

The Catholic Journal

Twenty-third Year, No. 33.

Rocheport, N. Y., Friday, May 17, 1924.



French Church Damaged by Fire. Loss About \$10,000

Burglars are held responsible for the fire which gutted the Church of Our Lady of Victory, in Pleasant Street, early Wednesday morning.

Louise DeMoore, housekeeper of the parish house, adjoining the church, says she heard footsteps in the yard between her room and the church. She heard the burglar alarm a few minutes later and hurriedly summoned Father Notebaert. Smoke at that time was pouring from the church windows, and the fire department was called by telephone.

Our Lady of Victory is one of the oldest Catholic churches in the city, some of the interior decorations were elaborate and expensive and practically all were destroyed by fire or water. Most of the vestments were destroyed and some of these are said to have been especially valuable. Some of the decorations were brought from Europe last year by Father Notebaert and were valued highly by him. The statuary was woodwork carved by peasants of Savoie, France, who are noted for such work, and it was quickly destroyed by the flames.

The organ was in the rear of the church, away from the flames but so intense were they that they almost destroyed the instrument, and the work of destruction was completed by the firemen, who had to chop holes in the woodwork in order to play streams on the flames. The altar was ruined.

While only a few of the pews in the church were destroyed, most of them were so badly damaged as to make it necessary to install new ones. The heat cracked the varnish of many and spoiled the beauty of the rest. This, it is said, is a large item in the loss.

The parish house, where Father Notebaert was asleep at the time the flames were discovered, suffered only slightly. The chief loss was caused by water. It was necessary to drag the hose leading into the vestry of the church. The loss in the parish house is estimated at between \$300 and \$400.

Father Notebaert said last night that the work of rebuilding the church would be started as soon as the insurance men made their appraisals. It is expected that the insurance will cover all the damage. Father Notebaert said that church services would be held at the regular hours Sunday, and would be conducted in the parish hall at the rear of the building.

The Church of Our Lady of Victory was built in 1868, during the pastorate of the late Monsignor DeRegge, who was later chancellor of this diocese. For many years previous to that date the French Catholics of Rocheport had worshipped in an old German Church on Ely St., which was commonly known as "St. Mary's French Church." When the new church was built the congregation was transferred to Pleasant St., where it has since worshipped.

Since 1879 Rev. Alphonse A. Notebaert has been the rector of the church. Under his administration the church has been improved and redecorated, being decorated with many statues produced by noted European artists.

The parochial school was added to the church property in the early '80's at a cost of \$16,000. The building accommodates 300 pupils and has rooms for societies and a hall which seats 600.

The church is attended by the Catholics of French, Belgian and Holland parentage. Sermons are preached in French, Flemish and Dutch as well as in English.

For some time past Rev. Notebaert has been assisted by Rev. Dr. Byrne of St. Bernard's Seminary, who comes to this church on Saturdays and remains till after the services on Sunday.

The church of the Holy Child, a church for the blind at Aqueduct avenue and Bergen street, New York, was dedicated recently by Mgr. Lavelle, V. G., rector of the Cathedral. A school for the blind will be started in connection with the church.

Bishop Schinner of Superior, Wis., has left for Europe to take up matters concerning the diocese. He expects to be gone several months setting sail from New York Tuesday of last week.

Franz Joseph Geissler, of Cleveland, former atheist writer, and the author of many bitter attacks upon religion and the Church, has become a convert. Geissler says his conversion was caused by a vision of the Blessed Virgin in which he was admonished to follow other ways.

Knights of Columbus. Canandaigua, May 12.—Hundreds of Knights of Columbus from throughout Western New York were here Sunday at the third degree ceremonial held in Bernis Hall under the auspices of the councils of Canandaigua, Geneva, Waterloo, Seneca Falls and Auburn.

The firm of Cassidy and Company distillers, Monasteravan, have been forced to discontinue distilling, thereby causing a number of men to be unemployed.

Rosecommon Patrick Harrington, Kingsland was, at the Boyle Quarter Sessions, awarded £150 compensation for loss of good will under the Town's Tenant's Act.

Tipperary. The Langley ranch at Moygannon, a flax buyer, died suddenly in Coleraine on April 2.

Tyrone. John Douglas, a native of Dunganon, a flax buyer, died suddenly in Coleraine on April 2.

Catholic News Notes

Very Rev. James E. Cassidy, Vice-General of the Fall River diocese, has been elevated to the dignity of a monsignor.

Just before his departure from Rome Most Rev. Archbishop Bonzano, late rector of the College of the Propaganda, and now Apostolic Delegate at Washington, ordained five Irish students from that college.

