Opinion



by NCR Staff

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Hans Küng, the celebrated and controversial Swiss theologian, died April 6 at his home in Tübingen, Germany, at age 93. Following are letters to the editor from NCR readers remembering Küng. They have been edited for length and clarity.

I still (despite a very-much-downsized library) have print copies of *Does God Exist* and *On Being a Christian*. Those two books gave me hope that I might still have a place at the Roman Catholic table as I acknowledged my innate gayness. I have since learned otherwise.



Fr. Hans Küng was, as far as I'm concerned, as much a Doctor of the Church as St. Thomas Aquinas, whether he's someday declared a saint or not. But his sainthood would require its own miracle, I realize.

RICHARD L. CRANK

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In her extensive obituary of Fr. Hans Küng, Patricia Lefevere has included two errors of which I am aware.

The Nazis' invasion of Austria in March 1938, did not initiate World War II. It was not violent and the German troops were welcomed by enthusiastic crowds. The peaceful annexation of Austria to the Third Reich (the Anschluss) occurred over the next days and was subsequently ratified almost unanimously in a controlled plebiscite. The war began only a year and a half later with the invasion of Poland.

At the age of 34 years, Küng was not the youngest expert (peritus) at the Second Vatican Council. Among the Americans, William Keeler, the future archbishop of Baltimore and cardinal, was 31, and I was 32 when the council opened. My classmate, Hans, who was the subdeacon at my first solemn Mass on December 9, 1954, in Rome would want accuracy in his obituary.

(Msgr.) ROBERT TRISCO

Washington, D.C.

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In the mid-90s, I had the good fortune to encounter Fr. Hans Küng briefly at a Catholic conference in Detroit. He had just given a lecture that impressed me so much that I quickly joined the line of folks purchasing one of his latest books, *Global Responsibility*. During the process, he personally inscribed several as gifts for my friends, made eye contact, exchanged pleasantries and I immediately sensed a kindly, sensitive spirit.

Like many of the presenters at the convention, Küng had courageously zeroed in on hot button issues of the day and shared reflections that were both concerning and, in hindsight, very prophetic. The take away for me from that riveting presentation was, (as Patricia Lefevere stated), there could be "no peace among nations without peace among religions."

From all of the Küng eulogies I have read thus far, it is clear that he had countless admirers and foot soldiers toward that end, including Pope Francis.

The other memorable experience at that Detroit venue that I'll never forget was the "send forth commission" from our Black city bus driver. Curious about the Catholic activity at the convention center that weekend, he inquired about what was going on. When I told him, he replied fiercely, "Lady, if you don't like the things that are going on in your church, you gotta speak up!"

Praise the Lord from whom all blessings come!

NANCY McGUNAGLE

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