

The Catholic Journal

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The Stray Sheep

Father S— one of the best-known priests in New York. Chaplain of one of the great metropolitan departments connected with the preservation of life and property, director for many years of the athletic activities of Catholic boys and assistant priest at one of the best-known parishes in Manhattan, his energies were spent in these and other channels with fervor and sincerity. He is now pastor of a busy and populous parish and is engrossed in the manifold duties of his position.

When he was stationed as assistant in the lower part of the city, the parish included several hospitals within its limits. The sick calls from these hospitals added a considerable burden to the priests of the parish, a burden cheerfully met, of course. The calls were numerous, often untimely, and, by all human standards, often unnecessary in their alleged urgency.

Every priest knows that too often Catholics postpone the call for priestly ministrations at the bedside until long after a proper and reasonable time and, then, when from a sudden fear, or a sudden change in the patient's condition, or the firm order of some belated relative, or the words of a new visitor or impatient neighbor, the conviction is forced home to the people's minds that the priest should be sent for, there is the greatest haste and the greatest appearance of urgency in the demand for attention.

As a result it often happens that the priest hurriedly prepares for the call and hastens forth, leaving his meal untouched or postponing some parish business, only to find upon arrival at the house of the patient that there was no real necessity for haste whatever. But no matter how often such an occurrence comes in to the life of the true priest, he will never fail to hasten when called upon. Full well he knows that haste is sometimes required to arrive in time.

Father S— had been busy all the week. His numerous extra-parochial duties had taken up his time, consumed his energies and deprived him of needed rest, while the parish duties in themselves were sufficient in that particular week to tire even a very vigorous man. Tired he was, but, in the full flush of manly vigor, he knew that his fatigue would soon wear away, that a day or two of easy labor would amply recuperate him. So on this particular morning, when he had made the round of parish sick calls and returned to the rectory, ready to stretch out in an easy chair before dinner, he was not unprepared for a disappointment in his expectations. In common with other busy men he had learned that the valued and looked-for hour ahead when one is to rest, is too frequently the very hour when all of one's energies are demanded for some new or unexpected strain.

The housekeeper told him there was an urgent call to the hospital. The good priest prepared at once for the call. He hastened to the hospital, which sheltered many patients. He was greeted at the door somewhat anxiously by the assistant superintendent, who told him that a Catholic patient had had a serious turn and desired the services of a priest. Father S— said a word or two in reply and went to the hospital ward where the patient lay. His face was blanched and his breathing rapid. The other patients evinced an interest in the proceedings. Father S— quickly prepared the man, hearing his confession in a very low tone, behind a bed screen, which was placed to shut out the view of the bed from the eyes of others. He then gave Holy Viaticum and anointed the sick man.

Before he had finished the sick man's breathing improved, his color came into his cheeks and the nurse and the doctor came forward, when Father S— came from behind the screen, the doctor's quick eye noted the improvement. With a motion of his hand, he indicated to Father S— that the latter should wait for a moment. The doctor quickly examined the patient, gave an order to the nurse and turned to the waiting priest.

"Why, he's rallied," said doctor, "and I think he'll be all right."

Father S— nodded and said a cheering word to the sick man, who beamed with pleasure and joy. As the good priest turned to leave the bedside, he noted the fixed gaze of a man two beds away. Hollow-eyed, pale, but with strangely lighted eyes, the man stared at the priest. Father S— walked towards him. The man's eyes turned away. The priest spoke.

"Well, my good man, do you wish to see me? Are you a Catholic?"

Not looking at the priest the man in bed said gently: "No, Father—I was, but I'm not now."

"Nonsense, my good man," said the priest earnestly, "if you were a Catholic once, you are now. The good God always thinks of the strays."

He sat down by the bedside. He urged the man to speak. And the man's story came, slowly.

He had been a wild young man, and had neglected home, position and religion. He had taken "to the road" from sheer love of adventure and the vagabond instinct. He had wandered through many States. Stricken with typhoid fever, he had lain in the hospital for weeks. But he was getting better now, and could feel his strength coming back day by day.

