of *Triumph* magazine, under the heading “Tim Brown, RIP”:

Tim Brown entered our lives in the early years of this magazine through the “Reactions” pages. A graduate student at the University of Virginia, he had for his years and our times a puissant loyalty to the Church compounded of innocence and strength—the flesh and blood, sinews and heart loyalty of the living Christian. . . .

For reasons misty in memory, a personal correspondence began, and throughout the years, between personal exchanges, he would shyly but insistently point out where, in his reading, a delicate nuance of the magazine seemed to tip the scales too much here, too little there.

Some few weeks after finishing a four-year stretch in the Marine Corps, Tim wrote: “It is so sunny today and my mood so expansive that I only lack a letter from you, my friend of five

years, to feel that paradise has arrived. I feel like a man exorcised and exorcising.”

It was his last letter. In September, I learned from his family that Tim had drowned.

As Tim is confident of our prayers for the repose of his soul, so we rest in the surety that in the years ahead he will continue to look over our shoulders, making sure, quite sure, that we not stray.

Tim Brown and I met in a class at Gonzaga University, around the time that *Triumph* was being founded. We quickly discovered that we shared many common views, not the least of which was disagreement with the educational theory being presented in class. We had both read much of Christopher Dawson, and were deeply influenced by his views on religion, Christianity, and culture. And we talked about the new magazine, *Triumph*, that was then being launched. What Trish calls Tim’s puissant Catholicism led to difficulties in his doctoral studies in Spanish at the University of Virginia. He once told a professor during class, for example, that he would eat the chair he was sitting on if she could prove what she was alleging about the Catholicism of St. Teresa of Avila. His fellowship days were thus clearly numbered; and, this being still a period of the military draft in America, he joined the Marines upon leaving school. His years in the Marines were extremely difficult. But, whenever he would write, or we would meet, he would mention his occasional book reviews and letters for *Triumph*, but especially his correspondence with Trish Bozell.

This correspondence was truly a thread that sustained Tim over the years and brought joy into his life. It was evident that Trish appreciated the talent he had for writing—which was the vocation he had been struggling to pursue. Without ever having met him, she clearly had understood the shy and lonely sensitivity of this passionate young man of faith. But I don’t know if she ever really knew how much her encouragement, and serious engagement with what he wrote to her, meant to him. The spirit of the note written above shows why she would mean so much to him. That Trish would write so beautifully and thoughtfully about this man, largely unknown to readers of *Triumph* and too young to bear a public portfolio, was something I could never forget; and I always looked forward to meeting her.

Our meeting finally did take place years later, in the mid-nineties, at the staging of a performance of a debate between “G. K.

Chesterton and G. B. Shaw” at the Catholic University of America. For some two years before this encounter, I had been attending the 6:00 A.M. Mass at the Franciscan Monastery in northeast Washington, D.C. Every day this 70-ish man with red hair would slowly make his way in, just a few minutes late. (Somewhat smugly wondering why he came consistently five minutes late every day, I learned many years later that it was because he was coming from morning prayer at another nearby monastery.) At any rate, when I saw him and his wife in the Hartke Theater lobby, I went to greet him. I was shocked: Brent Bozell was the man whose hand I had been shaking at Mass every morning for two years, but without either of us ever having initiated an introduction. Trish announced herself first, and my stunned reaction was to say immediately, in a flustered manner, that I had subscribed to *Triumph* from its beginning, and that the beautiful words she had written about my friend, Tim Brown, so many years ago would have meant the world to him, and to thank her for that.

Brent died within a couple of years of our meeting, but Trish and I continued to meet for lunch with some regularity up until the last months of her life.

Our students at the John Paul II Institute frequently, in the course of their studies, ask what it means to live as a Christian at the heart of the culture: how the theology and philosophy they are learning can be most effectively communicated to the men and women of today—in short, how to be a missionary. In responding to this question, I always think of Trish—because she lived so . . . *intrinsically*. She never communicated in fragments. What you got was the whole of her being, even if the exchange was brief. What comes to mind above all is her fierce and gentle love (and those who knew her recognize that in her case the terms “fierce” and “gentle” cannot be dissociated). If anyone ever wondered where that love was centered, she made that clear even in her email address: PBBRC (Patricia Buckley Bozell, Roman Catholic).

Trish was thus a missionary in the truest and most basic sense: she lived to the full *who she was*: a wife, a mother, a grandmother, an aunt, a faithful friend—indeed, it is hard to imagine anyone who exceeded her gift for friendship. She was a missionary because she lived so profoundly—always and only as PBBRC—her humanity: one thinks of the elegant grace of even her simplest gestures; of her great capacity for music, as a performer and a listener (of her refusal to attend Bach concerts unless they were performed

in the contemplative environment of beautiful churches); of her acute intelligence and literate style of writing; of her ready, albeit not infrequently feisty, wit. She could ask the most incisive questions with the ingenuousness of a child, as though *she* had something to learn from *you*. But she asked never out of idle curiosity; only out of passion for a deeper understanding of truths to live by—and if necessary to die for.

In a word, Trish embodied the missionary spirit articulated in the simple and profound theology of Pope Benedict XVI, whom she loved so much: the missionary spirit whose renewal was the burden of the Second Vatican Council.

In these past years, Trish did much editorial work for *Communio* and with its managing editor, Emily Rielley. We can now only express our trust that she—and her beloved Brent—will continue to look over our shoulders, making sure that we not stray from the faith whose meaning she bodied forth so beautifully.

David L. Schindler
All Saints Day, 2008