

NEWS and FEATURES

CONVENT LIFE EXPLAINED COLLEGE SYMPOSIUM

Catholic Collegiate Symposium Assails Youth Congress

BUFFALO (N.C.)—Criticizing the opinions expressed recently by the American Youth Congress in Washington, students of seven distinct Catholic colleges attended the tenth annual Catholic Collegiate Symposium here. Speakers expressed the opinion that the American Youth Congress was not representative nor characteristic and even misrepresented the "normal intelligent element of American youth." The subject of the Symposium was "The Dimensions of Democracy."

This year it was presented as a panel discussion led by the Rev. Francis P. LeBuffe, S. J., of Fordham University well known author and lecturer.

John J. Murphy of Canisius College, chairman, spoke of the necessity for Catholic youth to learn the principles of American Democracy. "One very urgent motive for Catholic youth to learn more about the form of government under which we live is that the Bishops on several occasions have pleaded with Catholics to study and discuss the principles of Christian democracy."

"Another very interesting fact was publicized recently when much newspaper space was devoted to the American Youth Congress in Washington. Whatever else might be said about that Congress it can be safely stated that the opinions were not those of Catholic youth." The colleges represented in the Symposium were Canisius and D'Youville of Buffalo, Nazareth of Rochester, Niagara University, of Niagara Falls, St. Bonaventure, of Olean, N. Y. and Mercyhurst and Villa Maria of Erie, Pa. Representing D'Youville College Miss Mary L. Murdock, said "Among human beings the first step to peace is a respect for moral standards and especially a recognition of a Supreme Being."

Nazareth Student Heard
"The normally intelligent element of American Youth was sadly disgraced by the relatively small but vociferous group of young people that attended the American Youth Congress," said Miss Dorothy E. Craig, of Nazareth College.

Richard P. Fisher, of Canisius College, said: "Wise, older heads are really worried about the future of America, when they witness a rising generation scoffing at the notion of God, ignorant of objective standards of morality and imbibing theories of government as distant from the ideals of Washington and Jefferson as the Kremlin."

Rita E. Weyand, of Villa Maria College, said: "It is time for Americans to live up to their profession of faith in God, otherwise take the mockery of the letter heads of our federal stationery, change the national emblems and honestly admit that the nation is going back to paganism."

"I think," said Niagara University's William A. O'Brien, "that the thing most sadly lacking in our country today is a universal determination on the part of every citizen to live up to noble moral standards in politics, business and national life."

Marie D. Callan, of Mercyhurst College, said: "This country today like all other nations, is going through perilous times. Loyalty to our traditional form of government is demanded of each citizen."

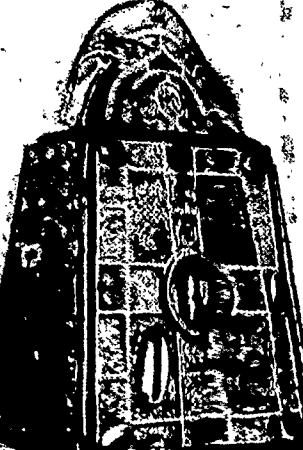
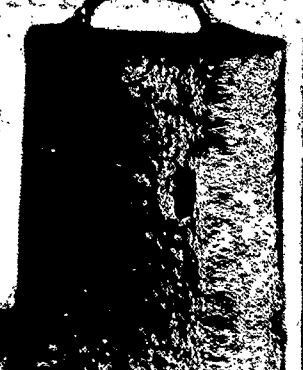
John R. Hartnett, of St. Bonaventure College, said: "The history of our nation may never again record the likes of a Washington, Jefferson, a Lincoln, if we allow the family life of the nation to be disrupted by birth control and divorce."

Father LeBuffe, Eastern Director of Sodality, in his opening remarks said:

"Democracy is a fluid thing, but it is a lordly river defining smoothly between well-ordered banks, not a flood that swells its waters where it will. Not for an instant do we assert that democracy is a static, dead thing. No, it is living, changing, dynamic, vibrant. But like all great forces—lightning, water, wind, explosives it must be harnessed or else it leaves havoc in its wake. This harnessing of the forces of democracy comes from those external truths on which our Republic is founded, and on which every true democracy must be founded."

This round-table discussion of the Dimensions of Democracy was also presented by the same group in Rochester, March 11, in Erie, Pa. March 3, Charles J. Mathews, of Canisius College, was the manager of the Symposium.