That was all, Father S— knew the love of "the road." It is the cause of many men leaving homes. They are tramps from a natural desire to wander about, to see new places, to meet adventure, to test the world. He knew now to deal with this stricken wayfarer. And gently he took up the matter of religion with the sick man. In twenty minutes the sick man had been shriven. His sins were told, his absolution granted. Then the priest wished to give him Extreme Unction, in addition to Viaticum. But the man demurred. He was getting better, he said. Why did he need anointing? He did not like the idea. That was for dying people. It made him afraid.

But again the patient, tactful priest won his stray sheep. It was better, he said, to receive these Sacraments. Extreme Unction did not imply death. Since the patient had yielded thus far in his reconciliation with God, why not yield to the confessor's advice?

And again the patient was won. Viaticum was administered and Extreme Unction followed. Gratefully the convalescent grasped the hand of the priest.

"I'll be in to see you, Father, just as soon as I am discharged from here," he said loudly and cheerfully, as the priest passed out.

Father S— arrived home. He carefully put away the sacred vessels, and said a short prayer and entered the dining room of the rectory, hungry, healthy, tired but satisfied. He had just seated himself, when the telephone bell rang, severely, strongly.

Wearily, he rose and answered the call. A voice, eager and hurried, said:

"This is from—Hospital. Please have a priest come at once."

Father S— said, confidently: "This is Father S—. I just left the hospital and attended to the man I was sent for to see."

"Please come, Father," said the voice. "There's a man very low."

"But isn't that the man I was prepared for before?" queried Father S—. "You know I was called behind a bed screen, which was placed to shut out the view of the bed from the eyes of others. He then gave Holy Viaticum and anointed the sick man."

Before he had finished the sick man's breathing improved, his color came into his cheeks and the nurse and the doctor came forward, when Father S— came from behind the screen, the doctor's quick eye noted the improvement. With a motion of his hand,

At the door he met the assistant superintendent, and the superintendent as well. Both were pale and frightened in appearance. "Oh, please hurry," urged the superintendent; "please, Father, hurry."

Father S— went up in the elevator. As he stepped out to enter Ward 7, the superintendent said: "There's been a terrible accident. A nurse gave a patient poison by mistake. We fear we cannot save him."

The priest and the official hurried into the ward. Around a bed were the house physician, and three nurses, one a terrified looking woman. As Father S— reached the bedside, the doctor stepped back and said: "Your too late, Father; he's gone."

Father S— looked at the dead man. It was the convalescent from typhoid he had left less than twenty minutes previously.

The good priest raised his hand to quiet the fears of those around the bed. And then said:

"Thank God, I know I am not too late."—By John G. Coyle, M. D.

A Feast Day Means Hard Work For The Missionary

It seems the natives of India consider Christmas the greatest feast of the year, and consequently the good Christians want to go to confession in order to celebrate the day worthily. It is not always easy for the priest to hear all his charges, scattered as they are in various villages.

Here is a sample of how one hardworked missionary spent the day before last Christmas. His name is Fr. Joseph Kesseler, B. F. M., and he labors in and around Valparaiso:

"I began hearing confessions at the mission post directly after early Mass, and kept at it until half past twelve. After a couple of hours rest I mounted my bicycle and was off to one of the outstations. I stayed there until dark, and although there were plenty of penitents still waiting I had to leave them and rush off to another community. By the time I had heard them there was not much time left for sleep, but I managed to snatch a little.

"The next day, Christmas, I had to say Mass in the three places, only in reverse order. The first Mass was celebrated long before daylight; with the coming of dawn I was on my wheel and dashing back to the second village, and at eight o'clock I was at home ready to give communion to my own flock. The two days and a night were somewhat strenuous.

"No one came to wish me a Merry Xmas, but I found at my door a long line of the poor, who expected double rations on account of the day. Happily I was able to give them more than the usual Sunday supply, and judging from their faces I succeeded in making them happy."

Weekly Church Calendar

Low Sunday.

Gospel, St. John xx., 19-31

S 11 St. Leo the Great, P. C. D.

M 12 St. Victor, M.

