

Sorsum Corda

Successors To Mercier

By Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P.
Editor, The Catholic World

What the world needs in its present disastrous condition is a sublime example of moral courage. Some may say that we have had a thousand such examples—in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Finland, Lithuania, France, indeed in every one of the countries which have been conquered or partially conquered, occupied by the enemy or partially occupied, there have been instances of magnificent courage amounting sometimes to martyrdom.

But martyrdom if it is to have nation-wide or world-wide influence must be the martyrdom of some person well known and in high place. Of course before God a martyr will not fail of his reward because he happened to be obscure. But the very meaning of the word "martyr" is one whose death is a "sign." A martyr testifies. To testify before men he must be known. The better he is known, the greater the testimony. If a martyr is put to death privately his passion and death cannot have the same beneficent effect as if he had suffered in the arena before thousands of spectators. It was in the Divine Providence that so many were martyred in Rome and elsewhere throughout the Empire under circumstances of most glaring publicity. The conquest of the world by Christianity was promoted by the fact that the pagans made a holiday and a spectacle of the death of Christians. Our Saviour Himself was crucified during the Passover when perhaps a million people were gathered in Jerusalem from all parts of the world. If He had been killed as a Babe in Bethlehem or if in His boyhood He had been quietly waylaid in the streets of Nazareth, He would still be the Prince of Martyrs and His death would be a source of infinite grace. But in the plan of the Father, He was crucified on a high

hill in the midst of enormous excitement, before uncounted thousands of passersby and lookers on.

Now in Holland and Germany there seems to be a chance that certain Bishops will be called upon to suffer if not to die for the Faith. The Bishop of Munster in Westphalia who happens by the way to be a Count, Clemens von Galen, has defied the Gestapo and through them the Fuehrer. It is reported that Himmler urged Hitler to authorize the shooting of the Bishop. Thus far the sentence has not been pronounced. It may come. If it does it will produce greater effect in Germany than all the arguments and explanations and expostulations of the defenders of the Faith. The martyrdom of a Bishop might well turn the tide against the Nazis in Germany.

At any rate Bishop von Galen has followed in the footsteps of Cardinal Mercier of Belgium the outstanding moral hero of the first World War. He has consistently upheld the Catholic Faith in the face of the Fuehrer and the Gestapo who have stopped short of no cruelty. It remains to be seen whether they will have the insane courage to kill the Bishop.

With Bishop von Galen the Nazis will have to kill twenty-eight other Bishops who have shown the same magnificent defiance of tyranny. Will they do it? Dare they do it? If they do the blood of the martyrs may be under God the salvation of Europe and the world.

In Holland also the Bishops have defied the conquerors of their country. We shall await with more interest than we await the news of battles or even the news of the conquest of Russia, the story of what happens to those Bishops in the Netherlands. They have to use their own words "openly and loudly raised their voices in protest against injustice." It would have been much easier to remain silent; they say, but concern for the salvation of souls forbade them to do so.

These evidences of the martyr spirit are consoling and encouraging beyond anything else in a world from which the voluntary imitation of Christ on the cross seems sometimes to have all but vanished. Terrible things are happening over here but it will become insignificant by contrast with the glorious deeds of martyrs.

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Library Signpost

Postal Apostolate

By Rev. Benedict Elmann

Chalk up at least one hopeful outgrowth of last June's Mission Crusade Convention in Rochester. It came out of a soiree of fun and entertainment which our St. Bernard's seminarians offered to their seminarian guests. It wasn't long in the evening before the men of Kenrick Seminary, in St. Louis, were selling their idea of a correspondence course in religion.

For several years now the Kenrick seminarians have been maintaining a correspondence with thousands of non-Catholics (and many Catholics, too) on matters of religion. They send each correspondent a little booklet of factual instruction entitled "Father Smith Instructs Jackson," and follow it up with eight tests which are to be answered and sent back for correction.

This apostolate has the merit of simplifying the non-Catholic's entire to information about the Catholic religion. Many non-Catholics are interested in the Church but timidity and human respect often hamper them from following up that interest or it may be they just don't know how to go about it.

But in the Kenrick Correspondence Course plan, Uncle Sam's letter carriers are the only ones who have to do the going back and forth, and to judge from statistics they have to do a lot of it. For in the few years of its operation the Correspondence Course has contacted thousands all over the country. The Course is a "god send" to those who are frightened by a priest, or who have not sufficient time for recital instructions, or who are prevented by distance from contacting a priest. This year the Kenrick seminarians are extending the work into the army camps.