At Santa Clara College, Santa Clara, Cal., which is about to be chartered as a university, two new buildings erected since the recent fire at a cost of \$250,000 will be dedicated on June 16. The college is conducted by the Jesuits.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the consecration of St. John's Church, Frederick, Md., was celebrated April 21. It was one of the first Catholic churches in the United States to be consecrated. The Cathedral church of St. Joseph, in the diocese of Louisville, was consecrated 98 years ago.

The projected new Cathedral of the new diocese of Toledo, Ohio, will, in architectural design, be of the Romanesque style of the Cathedral of Toledo, Spain, with many of its features.

Rev. W. F. Purcell, of St. Raphael's church, St. Peter, Mont., while a passenger on a stage coach, expostulated with a man who was using profane language in the presence of several women. When he received a sneering reply, the priest landed a short arm jab on the jaw of the profane one, silencing him effectively. Those on the stage applauded the priest's act.

It is reported that Cardinal Gibbons, as chancellor of Catholic University, Washington, has accepted from a Western donor of Jewish extraction, \$25,000 to found a chair for study looking to eradication of Socialism.

Hon. Henry C. Dillon, one of the most prominent Catholics of Los Angeles, Cal., and whose death occurred recently in that city, was a convert to the faith. A native of Wisconsin, he was at one time a student in Nashota Seminary, intending to enter the Episcopal ministry, and while there was a companion of the late Rev. John B. Tabb, the well-known poet-priest.

Chicago has a Catholic Persian congregation which is in charge of a Persian priest.

During the month of July the Catholic men of Denver will be given an opportunity to attend a retreat. It will be held at the Jesuit College of the Sacred Heart, under the direction of the Revs. J. J. Brown, S. J., and Edward Barry, S. J.

Finding His Mission

When Father Frank was ordained everybody said he would be a great addition to the Cathedral parish. He was talented and handsome—a strapping tall young man with a gray bright spirit that after a time made some of the older folks shake their heads. "It wasn't good for a priest to be too light hearted," they reasoned. "He was meant to cure sorrow and sin, and what need had he of a laugh like a boy's and eyes that danced in his head with mischief. The Bishop would do well to keep him near him."

And it might have been Father Frank's wish to stay with the Bishop and train the choir, and be at once guide and comrade and playmate of the boys and young men who gathered about him in increasing numbers as the months went by. Father Frank was ahead of his time, which looked rather doubtfully on athletic sports as a means of salvation, and could not accept as orthodox a system of reform that taught a boy to play as well as to pray. The priest's vigorous young strength must often have chafed at the restraint imposed by his cloth and public opinion, but for all that he followed up his own methods. "Sure, it's the playboy of a priest the Bishop has in him," said old Dan Coyle, the parish grumbler and the boy's inveterate foe, "evenin' himself to that gang of young ruffians that ought to be in jail, racin' like a boy after the ball an' leavin' the fence forward an' back as good as any daredevil among them all. An' with never a thought of him bein' priested."

Nor was baseball Father Frank's only offense. He could swim and row and box as well as he could sing and preach; and altogether the Cathedral parish was puzzled and just a trifle surprised that the Grand Seminary hadn't taken the tricks out of him. Fortunately it had not, for the "tricks" informed with the grace of God were the saving of Father Frank.

There was one mission in the diocese, the very name of which made many a young priest turn pale, for it meant not only privation and toil, but the indescribable isolation of the man of culture. Only the priest with the soul of a martyr could accept cheerfully an environment that threatens the lingering starvation of mind, while the body struggled against untoward circumstances. Less than a year after Father Frank's ordination this mission became vacant, and the old Bishop turned his wise searching gaze on the group of young men at his table. Perhaps he saw what lay behind Father Frank's laughing face and his "tricks," for before the week was out the parish gasped at the news that Father Frank was going to M.—"to work among the Indians." It was then that the parishioners knew their mind about the young priest; if they had ever misjudged him there was but one opinion of him on the dreary November day that he went from them. Even Dan Coyle declared it was "a wicked waste" to send the like of Father Frank to the Indians. "What would the cadets do?" "What would the whole parish do without him?" But questions were vain. The Bishop had spoken, and what he said was final.