T 13 St. Hermenegild, M.

W 14 SS. Tiburtius & Valerian, M.M.

Th 15 St. Peter Gonzales, C.

F 16 St. Benedict Joseph Labre, C.

S 17 St. Anicetus, P. M.

Plan C. M. B. A. Initiation.

At a meeting of the Boosters Committee of the Rochester Advisory Council of the Catholic Mutual Benefit Association Wednesday night plans were made for a class initiation that will be held with Branch 238 of Blessed Sacrament parish on Thursday, May 27. At a meeting on Tuesday evening the committee signed contracts for the publication of a souvenir directory of Rochester members.

An American Archbishop Urges Greater Interest In Foreign Missions

On the occasion of the annual collection for Home and Foreign Missions, Archbishop Ireland addressed a pastoral to his people urging them to take a greater interest in Society of the Propagation of the Faith this year, on account of the distress to which the war has reduced the missions. The letter is here reproduced in part:

"The Catholic Church must not allow the pall of death to spread over its missions in healthful lands. Those missions are its glory; the evidence of its divinely-given universality. Somewhere and somehow there must be found a Catholic in Europe can do nothing; Catholics in large-hearted America will be the saviors of the Church in its missionary work.

"In America we are blest. No war shatters our cities or desolates our plains. Our harvests are plentiful; our industries thrive. Wars in other lands bring us even greater prosperity than might otherwise have been ours. Let us show our gratitude to Almighty God by returning to Him, in service to charity and religion, a generous portion of the gifts with which His bounty has endowed us.

"Nor must we forget that help from the Catholics of America to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith is not only an act of religion and of charity; it is, too, an act of strict justice. In the early days of its history, when its children were few and poor, the Church in America received munificent contributions from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. It was indebted to that Society for its life, for the foundations of the prosperity which later came to it. Indeed, the fact is not to be overlooked that the Society was first established in the City of Lyons, under the suggestion of the Bishop of New Orleans, with the express purpose of lending assistance to missions in the United States of America.

"So far, our debt to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith has been repaid only in a small part. Let us be more just towards it. The present day is the opportune time to remember its favors.

Anniversary of the L. C. B. A.

The silver anniversary of the incorporation of the Ladies' Catholic Benevolent Association was celebrated on Thursday and Friday. On Friday morning at 9.30 o'clock Rt. Rev. Thomas F. Hickey celebrated mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral for members of the organization.

On Thursday evening, a reception was held in the Hotel Seneca, in honor of visiting officers, among whom were Supreme President Kate Mahoney of Troy, Supreme Recorder Mrs. Joanna A. Royer of Erie, Supreme Treasurer Mrs. Mary Early of Brooklyn and supreme trustees.

Rochester has 24 branches of the L. C. B. A., with total membership of 4,900.

It is a pity that there exists in the South an un-Christian race prejudice against the negro and the possibility of his being educated and uplifted. Such a prejudice is found, however, and the missionary must first overcome it before he can make much progress with his work. Fr. Dabent, S. J., of Macon, Ga., says he has dispelled this dark cloud somewhat, and where a year ago he met with cold glances, he now receives a noisy welcome from the children and a friendly greeting from the grown-ups. The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament are coming to help him next year and they will be a blessing to the mission.

News From Ireland

The following have been re-elected officers of the Carlow Catholic Y. M. S.: President, Rev. P. Geary, administrator, Catholic; honorary secretaries, J. J. Duggan and S. Nolan; treasurer, M. Molloy, M. P.

The deaths have taken place of Nannie Parker, the Causeway, Ennis, relict of the late Farmer Parker of Tallow, and of Mrs. Catherine Blundell, widow of the late Matthew Blundell, Inland Revenue, Ennis.

A verdict of death from hemorrhage following injuries accidentally received by colliding with a cart while motorcycling on the night of the 12th ult. was returned recently at an inquest into the death of a Killesnoo resident, William Long, merchant. Deceased was 34 years of age.

The death took place March 1, 1915, at Convent of Mercy, Mater hospital, of Sister Mary Columbanus McEvoy.

