

BANDITS ROB PRIEST

Chicago — (NCWC) — The Rev. Lawrence Byrne, curate of Holy Cross Church, here, was robbed of \$308 by three armed bandits as he was about to enter the church. He had just drawn the money from a nearby bank. The bandits stepped out of an automobile and demanded the money while brandishing revolvers.

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Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Devotions

LET

'A THING
OF BEAUTY'

By REV. C. F. D. C. S. R.

(Editor's Note: The following article discussing the merits of the miraculous picture of Our Mother of Perpetual Help has been written exclusively for the Catholic Courier by a Redemptorist Professor at Woodstock Seminary in Canada. The article will be concluded in next week's issue.)

Is the Picture Ugly?

Varied has been the reaction to the old and well-known picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, ever since its restoration to public veneration in the year 1886. Sophisticated youngsters just out of college, their reams of erudition smelling of fresh paint, have sniffed defiantly at it. Their up-to-the-minute art courses had no room for it, it was bizarre, old-fashioned, primitive. Matron ladies of middle-age or thereabouts, tending to the ultra-modern in their religious beliefs have of course accepted it in a heap with the rest of their Catholicity, but really, it hardly deserves attention when one knows Picasso and Rivera and keeps up with Dreier and Stravinsky. Besides, there is that rebirth of ecclesiastical art in Europe, if one wants such things. Germany's radiator churches for example, with their novel Christs like crucified skeletons, or the Rhenish wine-bottle church in Spain, all of which are so new and different.

On the other hand learned professors of art have discussed and re-discussed the panel in S. Alfonso, Rome; and archaeologists have seen in it a new Byzantine type worthy of the highest praise. The reaction of ordinary Catholics is generally honest and straightforward: they cannot for the life of them understand why such a splendid and popular devotion should be centered on so strange and ugly a picture. The sincerity of this last class deserves that some attempt be made to answer their objection. And so this article will be chiefly concerned with answering the oft-repeated question—Is not the Picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help very strange and ugly?

"A Thing of Beauty"

To put it all very briefly it can be said at once that the Picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help now venerated in the church of St. Alphonsus in Rome is by no means ugly, but is when correctly understood, a thing

of real beauty, of high artistic value and worthy of much attention on archaeological grounds.

This of course must be demonstrated, but it such proves to be the case, the Picture will then have a new dignity and will command our attention on purely natural grounds. This conclusion will of course not overlook the fact that the chief claim to glory of the Picture is that it is a miraculous image of the Mother of God which has now for many years been the centre of devotion for millions of faithful Catholics. For the moment, however, this important fact will be left aside and the attention of the reader will be focused on the artistic and archaeological value of the picture, for it is in these spheres that the objection mentioned above presupposes the picture to be inferior.

In judging of the merit of a particular work of art, it is the formal element that must be principally considered. This it is that gives to the work its specific perfection. By the formal element is meant the idea that the artist puts into his art. A series of parallel lines in colour they would not be considered beautiful, for they would not express anything, they would only be material elements. But when it is said that the formal element must be the principal base of judgment, it is not the idea in the mind of the artist that is meant, but the idea as expressed and that shines out of the work, whether it be the glory of a sunset that veritably leaps from the canvas to captivate the beholder, or the dignity and grandeur, the heroism of the leader of the chosen people of God, that compels attention in Michelangelo's great statue of Moses.

Must Be Dignified

In a word, the idea must dominate the matter, it must not be obscured by it as is done in some works of the Cubist school of painters whose productions are literally "material"; the form is lost under a cloud of matter. In religious painting, the idea must be dignified and above all it must be in accord with Catholic doctrine. A religious painting, for example, that gave expression to a heresy would be supremely unworthy. That is why the Holy See forbids artists to represent the Holy Ghost under a human form; or why excessive sentimentality is out of place in religious art. Coming now to the Picture of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, we find these canons of judgment especially valuable. The idea of the artist is apparent on first glance—it is the Holy Mother of God sorrowing at the Vision her Divine Son is having of his future Passion.