This whole picture so appealed to our Rochester seminarians that a group of them has taken the initiative of organizing a similar Course at St. Bernard's. They have the approval of the seminary authorities and will work under the guidance of the Rev. Dr. John Reddington, professor of Dogmatic Theology.

It is my privilege in this column to explain to the people of the Rochester diocese, the purpose and the set-up of this new activity at St. Bernard's, which we may hope will become a power for God throughout this area.

The course will be known as the St. Bernard's Seminary Correspondence Course. Its purpose will be to explain what Catholics believe and why they believe it.

Its students will be (a) non-Catholics who are interested in the Church who wish to learn more about it, who wish to settle difficulties, and (b) Catholics who feel the need of learning more about the fundamental teachings of their Church. The instructors will be seminarians under the direction of a faculty moderator.

The program will follow this procedure:

- (a) obtaining the names of interested parties.
- (b) sending them an introductory letter of explanation.
- (c) if they are willing, sending them a copy of the text-book, which will be "Father Smith Instructs Jackson".
- (d) sending them eight tests, based on the text, which are to be answered and returned.
- (e) correcting each test when it is returned; this is done personally by a seminarian, who also will answer in a personal letter any difficulties or questions proposed by the student on the back of each test a space will be left for questions, and the student is encouraged to propose them.
- (f) returning the corrected test (and the personal letter, if any is required) to the student, together with the next test to be answered.
- (g) giving, at the end of the Course, a certificate testifying to the completion of the Course.

The Course will not cost the student one cent, even in the matter of postage. All expenses are being underwritten by the Mission Society at the Seminary.

Now here is where readers of this column can serve their bit. Have you any non-Catholic friends who are interested in the Catholic faith? Suggest to them that they write to the Seminary for information and give the Course a trial. Or, if you suspect they might be unwilling to make the first move, send their names to the Seminary, and a student will help to break the ice with a courteous letter of introduction which will neither compromise you nor inveigle them into something they don't want.

In fact, I have seen the type letter of introduction, and it is a little masterpiece of tact and good taste.

Send all requests to:
St. Bernard's Seminary, Correspondence Course, Rochester, N. Y.

You may be wondering about the results where this type of thing has been tried. Some have been converted to the Church (one remarkable instance of a girl who was led along a difficult road from Christian Science); others have discontinued the correspondence and kept up the course with a local priest; many others continue to the end, without conversion, but who know with what a better understanding of the Catholic Church and as for others who drop out without being heard from again no one should minimize the good that may be accomplished, even if it were the removal of even one prejudice.

It is a necessary and courageous apostolate. We invite the people of the diocese to work along with the seminarians so as to spread its influence. You can all help by encouraging non-Catholics or Catholics with difficulties to write in, or else by sending in their names yourselves.

Five Years Ago--

—in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From Oct. 22, 1936, Edition

Only through the sufferings of missionaries in the fields afar and the prayers and assistance of the faithful at home can Christ's Kingdom be spread on earth, declared Archbishop Mooney in the Mission Sunday observance sermon at the Cathedral.

Completely disregarding the formal stipulations of its Concordat with the Holy See, the Nazi regime of Germany was quietly getting ready to wipe out the whole Catholic parochial school system there, according to reliable information received in Amsterdam.

Marking one of the important results of the National Catechetical Congress of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, held in New York, a Catholic Bible Association was formed in the session devoted to discussion of the work of revising the New Testament.

A total of 550 persons enrolled in 53 study clubs was reported by Immaculate Conception Church, Ithaca.

Selected

Courtesy isn't easy. Shall you listen and look bored, or tell him you have heard it and let him feel sat-upon.—Cincinnati "Enquirer."

In a great city, you must be a somebody or you're a nobody; in a little town, everybody is somebody.—Saginaw "News."

If magazine stories seem duller or sillier than they used to be, don't blame the writers. You have grown up.—Pontiac "Press."

The old-fashioned cavalry had one advantage: if a dumb recruit can't learn now, he can't depend on his tank to think for him. Charleston "Post."

EDITORIAL FEATURES

Page My Pastor

The Pastor Is Blue

By Rt. Rev. Msgr. Peter M. H. Wynhoven

Editor in Chief, Catholic Action of the South

"I saw my pastor this morning and he was blue and in the dumps."



"What precious thing did he lose, Fran?"

"He did not lose anything, in fact he should gain the respect of his intelligent and worthwhile parishioners."

"Well, what is the story?"

"Oh, somebody in his parish died, this person had not gone to church and the Sacraments for long years, as a matter of record, he did not want to have anything to do with the priest. He had had plenty of opportunity to come back to God, but with a sneering indifference he refused consistently."

"I can guess the real, Fran, your pastor refused to bury him and is now being criticized from every corner of the parish."

