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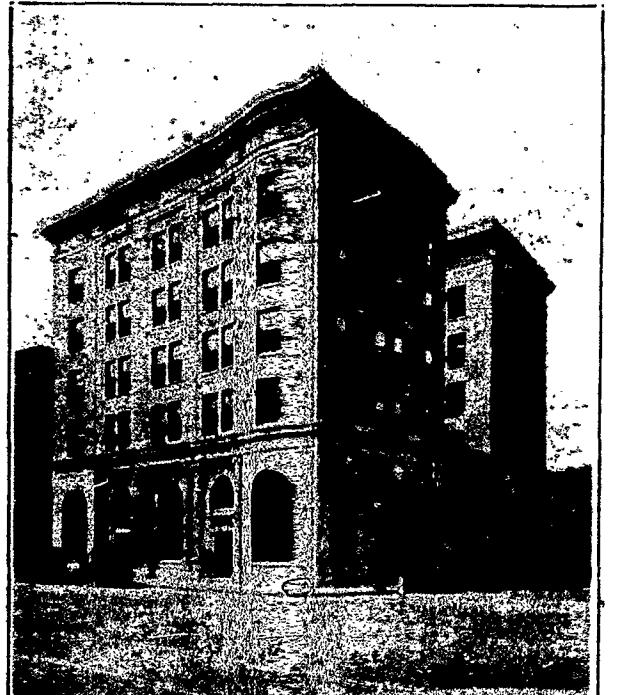
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EASTER IN ROME

By PHILIP M. HANNAN
 (Written for N.G.W.C. Easter Supplement)

Easter is not an isolated feast; it is a culmination, a climax, and to understand the grand ceremony in St. Peter's on Easter we must begin with a notice on the Roman custom of "station" churches. The "station" church was the church at which the Pope, assisted by his titular priests and the faithful, celebrated the liturgy of the great fast days; the custom is preserved though the Pope no longer celebrates each day. Every day of Lent has its station church, each day adding its part to the great climax on Easter with the station at St. Peter's and with the Pope present. But first a word about the proximate preparation for Easter and Holy Week.

Holy Week begins with a custom inaugurated by St. Philip Neri and common in Rome, but honored by the North American College on Monday of Holy Week: the Seven Churches Walk. A plenary indulgence is granted for visiting the churches of St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Sebastian, the Holy Cross, St. Mary Major, St. John Lateran and St. Laurence; the route measures about ten or twelve miles of Roman cobblestones and is followed with no special services until Wednesday afternoon, a kindness of Providence that enables the uninitiated to recover from "cobblestone feet" Tuesday on Wednesday.

Tenebrae is sung on Wednesday afternoon, like a dialogue to the great drama that begins the next day. The ceremonies of Holy Thursday are carried out with great solemnity in the church attached to the college, the chapel donated centuries ago by the princely Colonna family being used for the repository. This is the single day of the year that the college church, famous for its masterpiece of the Blessed Mother by Guido Reni, is open to the public; the church is a national monument.

But all the students do not assist at the ceremonies in the college church; somewhat like the 72 disciples, many are sent out to assist at various churches and an American accent can be heard intoning the sacred liturgy at Saint Andrew's (chapel for the royal police), at Saint Susanna, the American national church, Saint Cecilia's and many other famous places. Those who do not assist at these outside churches can attend the final part of the services at St. John Lateran, the station church of the day and enjoy the sacred pageantry of a ceremony that dates back to the primitive church.

The ceremony the great relics presented there, the table of the Last Supper, relics of St. Peter and St. Paul, and part of the Holy Sponge are exhibited. We shall also see there the grand Penitential, the staves of Longinus, the long rod the heads of those who wish to undergo this humiliation and indulgence of 100 days is granted.

Washing of Papal Altars
 In the afternoon one usually hurries over to Saint Peter's to see the washing of the papal altars. Seven crystal vases and one of golden metal are filled with aromatic water. The officiating priest steps and pours wine on the altar then everyone in the procession with large brushes of palm or shaved wood helps dry the altar. Afterward the brushes are thrown away. The crowd and a few always end up as ornaments in some room of the North American College. The famous relics preserved in the Basilica the spear of Longinus, the veil of Veronica, and relics of the Passion are exhibited. After this the one hundred and twenty-two lamps around the confession of St. Peter are extinguished and the great Basilica becomes like a cavernous tomb. The custom of visiting repositories prevails in Rome; flowers are plentiful and marvelous effects are achieved by making carpets of flowers or hanging them like a compacted rainbow.

Good Friday is especially impressive in Rome because of the many relics of the Passion preserved there. After the ceremony in the college church we return to the Church of the Holy Cross in the station church of the day in the celebration of this solemn day, even ancient Rome must bow to a great antiquity. At almost the same hour liturgy is taken over from that employed in Jerusalem at the church built on Mt. Calvary. After the Mass of the Presentment the faithful are distinguished by relics of the Passion. Thorns, nails and a large portion of the Cross, including the part containing the inscription. After this we go to the Scala Sancta (Holy Stairs) near St. John Lateran. Tradition tells us that these are the stairs of Pilate's Praetorium upon which the King of Kings walked to be judged guilty of treason. One must ascend the marble stairs, covered with wood, on one's knees. At the top of the steps is an exposed crucifix which the faithful kiss. Two guards are stationed near it to prevent any lengthy embracing of the crucifix and the precaution is never in vain; in fact, one wonders why they place only two on guard. A plenary indulgence is granted for this devotion.