And Father Frank himself? It was years after that he opened his heart to a friend who had known him all his days, and revealed the thoughts that rent him when the Bishop's decree went forth. "It was the turning point in my life," he said. "Thank God for his mercy in helping me to take the right road. The struggle was awful—to leave behind everything that a man's heart craved for. You know how I loved the ways of city life, the throngs of friends, the excitement and change of it all; and how I threw myself into my work for the boys, thinking that was my special calling and that I was pleasing God in it. But I must have been pleasing myself as well, and He made the test of my ministry. The reality was worse than any-

thing I had imagined. I was a stranger in a strange land, and that first night at M.—"I don't know how I walked the road, but I was down with only trees for company with every fiber of my body in revolt and every thought pain-ful with the horror of having to live years, perhaps all my life among uncouth Indians. No church, no home, no consolation. Appeal to the Bishop? To be refused. He was hard, he was cruel, unjust to run my thoughts and a quick hot anger against him rose within me. Into the dawn I fought my battle with self. Should I submit? Or go out from the diocese to seek another where a man of my attainments would be rated higher? God was good to me in that night of agony. He cleared the mists of passion and pride and self-love, and in a clearer vision I saw that it was His will that I should work for His poor neglected children. The Bishop had asked nothing of me that he had not done cheerfully in his own young manhood; his high conception of his calling made no distinction of race or place—what mattered it to the priest what mattered it to the priest to God? Why should I seek the luxuries and pleasures of the city when my Master had not even such a wretched shelter as mine wherein to rest?"

Father Frank ceased speaking and for a few moments there was silence. Then he added: "After that nothing was heard—privation, aqualor, dirt, ignorance—only so many obstacles to be overcome. The isolation I dreaded most of all was nothing but the barrier of egotism the white man is apt to raise between himself and his brothers of a darker tint. I broke it down with my 'tricks,' and he laughed the old boyish laugh. 'It would make Dan Coyle turn in his grave to see me wrestling and boxing with my young Indians, and hunting and fishing with them. I got them every one they are good Catholics and generous, loyal friends. But you will see for yourself. You stay for the feast of Corpus Christi and sing in the 'O Sicut erat' we sang in the Cathedral long ago. There will be a grand gathering of the tribe."

The guest stayed and sang the 'O Sicut erat'—the Indian took part as if their souls were in the music. After all, Father Frank's talents had not been wasted. Only that morning at Mass this conviction came home to the guest: the scene was one to remember all one's life—the humble church, the dusky workers, the stalwart priest on the altar, the swarthy little acolytes, lithe and deft in their service. There was no surplised choir but from their bench at the right of the sanctuary three roughly clad Indian men sang the Kyrie and the Gloria in Gregorian chant and up in a tiny loft above the door the Indian organist was the central figure of another group of singers, who were proud and glad to give of their best. Father Frank preached with all the eloquence that had charmed the Cathedral congregations, and listening to him, the visitor was convinced that he had found himself in his work. Struggle and toil had left their marks—the scars of a battle nobly won—but the victor was well content.

The neat church, the comfortable homes, the gathering in of Indians from miles around to honor the great day with prayers and feasting and games—all were evidences of what Father Frank had accomplished. As he went among his people love and respect were his portion. Toward sunset the priest and his guest left the merry-makers to their feasting and dancing; the calm of evening was on forest and field, and the air was sweet with the scent of flowers and fragrant grasses. Out on a log in the stream two Indian boys were fishing—motionless as statues until the Angelus rang from the little belfry when bearing their heads, they sank to their knees on the log and recited the beautiful prayer. Father Frank watched them with a light in his eyes that was good to see.

"You are happy," said his friend, not in questioning, but with certainty of his reply. "Entirely happy," said Father Frank.

News Items

Thomas McKeown, a native of Rhode Island, arrived in New York and was in imminent danger of drowning owing to the fact that he was unable to swim. He was rescued by two men named John and Francis Campbell, who were in the water with him.

A farm, the property of a man named John, was recently destroyed by fire. The loss was estimated at \$10,000.

The Rt. Rev. Bishop of New York, in a recent letter to the clergy, urged them to be more active in their parishes and to work for the betterment of the people.

The Rt. Rev. Bishop of New York, in a recent letter to the clergy, urged them to be more active in their parishes and to work for the betterment of the people.

The Rt. Rev. Bishop of New York, in a recent letter to the clergy, urged them to be more active in their parishes and to work for the betterment of the people.

The Rt. Rev. Bishop of New York, in a recent letter to the clergy, urged them to be more active in their parishes and to work for the betterment of the people.

The Rt. Rev. Bishop of New York, in a recent letter to the clergy, urged them to be more active in their parishes and to work for the betterment of the people.

The Rt. Rev. Bishop of New York, in a recent letter to the clergy, urged them to be more active in their parishes and to work for the betterment of the people.

The Rt. Rev. Bishop of New York, in a recent letter to the clergy, urged them to be more active in their parishes and to work for the betterment of the people.