

No Place To Play

'ALONG THE WAY'
By Rev. Daniel A. Lord, S.O.

Across from the room I am occupying in our New York Jesuit house is an enormous apartment building, of the semi-expensive class. It is equipped with Venetian blinds, radios that blare all hours of the night, and a well-mannered lot of people who keep their affairs much to themselves.

But as I look out my window at any time during the course of the day, I see in the apartment opposite a youngster of perhaps four years. All day long she sits in that window, looking out. For a bit I thought she might be a cripple. But she jumped up and ran back into the room on one occasion, and the other went back and returned with a large and expensive looking toy elephant.

So she's no cripple, and her parents no doubt are persuaded that she is being given the best of homes. Yet she sits all day in the window just looking out into space. Not a sign of green growing things meets her gaze this lovely spring day. She has no place to play. For to one she does not know the name of a single child in that enormous apartment building, and that enormous apartment building has another child.

What sort of a human being will she grow up to be? I wonder if anyone has tried to write the story of an apartment-bred child in a big city. Who can say what goes on back of the eyes of that little girl as she sits looking out the window at blank walls and cement courts?

MYSTERIES FOR MAIDENS

The mystery story is not confined to your detective-fiction story and mine. It has invaded the field of the juvenile. And your son and your daughter can find mystery and romance and danger and happy solutions in a dozen series by a dozen different authors.

But Catholic writers of this sort of thing are rare enough. That's why we welcome "The Secret of the Bookshop," a second thriller from Francis Y. Young is bringing out through the Catholic Library Service of St. Paul, Minn. For fifty cents, your children can have their mystery with a bit of Catholic atmosphere, and their danger with its happy solution.

JUST TOO VIVID

The modern teacher of catechism has his (or more frequently her) own problem. Especially if she happens to be teaching a class that is mechanistic minded or at least is.

Before she could catch her breath, his big brother intervened: "Shut up, you dumb egg. Of course the Holy Ghost didn't come down in a parachute. How do you think He'd have got up again?"

It was all very puzzling, and the catechism teacher wished she had taught back in the days before modern minds were full of modern miracles that don't help a bit to explain the miracles of ancient days.

SLOT MACHINES

Write a young mother: "Could you do something in the near future, say something on the subject of squandering money on slot machines?"

"As we drove along a trip, we stopped at several towns, and not a place did we enter, but two or three young men were glued to the slot machines. They were the kind that couldn't afford to put money into those one armed bandits. They were the same type of men, never thinking of giving a place to the collection box. Yet they pour their loose change into the absolutely unbeatable racket machines. Why, oh, why."

How tough it will be for the makers of gambling machines if young America ever develops complete sense. Will it? Where gambling is concerned, that's asking a lot.

LET IT STAND

Hastily I transferred my hand scribbled notes for a lecture on "Paganism in Modern Literature" on the typewriter. As a subheading, I noted, and as I thought, copied, Oscar Wilde and his following.

During the lecture, I glanced down at my notes and almost burst out laughing as I saw what I had, by a slip of the typewriter, written: "Oscar Wilde and his following."

Feast Days

Sunday, May 1—ST. PHILIP AND JAMES, APOSTLES.
Monday, May 2—ST. ANTHONY, BISHOP.
Tuesday, May 3—THE DISCOVERY OF THE HOLY CROSS.
Wednesday, May 4—ST. MONICA, THE MOTHER OF AUGUSTINE.
Thursday, May 5—ST. PIUS V.
Friday, May 6—ST. JOHN BAPTIST.
Saturday, May 7—ST. PETER, LAUS, BISHOP OF CRACOW.

DON'T LET HIM FORCE A DETOUR!



But What Is 'Politics'?

Sursum Corda

By REV. JAMES M. GILLIS, C.S.P., Editor, The Catholic World

Emperor Adolf the First reassures a frightened woman with the promise that Catholic priests will not be persecuted in Austria provided they stick to religion and avoid "politics."

Good! But what is politics? Let us see.

A priest receives a pastoral letter from his Bishop, with the usual reminder "to be read at all the Masses in every Church." The local Nazi newspaper warns all priests that the Bishop's letter must not be read. The priest reads it, explaining to the congregation that he takes his orders from his Bishop and not from the newspapers.

