

The canonization of the Swiss Statesman Nicholas of Flüe

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Swiss Time	MONDAYS	TUESDAYS.	THURSDAYS	SATURDAYS	N.Z. Time P.M.	Wave Lengths
8.15	Musical Salute	Musical Salute	Musical Salute	Musical Salute	7.15	
8.20 8.25	Home News Swiss Spotlight (H.Böschenstein)	Home News Swiss Sports Foundup (Rigassi)	Home News Views on the News	Home News Views on the News	7.20 7.25	
8.30 8.35	Music from Switzerland	Music from Switzerland	Music from Switzerland	Music from Switzerland	7.30 7.35	25.28 m. 25.39 m
8.40	Towards a Better World (The World Observer).	Towards a Better World (Prof. Privat speaks)	Towards a Better World (The Social Aspect)	Towards a Better World. (The Geneva Observer)	7.40	11.865mc 11.815mc.
8.45	Scirée Romande	Music by Swiss Composers Variety Program Swiss Spot- light (Pierre Bequin)	The Symphony Hour Cultural Review	Schwyzertütsche Heimetsbig (For Swiss Listeners)	7.45 8.40	
9.45	Close Down	Close Down	Close Down	Close Down	8.45	

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THE CANONIZATION

of

THE SWISS STATESMAN

-- NICHOLAS OF FLÜE --

(SNTFO). On May 15th in St. Peter's in Rome Pope Pius XII will solemnly proclaim the canonization of the holy hermit, Nicholas of Flüe. The figure of the saintly Brother Claus has played a prominent part in the history and culture, in the life and conscience of the Swiss nation; and he well deserves his reputation as the greatest statesman the Confederation has ever produced. By acting as a peace-maker, Nicholas of Flüe preserved Switzerland from a disastrous civil war in 1481, and laid the legal foundations of her political and international status which have stood the test of more than four centuries and led to the formation of the island of peace that Switzerland is today. Now the

Catholic Church is raising this man of peace to the honours of the altar. Nicholas of Flüe finds his place in the catalogue of Saints of all nations and epochs as patronus pacis, which means intercessor for the peace of the world.

Nicholas of Flüe was born at Sachlerberg, in what is now the Canton of Obwalden, in 1417. Obwalden lies in the heart of Switzerland, not far from Lucerne, whose famous lake forms one of its boundaries. Tourists, mountain-climbers, hikers and pilgrims to the Saint's grave enjoy the jolly, sharp wit of the inhabitants of this agreeable, sunny, pre-alpine land. The men of Flüe enjoy the reputation of being the most robust of all in mind and body. They are the direct descendants and namesakes of the new Saint; but there is not one of the old-established families of Obwalden and Nidwalden that cannot boast at least a drop of his blood. Like the majority of the natives of the original cantons, Nicholas was a genuine mountain peasant, and therefore we should not be surprised at the intimate spiritual bond that still exists between the saint who lived 500 years ago and his compatriots of the present day. Nicholas of Flüe was a married man and the father of ten children; an able, prosperous and prudent peasant. Clear judgment and an incorruptible sense of justice predestined him for the different dignities of the ancient rural republic of Obwalden. He was elected to the bench and the government, and served as an officer in several campaigns undertaken by the small but victorious Obwalden army. The warrior of Flüe was, however, no war-monger.

He fulfilled his military duties obediently, but a friend of his youth could truly say of him that "in war he inflicted little damage on his enemies, preferring to draw away and pray, and shielding the enemy as far as he could." The peasant farmer of Flüe who succeeded in bequeathing to his sons an extensive property, devoted several hours each night to prayer. The judge and councillor sought escape in pious meditation from the brutal quarrels of his day. His business stood between him and God; so that when the people wanted to elect him to the highest place in the state, that of Landammann, he abandoned his country with the consent of his family and sought to serve God as a hermit in Alsace.

But fate brought him back to the land of his birth. In the mountain gorge of Ranft, in the immediate vicinity of his former property, the people of Obwalden built him a tiny hermitage and chapel. Here he lived a life of prayer, penance and the strictest fasting. But the world, whose honours he had fled, sought him out to ask his wise advice. Kings and princes made use of his services in difficulties of all sorts. The pious man of God, who had turned his back on worldly matters, attained to the position of universal sage; the politician developed into a statesman; the peasant into an ambassador of peace. On Christmas Day 1481 he induced the divided Confederates to sign the Agreement of Stans. In 1517 the Swiss Federal Council wrote of this event in the following terms; "During the period when the greatest internal danger threatened the old Confederation, Brother Claus, looking beyond the small local interests, used all the weight of his moral influence not merely to conclude a temporary peace, but rather to strengthen for the future the loose ties that bound the Confederates, so that the state succeeded in surviving in all its diversity the crises of the Reformation." True to the principles expounded by Brother Claus, Switzerland has always abjured territorial expansion and insisted on neutrality. From him she inherited her mission of peace. After a life spent in the service of his people Nicholas of Flüe died on March 21st, 1487; his mortal remains are piously preserved in the Parish Church of Sachseln.

Immediately after his death, Claus of Flüe who was already termed "the living saint" or the "saintly Confederate" by the writers of his time, became the object of pious veneration. His intercession was invoked in personal matters and affairs of state, particularly when the danger of war arose. Notwithstanding this, 460 years have intervened between his death and his canonization. Today the whole Swiss nation is united in honouring Switzerland's greatest statesman and in admiring the work he accomplished on behalf of peace.