In the afternoon one can attend the Stations of the Cross in the Colosseum, but later we return to the Church of the Holy Cross for there is a procession in which the relic of the Cross is carried and then used to bless the congregation. Real courage and strength are needed here for the words of Scripture, "the door is strait" certainly applies to the entrance to the church and the zeal of the natives is infinite.

Great Bells Ring Out
 After the conclusion of the solemn ceremonies on Holy Saturday, at about eleven o'clock, the large bells in St. Peter's ring out like a great Exultet, announcing the feast of Easter. In the afternoon few students go to Saint Michael's in Telemio to attend the first Mass of Easter celebrated, according to the Armenian rite, at five o'clock in the afternoon. Easter is the most magnificent

Pope Pius XII Wears His Triple Crown



Reflections At Easter

It is Easter! Holy Mother Church has laid aside the purple of the Lenten time and has put on the loveliness of this joyous Easter season. Vestments of spotless white, tall stately mitres, symbols of purity, joyous Alleluias, all proclaim the glory of the Resurrection.

Mother Nature has shed her somber garb of winter and has come forth resplendent in all the loveliness of spring. Tiny growing things have pushed their way through the earth and stand straight and tall with their lovely flowered faces turned upward toward the sun. Everywhere is rejoiced the glory of the Springtime. Skimurch, thrushes and robins who have followed the footsteps of the Christ, up the rugged pathway of the Cross who have stood with

even the office of the prince minister at the throne recalls the days of our triumphant triumph. But these are not the only elements of the universal domain of Christ's Vicar, for in the procession are the canons from all the basilicas, superiors of the religious orders, bishops from every land and of many a Rite. Finally, in front of the sedia gestatoria on which the Holy Father is carried, come the Cardinals. We need not look to find the Pope, for his progress down the aisle is marked by tremendous demonstrations from the devout and loyal faithful who seem to buy him and carry him along the crest of their enthusiasm. Occasionally he may pause opposite a pilgrimage from a land that is bearing the burden of persecution to impart a special blessing. Thus he proceeds down to the papal throne erected in the apse directly under the giant reliquary containing the chair of St. Peter.

'LIVING STATION' PRESENTED AGAIN BY PARISHIONERS

CHICAGO—Corpus Christi parish right now is in the midst of its second annual season of "The Living Stations."

When the Franciscan Fathers took over the parish early in this decade they found themselves among literally swarms of Negroes. Father David Footman is a practical psychologist and he had to stir for drama. It was inevitable that his thoughts should take a pattern something like this: Our task here is to convert many people who are undeveloped mentally. On best appeal to such through the senses. That is why the early Church adopted the use of pictures and statues and music, hence "Miracle Plays" and "Moralities" came into being for this purpose the "poor little man of Asia" built the first Christmas crib. With us Franciscans The Way of the Cross is a preferred devotion. Is there no suitable way to dramatize and the import of the Way of the Cross can be emphasized to these people?

"The Living Stations" are the outcome of these reflections.

At the appointed hour a priest comes into the sanctuary, recites the usual prayers and, while the congregation sings verses of the "Stabat Mater," starts his conventional hour of the church. When he reaches the first Station another priest in the pulpit reads an account of Christ's appearance before Pilate. As he reads various characters move into the sanctuary and pantomime the episode. Narration and tableau are synchronized so that the first actors make their entrance when the reading starts and the last their exit when it stops. When the narration is finished the first priest and the congregation recite appropriate prayers, at the end of which the second priest in the pulpit commences his story of the second episode. Thus the same scene is dramatized with prayers through the fourteen Stations.

What is the effect? Well a beautiful church normally inspires high thoughts. Being words powerfully sway the mind and heart. But here one is stirred less by glorious windows glistening marble and phrases than by the gripping pageant. An innate representation strikes harder than inanimate. The sacred theme is unfolded in a hushed-holding silence. Good Friday's tragedy is portrayed in an order that focuses attention on the scenes, stimulates introspection and fortifies resolve. Finally one is touched by the simple reverent performance of the cast.

It is interesting to know there are no professionals in the group. All are members of the parish. Some made their own costumes.

Requests for copies of the script and stage directions are coming from places throughout the United States even from far-off India.

Los Angeles Planning Honors For De Valera

LOS ANGELES—Honors reserved for the heads of sovereign states will be conferred upon Eamon de Valera when he attends Solemn Mass in the Cathedral of St. Vibiana in the course of his visit to this city, where he is scheduled to arrive June 2. The Most Rev. John J. Cantwell, Archbishop of Los Angeles, will preside at the ceremonies.

Mr. De Valera will be guest at a public banquet under the auspices of a Citizens Committee appointed by Mayor Fletcher Bowron and headed by Joseph Scott. He will address a public meeting in the Hollywood Bowl.

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