Now is that "politics." Evidently yes, for the good pastor is clapped into jail and remains there for six months.

Again, a priest, in the pulpit, by way of reminding a people of the words from the mind of Leo XIII on the "Christian Constitution of States" the following familiar passage: "The Almighty has placed in the hands of the Pope the power of the keys, the ecclesiastical and the civil, one being set over the other, and the other over human things in its kind is supreme, each has fixed limits within which it is contained."

Is that a political utterance? The Holy Father himself considered it as only a paraphrase of the text "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." But to the suspicious and sensitive Nazi mind the very reading of that passage is "politics." And into jail the priest again must go. In fact he may go to jail so often that he may stay so long that his people will be deprived of the Sacraments almost all the time. I have seen a news report to the effect that one pastor was jailed eight times. There is method in the madness of the Nazis.

READING SCRIPTURE

But perhaps the phrase "Papal Encyclical" is a red rag to the Germanic bull. The priest then alludes to the Scriptures. He alludes to a text: "We must obey God rather than man." That is as far as he gets. A couple of brown-shirted Nazis stalk up the aisle, yank him out of the pulpit and again he is missing from the sight of men for six months. Perhaps forever.

What, then, may not a preacher quote the Scriptures? Is the Scripture politics? It is if Goebbels says so. Who is Goebbels? Christ, I know, and the Pope I know, but who is Goebbels? Goebbels is the official theological censor who draws the line of distinction between religion and politics. If Goebbels says that a text or a sermon is politics, then it is politics. Goebbels locutus est causa finita est.

Together with Goebbels there is Rosenberg. It is he who hopes to reintroduce heathenism into Germany. I know a priest who was called from Germany for defending the Christian religion against the attacks of Rosenberg. A pagan politician may enter the field of theology, but if an ordained priest answers him, the priest becomes, by that very fact, a "politician."

EVEN CHOPPING BLOCK

Take another sort of case. The parochial school being abolished, a pastor announces for the children a special Mass at 8 o'clock, to be followed by instruction in the catechism. The local leader of the Hitler-Jugend summons all the children, boys and girls, for a hike on Sunday morning at nine. The pastor protests that this politics. Where then politics, it is conspiracy against the welfare of the German people. Conspiracy, obnoxious, recalcitrant. The good father will be lucky if they don't call it treason. Treason calls for the chopping block in the most advanced and most enlightened of modern states.

On page 86 of Mein Kampf, Hitler says: "The appearance of Christianity brought into the much freer ancient world the first spiritual terror. Since then the

world has suffered and been dominated by this compulsion." Let us suppose that a Catholic professor announces a series of lectures in reply to that curious interpretation of history. He proposes to build his argument upon one of the greatest historical works ever written, *Indiditum und Judentum*, by the illustrious German scholar of a generation ago, Dollinger. Will the professor be permitted to deliver that course of lectures? Or even one of them? Will he even be allowed to explain that Dollinger is an authority on pre-Christian paganism and that his description of the manners and morals of the pagans would make an illuminating commentary upon Hitler's idea of pagan "freedom?"

The question need not be answered. The lectures will not be given. To deliver them, or even to announce them, would be "politics."

Also in Mein Kampf, p. 127, Hitler says, "religion is not to be mixed up with party political humbug." Yes, but what is "political humbug?" Was the Center Party political humbug? Of course Hitler said that Party in mind. If a priest were as much as to say "I wish we had the Center Party back again," off to jail he would go.

In fact, the jail is the first and last argument in Hitler's Reich. It is like "the biggest ready-made jail" in the world. You must not doubt the Fuehrer. You must not question the least of his utterances. Nor those of his henchmen. If Rosenberg tells you that Wotan is a better God than Jesus Christ, you must not contradict him. If, your action will be evidence that you have ventured into the political field and the doors of the jail will yawn for you.

Consider another feature of the Hitlerian persecution. When Father Mayer, who was born in Austria, was arrested in Germany, the papers in Italy commented upon the arrest. The papers were immediately confiscated. Evidently the Duke and the Fuehrer were acting in concert. Only the Pope's official newspaper, *Osservatore Romano*, protested.