This is a concept of great dignity and one that is found throughout all Catholic tradition: the reason of the sorrow of the Mother is the Passion of her Son. This, too, is a fundamental point in the understanding of the Picture, Our Lady of Perpetual Help is not a joyous Mother but a Mother of Sorrows. Many of the usual prints of the picture tend to denature this principal idea by making it a smiling, happy, pretty Mother. The title of the picture, "Perpetual Help" gives us the second important point about the idea of the image, it shows us the Mother associated with the Passion of her Son, and as it were "co-suffering" with Him and it is this fact that is at the bottom of the doctrine that Mary is Co-redemptrix with Christ. As she suffered with Him so she redeems with Him, and it is His will that the grace of the Redemption should come to men through her and this is why she can be called and painted as truly our Perpetual Help.

Again, there is no false sentimentality here, no flowers and smoke and bursting fireworks to clutter up the main idea and suggest to the faithful that religion is principally a thing of the emotions. There is sorrowful dignity without harshness and something about it all that convinces the beholder that truly this is the august Mother of God. There is a high seriousness about it that is redolent of the Fathers of the church and ancient Christianity just as there is a grandeur and the endless roll of centuries that lead to eternity, about Gregorian Chant, the official music of the church.

More Than Idea

In judging of a painting, however, one must seek more than just idea, there must be adequate expression of the idea. Here some knowledge of artistic technique is needed to judge correctly. It is the opinion of ever so many well known artists as quoted by Rev. C. Henze in his excellent work on this subject that this Picture is an extremely fine specimen of its type, portraying a technical mastery much beyond the ordinary. It has been said "to reveal superior artistic qualities" to "be one of the most famous masterpieces of its kind," "to be deserving of very careful study and attention." The reason for such opinions is

French Priest Says
Japan Girls Exert
Mission Influence

Father Yves Cassard, a representative of the Paris Foreign Mission Society of France who was the guest of Archbishop Mooney, a former Apostolic Delegate to Japan, spoke to Nazareth College students of the French department on February 16.

Father Cassard, who has served 14 years as Spiritual Director at the Seminary in Tokyo and is now on his way back after 8 months leave of absence, was introduced by the Rev. Patrick Cleary, M.M.

"The work of Saint Francis Xavier in Japan," said Father Cassard, "was practically undone by a persecution which exceeded even that of Nero in its cruelty." The Catholic population of the country was exterminated. No missionaries entered her borders for many years, until the United States succeeded in opening one of her ports to international commerce.

The first Church built after the return of missionaries was for Europeans. Some Japanese peasants came to see it through curiosity and told the priest that they were descendants of the first Christians in Japan. They had recognized the Catholic Church because it contained a statue of the Blessed Virgin.

Father Cassard stated that the aim of present-day missionary work in Japan is to Christianize the old civilization which has survived, so that the new civilization which is being developed can be adopted safely.

"Missionaries in Japan," said Father Cassard, "must show the people that their purpose is to help them christianize their own culture, to make them better Japanese, not to deprive them of their individuality."

If the conversion of the Japanese depended on the conversion of the women the missionaries would have a very easy task," continued the missionary. "Without the nuns who maintain large schools in which the daughters of the socially prominent Japanese are educated, the priests would be unable to reach that class of people. The girls are not always baptized Christians but their knowledge of Catholic faith makes them an important Christianizing influence because the Japanese girls are married without their consent, and live with the bridegroom's family. In Christ, the Japanese women see the symbol of their own lives of devotion and submission."

Father Cassard believes that the missionary above all others has obeyed the admonition to become as little children. He must begin life over again in a new country, learn a new language, practice new customs, and acquire an understanding of a foreign viewpoint.

Father Cassard closed his talk by asking the prayers of the student body for "Japan, the joy and hope of the missionary."

Turkistan Missionaries
Cut Off From World By
Blockade of Brigands

Cologne. — (NCWC) — The German Catholic mission station in Turkistan is completely cut off from the outside world, according to advices received here.