The Fermanagh County Council have by a majority approved of the scheme put forward by Dr. Timoney, the tuberculosis medical officer, for the erection of a combined sanatorium and dispensary in Enniskillen.

Mrs. Mary Anne Brogden, Newbridge died suddenly a short time ago. At the subsequent inquest the jury delivered a verdict of death from heart disease.

George Ryan, a builder's laborer of Westgate, Limerick, was killed by a fall while engaged in dismantling a building known as the "Haunted House," situated by the side of the canal, to Dublin.

The late E. Bennett, managing director of Matterson's, Limerick, left estate valued at \$6,717.

At the last meeting of the Dundalk Urban Council J. J. McGahan, B. A., solicitor, was co-opted a member of the council for the South Ward, in room of Thomas Murphy, resigned.

At the Cathedral, Ballina, by the Rev. W. G. Greaney, C. C., Thomas Maah, son of Patrick Maah, blacksmith, Ballina, was married to Mary, daughter of the late John Raffar. Two-Mile-bridge, Ballina.

The late T. M. Grace, merchant, Oldcastle, who died intestate, left personal estate valued at \$18,720.

The only child of W. Maher, Co. C., Kneekagh, Templemore, died recently from the effects of accidental burning.

R. F. Purcell, Munster and Leitiner bank, Roscrea, has been promoted manager in Dunlavin, County Wicklow.

At a recent meeting of the carters and laborers of Dungannon was decided to establish a branch of the Workers' Union. Officers were elected and sixty members enrolled.

P. Moroney, of the Customs staff at Waterford, has been transferred to Limerick, and his departure will be a loss to the Waterford branch of the Gaelic League, of which he was an energetic member.

The death has taken place at his residence, Hopetown, Mullingar, of Patrick, eldest son of the late John Kieran.

The profession took place last month at All-Hallows Convent, Brisbane, of Miss May Keogh, daughter of John Keogh, Dunfermline, Wicklow. The ceremony was performed by the Archbishop of Brisbane. The young nun's name in religion is Sister Mary Michael.

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Catholic News

The new Bishop of Ballarat, Australia, has been appointed. He is Rev. James H. McKeown, who has served in the Diocese of Ballarat for many years.

A beautiful and costly marble statue of Our Lady was unveiled at the cathedral of St. Louis, Mo., on the 12th inst.

The Archbishop of Baltimore has appointed a commission to investigate the activities of the Society organized in every parish of the diocese.

At present, the Episcopal Conference numbers among its members two Cardinals, six Archbishops and 80 Bishops.

The exhibition in New York for the proposed model national shrine of the Immaculate Conception at the Catholic University, Washington, cost \$2,800.

Captain C. E. Fogarty, Catholic of Passaic, has been appointed Adjutant General, Tennessee.

The Bishop of Albany will probably begin the work of an episcopate at once this spring; the bishop's cathedral is deferred.

Rev. A. I. Townley, O. S. A., undertaking an apostolic mission for working boys in New York.

Four Japanese boys were taken to California to assist in the work at Los Angeles.

Out of 15,000 members of the Society of Jesus known in the world with foundations in the year 1863, 6,500 are engaged in various work.

The Panama Exposition Commission of Indiana has named Father Charles L. O'Donnell, S. C., of Notre Dame, as official composer and delivery official for Indiana, that State.

The Church in the United States loses on an average 100,000 souls a year and loses probably one church every day.

The new, completed and opened perhaps this week, the Alexius Hospital at St. Paul, N. Dak., cost about \$150,000. The parish has a population of 6,700.

In the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Baltimore, there was organized a Women's Association to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

The new Pinacoteca Gallery in the Vatican, opened in 1914, and to which over 150 works of art were brought from the Lateran Picture Gallery, is probably the point of superiority, the finest in the world.

It is asserted that the population of Ireland increased last year 5,000—the first increase in 25 years.

The first Bishopric in Mexico dates from 1525.

In Galicia, the Russians have converted Catholic churches into stables and their kneeling benches into horse mangers.

It is reported that nearly 300 priests and 100 religious have already died on the battlefields of Europe.