But perhaps the best definition of what is and what is not politics in Hitler's new empire is to be seen from an incident preceding the plebiscite. I mean of course the genuine, truly democratic plebiscite. Here are the facts: On the morning of the plebiscite, the Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna and the Protestant ministers instructed their people to vote "Ja." Was that politics? Certainly not. But if the Cardinal and the Protestant ministers had instructed their people to vote "Nein," would that have been politics? Politics it would have been. Death!

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The Question Box

Q.—Why do people light candles at the altars and shrines of the saints found in our churches?

A.—Candles are symbols of faith, the light which guides man through life into eternity. They are also symbols of love, the love we owe and give to God and our neighbor. Burning candles are a sacrifice, consumed, giving their lives to God.

Q.—Is obedience to the Church a necessary quality in members who would be worthy of her?

A.—Obedience toward the Church is necessary. The reason is simply that the Church is the faithful interpreter of God's commands. The Church carries on Christ's work upon earth. In matters, accordingly, that pertain to salvation, the faithful must obey the Church as they would obey God.

Big City 'Shrines'

'LIBRARY SIGNPOST'

NEW YORK PILGRIMAGE
I have just come back from a pilgrimage I don't think I can call my Easter week trip anything less than that. Of course, New York City is hardly a shrine of pilgrimage to most people. But it can be to those who know where to go.

There are two places where I go as a pilgrim in New York. One is the "old-law" tenement Catholic Worker and its building on West St., which houses Christian beggars; the other is the Plunkett School in theurgical Music in downtown Manhattan, beyond 128th St. on the west side.

In both these places I can renew my soul in no other place in this part of the world. They both represent in their kind the spirit of Christianity. One comes as close as it is possible to the spirit of the early Christians.

Both of them are working with and for the poor. Both of them have a woman at their head. At the Plunkett School, Mother Stevens of the Madonna of the Sacred Heart gives a free education to girls of the neighborhood, most of them from poor families, and they in turn offer themselves as volunteers for a sacred choir which is conducted by all literate and by the many great musicians who have heard it, to be the finest liturgical choir in America. If these girls had taken the ordinary education of their sisters and neighbors, there would be nothing about them to distinguish them from the crowd; they are just ordinary people from ordinary families. But under the tutelage of Mother Stevens and the powerful influence of their close contact with the life of the church in the liturgy, these girls are given a peace and grace and power that is not of this world. Because they are laboring hard to create beauty for God, God gives them a beauty of soul which is unique among modern girls. Not one of them gives the socially canon measure up to the spiritual aristocracy of this remarkable group.

One feels like a pilgrim when he goes to Plunkett School. It is a solemn workshop for the beauty of liturgical worship. Carefully and lovingly the sacred texts of Holy Mass and Vespers are studied, the ethereal melodies of the chant are learned, the innocent voices are moulded to perfection of tone. Out of all this comes a participation in High Mass and the Mass which fulfills the best hopes of Plunkett when he began his great liturgical reform at the beginning of our century. It was his desire that the faithful should "pray in beauty." But he had a notion of the earthy, but of heaven, and that is just what people say when they are at High Mass or Vespers in which the Plunkett Choir sings. It is heavenly.

And so it is heavenly at the Catholic Worker quarters, despite all the squalor and poverty of the neighborhood. You step into the other world when you pass across their doorstep into the serene peace of their humble rooms. Someone has said it is like stepping into the "Acts of the Apostles." And indeed it all presides the woman who brought it into being, Dorothy Day, who left Communism to follow out literally the Christianity of the apostles and martyrs.

When one makes the pilgrimage to the Catholic Worker, he means to pass through narrow streets crowded to suffocation with a motley multitude of Italians and Jews and Chinamen, among a mass of boxes and barrels and cardboard, cast-off garbage, hanging clothes and peering faces overhead, and an indescribable composite odor of garlic and cheese and stale smoke. It is just the kind of place where one might expect to meet Jesus Christ. Here are the "least of his brethren," and in such a place He is easily found.