St. Patrick's Bell



Among the rare relics of St. Patrick, preserved in Ireland, is St. Patrick's Bell (upper photo). It is made of iron, riveted at the sides and bronzed outside and inside. About 1100 A. D., it was enshrined in a beautiful repository (lower photo). Both are now in the National Museum of Ireland, in Dublin. (N.C.W.C.)

Sodalists

Rochester Parish Sodality Union Activities

By MARGARET LARBIN
During the past week we have received two new Sodality line-ups. The first is a newcomer to our Column St. Francis Xavier have reorganized their Sodality under the direction of the Rev. David B. Singerhoff. At a recent meeting the Rev. Robert J. Fox, Union Director, spoke to the sodalists on the organization and functioning of a Sodality. New officers elected were as follows: Marie Dragiolamo, President; Stella Tantiello, Vice President; Florence Gaglio, Treasurer; Ann and Mary Horton, Recording and Corresponding Secretaries; Congratulations and our usual best wishes to you all for a very successful Sodality year!

The other comes from snow-bound Charlotte Holy Cross Sodality. Being snow-bound, sodalists are a thing to the sodalists for under the direction of Father Patrick Connell and their new officers, the Sodality are out to do big things. Helen Dougherty leads the girls as President; Margaret Twette, Vice President; Genevieve Kavanaugh, Secretary; Clara Albert, Eucharistic Committee; Jeanne O'Connor, Our Lady's; Gilda Giovanni, Apostolic; Jeanne Wolehan, Catholic Truth; Dorothy Schmidt, Social Life; and Connie O'Brien, Publicity.

What could be more perfect! St. Patrick's Sodality is having on St. Patrick's Day a St. Patrick's Silver Tea. Very smart little invitations in the form of a green harp are being sent to all the Sodality. Even if you didn't get one, you are cordially invited. Teresa Nacca, General Chairman, assures us. Assisting Teresa are Rose Chiappone, Rosaria Maurizio and Mary Ranelletta. The only thing I would suggest is that they're green tea!

The Sodality of St. Patrick's are attending the Mission at their church in a body and are singing at the exercises.

Probation classes have already begun at St. Andrew's Sodality. Catherine Matile, who did such a splendid job last year as Probation Mistress, will take over the duties of the job again this year. We look for perfectly trained Sodality members from St. Andrew's!

English Catholics To Open Hut In France

LONDON—The first group of the Catholic Women's League volunteers has left here for France where the first recreational hut for the troops will be opened in a few days. Arrangements are nearly complete for the opening of three other centers in France. There are C. W. L. huts in eight places in England where there are troop concentrations.

Niagara U. Debaters Here Friday

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY, N. Y.—The Niagara University debating team will open its annual eastern tour Friday evening this week in Rochester where it will be entertained by the Rochester Division of the university's College of Business Administration. The team consists of George A. Rushton and Reginald W. Shepherd, Niagara Falls, will defend the affirmative side of the question: "Resolved—That the United States Should Follow a Policy of Strict Isolation Toward All Nations Outside of the Western Hemisphere Involved in Civil or International Conflict" for the visiting Niagara team. Immediately after tonight's engagement, Niagara will continue to New York City where it will hold verbal arguments with Gotham seats of learning until next Wednesday when the tour ends. Tomorrow night in New York, Mt. St. Vincent's College will afford the opposition in the second of a home-and-home series. After a rest Monday, Manhattan will be a rest Monday, Manhattan on Tuesday night, and New Rochelle on Wednesday. The isolation question will be debated in all New York meetings, with Niagara upholding the affirmative against each institution. Besides Rushton and Shepherd, the Niagara team will include Capt. Edmund W. Juszaitis, Watertown, Conn.; Edward J. Speno, Auburn, N. Y., and the Rev. O. E. Morton, C.M., varsity debate coach.

Nun's Answer to Distorted Views on Convent Completely Defined in Letter's Complete Text

(Such widespread interest was stirred in the letter of Sister Mary Claire, U. S. F., of St. Anthony Convent and Motherhouse, Syracuse, to the New York Times, refuting the distorted and untrue picture of convent life given in the book, "The Convent," by Alyse Simpson, it was decided to publish the full content of the letter here. The book is reported having a large sale and it is to combat the "glaring falsehoods" contained therein that Sister's letter is given below.)