"No, Cedic, your guess is all wrong. First of all, he did not exactly refuse; he is simply forbidden by the laws of the Church to give a Christian burial to well-known, and hardened backsliders. His own personal judgment and wishes have nothing to do with a case like that; the priest has simply to live up to his duty. Secondly, he is not criticized from every corner of the parish, for sincere, understanding Catholics appreciate his predicament."

"When, then, is he upset about it, Fran?"

"The family is all disturbed, ugly

and spiteful about it. Cedic and that's what hurts the pastor especially since one of the men is a pretty good Catholic. In fact he is an usher in our church."

"Well, Fran, it must be pretty tough for anyone to see his father buried like a dog. I don't think, myself, it is quite right, the feelings of the close relatives should be considered."

"The feelings of the close relatives, Cedic? When in thirty years they did not make one sincere effective effort to bring their dear one back to God, there are no feelings to be considered, for the simple reason there are no feelings of the right kind."

"Listen, Fran, you go at this thing in an impersonal hard-hearted fashion, if you."

"Wait a minute, Cedic. I beg to differ with you. Take your own case, your father was a Protestant and a good man who served his God in the best way he knew how. Did you let things go at that? No! You prayed and schemed and worked till you had the satisfaction of seeing your dad come into the true religion."

"Yes, but to be a Catholic and then to be buried like one shunned by God, must be terrible."

"You are right, Cedic. It is terrible. But, after all, the man turned his back on God coldly insulted him for thirty years, and then, when he comes to die, with his back still turned to God, should the Church of God say, 'Come on, my man, we accept you all the honors becoming a friend of God.' It isn't logical, Cedic."

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made and kept them devoted children of the Church of Christ. It sings the praises of the pioneers who so splendidly built up a great Catholic city, in the face of poverty and want, and at the cost of heavy sacrifice. It commemorates the sacrificial spirit of the founding fathers, while it gives a living expression in stone and mortar to the same splendid spirit of sacrifice that marks the pioneer members of the new Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Well may the Pastors of the City of Elmira look upon this as a most happy event in the history of the city. The great Apostles Peter and Paul, have been revered as Patrons of the first church in Elmira. Our Patrick has long watched over a second parish. The Blessed Mother has fostered with a loving care the parish named of her, St. Mary's. St. John the Baptist has been the patron of many a grace to the people of the parish dedicated to his name. St. Casimir has been honored as patron of the parish serving Catholics of Polish descent. Blessed Saint Anthony has presided over the destinies of the Italian Parish. St. Cecilia's Parish has revered as its titular saint that famed heroine of the early Church, who is also the Patron of Music. All these holy men and women of God have watched over Catholic Elmira, have guided the souls of its people toward a greater love of God and His Church, have taken a special interest in them.

Now a new Patron is added to the revered list of those who have served so faithfully. Elmira welcomes Mary anew under her title as Our Lady of Lourdes as the Patron of her new parish. At her shrine in the Pyrenees in France she was wrought many a miracle in the healing of helpless and hopeless invalids. Her beneficent presence shall hover in and about the new Elmira church to bless and sanctify and consecrate those souls belonging to her parish, and to shed her benedictions also on all the faithful of the city which now raises a new monument in her honor.

Father Schwab is to be felicitated on the splendid work he has done in the few months since the new parish was formed. He is to be congratulated on the stately and graceful lines of the new church, and on the very practical and useful manner in which every detail in church and hall has been worked out. The people of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish will have in their zealous Pastor and in their beautiful Parish Church a lasting incentive to practical and persistent cooperation in furnishing that adequate support that will place and keep their parish on a sure financial basis.

Not of This World

These are bad times for earthly kings. Their number has been lessened, their power straitened, their freedom is destroyed. Far more than royal power has fallen to the hands of those who are not kings, who have come up from the ranks to usurp the power that once went only with royal blood. But even in most auspicious times, far greater value was set on the riches and power and majesty that surrounded kings, than was due. The riches were doomed to pass away, the power was due to fail, the majesty was finally to disappear in death. A worldly office, it was subject to every worldly defect.

"My kingdom is not of this world," says Christ the King. Not to be a conqueror of men, not to be a destroyer of cities, a scourge to the earth and a destroyer of life; no Christ's Kingship was to be a beneficent one. He was to win men to himself not through the excesses of war, but through the drawing power of His own Sacred Heart. He was to rule men not that they might find their careers in holding sway over others, in amassing property and securing power; he was to rule them that they might find their true careers in preparing their souls for heaven.

Christ is our King! Christ is to rule over us, to live in us, to command us. Christ is to keep us mindful of His words: "My kingdom is not of this world."