Poor with the poor, hungry with the hungry, Dorothy Day and her associates are doing the work of mercy for the world's cast-offs and derelicts. In the early morning they serve a bread line of hundreds with hot coffee and buttered bread; and during the day they serve about seventy people with substantial hot meals. I saw some of those people: poor, haggard, forlorn, left out in the cold by fellow-men and coming here to warm themselves at this fire of Christian charity. They are called "the ambassadors of God" by the Catholic Workers.

And there is hospitality and lodging for those who need it, scores of them who have no other friendly place to lay their weary heads. If necessary, the Workers give up their beds and sleep on sofas or on the floor. They have grown a little bit used to bedbugs, but not enough to say they don't notice them any more. Miss Day says, "When you live in the slums you are going to get rats and bedbugs; the Catholic Worker is in the slums and the people who come to it are going to find rats and bedbugs. If you want to get to the very poor and outcast, you've got to put up with that."

So there you are, Christ's chosen souls, doing the hardest of hard work, making real Christians out of themselves to help the neediest of their fellowmen, and doing it with such a spirit of gladness and joy that one must bow one's head in shame, remembering how little one does for Christ with what a niggardly spirit.

Fr. Benedict Ekmann.

Godless Communism Queries and Replies For Discussion Clubs

CHAPTER VIII

Marxian communism is essentially atheistic and therefore the communist must necessarily be an enemy of religion. He realizes that his most important and strongest adversary is the Catholic Church, for the Church has built up our civilization on the solid foundation of love for God and man.

When man becomes atheistic he tends to forget the principles of brotherly love that must necessarily follow the love for God, and he threatens to destroy the beautiful structure that is our Christian civilization. To preserve our civilization we must protect our religion by following solid principles of action to meet the perils of Godless communism.

1. What are some of the solid principles of action which our Holy Father has given to us to meet the perils of Godless communism?

A. Our Holy Father in his timely encyclicals has stressed that there should be: (a) unity in action to fight our foe, (b) justice for all mankind, (c) prayer and penance (d) Christian life and charity; (e) discussion study clubs.

2. Why should all believers in God and in Christ take part in this fight against communism?

A. This question is best answered in the words of our Holy Father. He said, "belief in God is the unshakable foundation of all social order and of all responsibility on earth. It follows therefore that all those who do not want anarchy and terrorism ought to take energetic steps to prevent the enemies of religion from attaining the goal they have so brazenly proclaimed to the world."

3. How will social justice impede the spread of communism?

A. Because some men have been selfish and greedy, wealth has been concentrated in the hands of the few. As a result, communism, which has the promise of an abolition of private property, has an alluring appeal for the hungry and discouraged. If there

was a more equitable distribution of wealth, as the Catholic Church advocates, there would be less poverty and more peace in the world. Atheistic communism would then lose its strongest means of acquiring converts to its cause.

4. What part do prayer and penance play in our struggle with the communist enemy?

A. Since his fall, Satan has tried every means to vanquish God. Atheistic communism is his latest and most diabolical attempt. By means of our prayers and sacrifices we will obtain from heaven the aid and love of the Church. In this present struggle Our Holy Father asks us to "improve also the powerful intercession of the Immaculate Virgin who, having crushed the head of the serpent of old, remains the sure protection and invincible help of Christians."

5. Can Christian life and charity prove a remedy?

A. By living a good Christian life we are strengthened in our fight for the world and are not fall victims of those errors of the world which make men selfish and unmindful of the sufferings of the oppressed. Our charity to the poor and unfortunate will make them realize that the Church loves all her children and does not care who has been falsely accused, stand on the side of the exploiters of labor.

6. How will discussion clubs help Catholic Action?

A. In order to refute the keen, well trained communist, who is doing so much harm about us today, our Holy Father wants us to form discussion clubs and to make it a chief aim to train members with special care and to prepare them to fight the battles of the Lord. St. James the Apostle said: "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." A member of a discussion club can, by good example and truthful arguments win to his side those who might be misled by the deceitful promises of the communist.

Open Letter Answered Diocesan Recordings

The Recorder, The Catholic Courier.

May I suggest that you read again this time thoroughly and carefully my review of Peter Merin's book, "Spain Between Death and Birth," which appeared on page 12, The Democrat and Chronicle's Sunday Magazine for April 17?