Editor The New York Times Book Review.

In an age notorious for its lamentable "repeal of reticence" it is inevitable, I dare say, that a sensationalist with an itching palm or at best a sentimentalist who has not risen above a merely subjective experimentation with the sublimity of religious faith should seek to exploit her deplorable and falling experience as a nun for sordid and glibly made. I refer to Alyse Simpson, "The Convent," favorably reviewed in the columns of the Book Review of The New York Times issue of Sunday, Feb. 4, by Edith H. Walton.

As a nun, and in the name of millions of Catholics and non-Catholics who hold opposite viewpoints from this nun author, and who hold the religious life in high esteem, being conversant with its sublime objective and practical service to humanity, I strive to bespeak a re-formation of the review, else slander the book may become to the public especially the uninformed, portion of the public in the unwitting universal application that will probably be made of such experience as Miss Simpson says she had.

In the first place I have never heard of a convent anywhere having been named The Mystic Rose, which the author says she entered. There may be such a one, and we shall assume that there is verity in the preliminary statement of the author, assume, too, that it is a convent approved by the Catholic Church for such approval is a necessary condition to a true religious-life foundation. Furthermore, such approval either directly from Rome itself or through an authorized prelate of the church is not given without inquiring into essential conditions conducive to developing the religious spirit as well as the bodily welfare of its members and aspirants in accordance with the best traditions and knowledge of the sciences of both the spiritual life and physical health. That Miss Simpson as an author, readily lacked the rudiments of the former, that is, the religious spirit at the outset is evident from her having suppressed at the time of her entrance into religion—as we term it—the fact of her having as her motive primarily that of the defection of a lover and definitely charts her as an undetachable and one unit for the sublime life into which she presumed to enter.

St. Francis of Assisi, beloved of the whole world and a lover of humanity beyond the dreams of most philanthropists in the history of the world, whom we regard as the seraphic father and founder of our order once said: "He who enters religion with a wrong motive lies to the Holy Ghost." Usually such a lie is detected before a candidate (called a postulante) or a novice that is a nun clothed in the habit of religion but still not essentially religious in that she has not pronounced vows, reaches the end of her novitiate training.

I should say from the glaring evidence of Miss Walton's revealing view that the chief fault, if any, on the part of the community that received this woman was one of too great charity of naive faith in one who may even then have the gift of "skill and artistry in prose" which the reviewer says may have deceived her—the reviewer is in a conclusion that this ex-nun's book is "a valuable document."

Documents presuppose documentary evidence. Setting aside for the moment the glaring falsehoods about religious and conventual life as it is lived by approximately 100,000 nuns in this country alone and this is virtually a replica of conventual religious life all over the world—Miss Walton herself acknowledges this serious disqualification for making a just review of the book. She says: "As a reviewer, I feel a certain extra-literary hesitancy in approaching such a book as this—partly because I lack background for judging the accuracy of its facts, partly because it reads, obviously, on so many lies."

The last is, to us nuns, too trivial for consideration, so absurd in the face of facts are the author's biased and purely emotionally subject reactions to the life she was privileged to experience for a time. It is the presenting of this distorted picture of our conventual life to the general public that holds the element of danger, especially danger of breeding misunderstanding of an influence of tremendous spiritual and humanitarian value to the citizens of this country and many others. The first reason for the reviewer's failure properly to evaluate this book, that of "lack of background for judging the accuracy of its facts," is manifestly a serious admission. It needs no further comment.

Two points I should like to make, however, in correction of fallacies which the author sets forth, as told by the reviewer, who apparently swallows them with the most glibly appetite for the sensational and sentimental. One is the idea, presented of a nun who "escaped through the connivance of a forthright woman doctor" from her conventual home, having like the author, presumably, been "appalled by the lack of intellectual stimulus anywhere in the convent by the lack of books, time for meditation" (where) there was nothing to satisfy those who were restless, tortured, intelligent, nothing but wild superstitions and blind driftable faith. * * *

Did not Miss Simpson learn in her apparently brief stay—and one wonders whether she was not dismissed her self and if she ever was even clothed in a holy habit, that the canon law of the church, applicable to all conventual life,

CANONIZED SOON



BLESSED MARY ST. EUPHROSIA PELLETIER, foundress of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, whom the Sacred Congregation of Rites announced will be canonized on May 3.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY SPECIALS

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