The priests who belong to the Society of the Divine Word have not been heard from for many months due to a blockade effected by bandits and insurgents.

that this picture is one of the best examples extant of revitalized Byzantine painting. It is by no means primitive art as some have said but belongs to the third period of Byzantine art, a period extending from about the XIVth to the XVth centuries, when Byzantine artistry achieved its climax after awakening for a new and superior renaissance. Byzantium (Constantinople) which gave its name to the school of painting to which the Perpetual Help belongs, had been for centuries an important centre of culture and learning in the East and it is this apex of Eastern artistic culture that is reflected in so many works of art of exceptional merit and amongst these our Picture has admittedly a very important place.

From the internal evidence of the Picture itself it is clear that the painter responsible for it was an artist of genius, but it is impossible now to say with certainty just who was the author. There is much probability for the opinion that Andrew Rizo of Crete was the artist.

Over and above details of technical mastery the picture is very valuable archaeologically, for besides dating back to at least the XVth century (making it some five hundred years old) there is much evidence pointing to it as being the original of a long series of Byzantine Madonnas which express a new idea in Christian iconography, i. e., the Christ Child frightened at the Vision of future suffering, although this evidence is not entirely conclusive it at least shows the Mother of Perpetual Help to be one of the best examples of this new type. Moreover there are many marks of resemblance between this picture and the famous old painting of Mary called the Hodegetria and attributed to St. Luke the Evangelist. This latter painting destroyed in 1453 by the Turks was considered as the Mother of all the pictures of Mary and our picture can be truly called a daughter of this ancient type due especially to the striking resemblance between them.

(To Be Continued)

FLOWER SHOW -
TICKET SALE
NOW UNDERWAY

The sale of Advance Tickets for the National Flower and Garden Show which comes to Edgemoor Park, Rochester, April 14 to 22, got off to a flying start February 11. By the first of March 75,000 more of these tickets will have been distributed to fraternal organizations, business houses and other groups in Rochester and throughout Western New York territory. It is confidently expected that the entire 100,000 tickets will be sold by April 12, the closing date of the sale. The price of the Advance Tickets is 35 cents or a book of eleven tickets for \$3.50. After the closing date of the Advance Ticket Sale the price of admission will be 50 cents plus a 5-cent tax.

The sale is being handled by a committee of 57 prominent men and women in Rochester with Archbishop-Bishop Edward J. Mooney representing the Catholic Diocese of Rochester. Over 300 men and women, representatives of every field of civic endeavor, are actively engaged in various forms of committee work in connection with the show.

"The outlook for the show's success is most promising," said John Roche, vice-chairman of the Advance Ticket Sale Committee. "Each day it becomes more definitely apparent that this great display will be the finest floricultural and horticultural exhibition in history. Tickets are now available at the National Flower & Garden Show Headquarters in the Seneca Arcade."

Mercy Flower Guild
Plans March 13 Meeting

Auburn. — In grim defiance of the sub-zero weather, a large number of members attended the meeting of the Flower Guild of Mercy Hospital held last week at Hotel Osborne. Important business for the ensuing year was discussed under the direction of Miss Laura Falley, chairman of the session. The next meeting will be held Tuesday evening, March 13, at Hotel Osborne.

The Misses Helen Ganley and Marie McGeever were awarded the prizes for the month. Miss Gertrude Kennedy will be in charge of the next meeting of the Guild. Miss Geraldine Lower heads the committee this month in arranging for the flowers at the Mercy Hospital.

BECOMES CHAPLAIN

Quebec. — (NCWC) — The Rt. Rev. Charles Henry Paquet, who has been stationed at Putnam, Conn., for several years, has been named chaplain of the St. Francis of Assisi Hospital here.

New Holy Name Group
Composed of Boxers

Chicago. — (NCWC) — An unusual Holy Name branch, composed entirely of amateur and professional Catholic boxers, has been formed at the Catholic Youth Organization Center, the Rev. L. F. Kroeck, director of the C.Y.O., has announced. Obligations of members include weekly recitations of the Rosary, the Mass and an hour's devotion of the Blessed Sacrament each week at the Church of Holy Names. The branch has an initial membership of 30 young men, most of whom are professional boxers.

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