To begin with, you have completely misinterpreted my review. Merin's book is a review of the book "Spain Between Death and Birth" which appeared on page 12, The Democrat and Chronicle's Sunday Magazine for April 17.

You say in your letter you were surprised that I conscientiously pictured the book as I read it. Anyone privileged to review books must first of all be fair to the author and to the general reading public. Anyone who performs the task conscientiously and honestly should be praised, not criticized.

That I believe, is exactly what I did with Merin's "Spain Between Death and Birth." At no point did I attempt to editorialize or give personal feelings. Believe me, to the best of my ability I was fair and objective. I tried to convey its spirit and the sentiments of its author as indicated therein. Your letter, I am told, might better have been addressed to Merin.

Having followed as closely as anyone in Rochester the Catholic version of the Spanish War, as reported in the pages of your own publication, and being in position to see daily the news dispatches of three wire services, I resent your implication that I am unwelcome information. Catholic or otherwise, available on the Spanish conflict.

I mentioned in the review at some length that Merin's version of the difference between Franco and the Nationalists, Francisco Caballero, was a considerable one from the accounts of unbiased news services have given American readers. But you seem to have overlooked that.

You will laugh, as I did, when I tell you that a Leninist sympathizer in Rochester has already taken me to task for the review and accused me of pro-Franco leanings. Certainly one of you must be mistaken.

I wrote about no "heroes" of the constitutional government. Merin did and I quoted him. My conclusions, my personal sentiments and sympathies, I believe, closely approximate your own with regard to Franco, the blessing he receives from Rome, the war and the February, 1938 election. Merin may have challenged me; I simply quoted him. In your letter, you employ an old political trick, giving merely those quotes or parts of quotes which strengthen your argument, no matter how distorted they change their original connotation. For instance, I said that Merin frequently used the method of "damning with faint praise" regarding Franco and others, but

you made no mention of that when you challenged the later statement. With the same aim with which he attacks Franco but with more foundation, he castigates the Catholic religious orders in Spain. Because Merin

The remark in your letter "My Merin" rises me never "My Merin" merely "Peter Merin" embittered romanticist and writer, undistinguishable from Nationalist.

As a layman writing in a Catholic weekly you should be sufficiently familiar with the history of your Church in Europe to know that its human element has not always been without talent, often in the affairs of state which were none of its concern. Such conditions in Spain "draw a veil" not from me, but from Merin.

One of the points opened the Vatican library revealing some not-to-be-exemplary history is now being better than to seek to hide the faults of its members. Merin's doctrine is that because Merin says this human element was at fault in Spain, he does not impeach the Church, and quoting him, neither do I. That point, I am sure, would cause neither Merin nor any of his statements historically correct.

Give Merin credit for knowing the Spanish condition, if only the loyalist side of it. He has been long in Spain and in the trenches and his observations, wrong though they may be, are at least the result of actual contact, not simply the outgrowth of Soviet propaganda.

With a single exception "fascist," "rebel," "traitor" and "surgeon" were quoted in my review showing them to be Merin's words as they were mine. Frankly, you are "all wet" when you "appreciate in my position I am called upon to write such reviews." Of a number of books, without any of the ridiculous criticism at which you hint and entirely of my own volition, I selected Merin's to review because it interested me. I might have chosen any other from a number of publishers and my review would have been no more altered than was that of the Merin work.

I believe in Catholic Action, that eternal vigilance is truly the price of peace, that nothing may be too minute to overlook, but I find "going off" at every fanciful, unintended slight by over-belligerent Catholics like yourself may leave the Church sadly in need of support in time of real crisis. I differ with you on the point that the review follows the lines of the type of propaganda that is being strongly protested by informed Catholics. It is no sense propaganda. I said the book was well-written. I said Merin's "prose has the rhythm and the beauty of verse, and at times a razor edge." I indicated that it was fluent, soul-stirring, powerfully, beautifully written with great verbal variety. I said so.

I might likewise pay compliments to the literary talent of Boccaccio. Because the Church has seen fit to ban his Decamerone does not lessen the fact that it contains passages of literary greatness. The same is true of Merin's book. Because I say that "the man is a gifted writer and

(Continued on Page 7)