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The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

The REV JOHN S. RANDALL
DIRECTOR

FEBRUARY MISSION INTENTION:
"For Native Clergy Among African and American Negroes."

Sometimes one forgets that Mary and Joseph, fleeing from the wrath of a white despot, brought the Child Jesus to Africa, the Black Man's continent. It was that land which then became a haven for the Son of God and His Heart has always yearned to embrace its sons and daughters within the saving Fold of Catholicity. It is understandable therefore that the creation and expansion of a priesthood among the colored people of Africa and America constitutes a major concern of the Church. It entails also the prayerful interest of every true Catholic, particularly since that priesthood existed in Africa centuries before the very name of Christ was known in our own land.

The African priesthood of the first centuries of the Church was a glorious one, numbering as it did the saintly Cyprian the brilliant Augustine, who stated that "the Church was black by nature, beautiful through divine grace."

In studying the history of Africa to which America is closely allied because of its Negro population, one discerns that as far as Catholicism is concerned there have been four distinct periods. The first was the glorious era, which produced a Felicitas and Perpetua, an era whose grandeur is but recently unearthed through the discovery of catacombs containing thousands of Christian tombs. There there was a living, vital Church confined it is true to northern Africa but capable of extending throughout the length and breadth of the continent. This expansion was not possible before the followers of the Prophet invaded the country. Entrenching themselves in the very strongholds of Christianity the Mohammedans succeeded in obliterating every trace of Catholicism and then launched their campaign to win the entire land to the doctrine of salvation through the sword.

Next followed the period of exploration wherein Europe once more "discovered" the Black Man's continent. It was not long before Portuguese missionaries established themselves in the coastal cities and eventually Catholic Sers were erected to take care of spiritual welfare of the converts.

It requires little delving into history to know that the state of the Negro imported to the western hemisphere was an unhappy one and this was particularly true in our own country. However it might be well to remember that Maryland was the only one of the original thirteen colonies settled by Catholics and that legislation was enacted against the Church during the early days of our history. Nevertheless let us keep in mind that it was Catholicism which championed the cause of the Negro since it recognized no distinction because of race or color.

Conditions have changed in both Africa and the United States. The 19th century saw the extinction of slavery in this country and the reopening of the so-called "dark continent" to the white man. But this was a different sort of white man. The kind that followed in the footsteps of Liverman and Lavigerie had only the most sublime affection for the African people, and he came to offer "the gift supreme" faith in the true God. Thus Africa is experiencing a renaissance, which bears the mark of the Redeemer Himself. Native sons are mounting the altar steps to consecrate the Bread of Angels for their own countrymen; the Vicar of Christ on earth has elevated two Negroes to the episcopacy, placed a third in charge of a Prefecture Apostolic. It is then for this cause that the appeal of the Holy Father goes out to every Catholic to pray "for native clergy among African and American Negroes."

THE CHURCH MARCHES ON!
"There is little place in Europe today for the marching Church"

4 Brothers On Team
New Orleans. — The basketball team of Holy Cross College, prep school conducted by the Brothers of the Holy Cross, includes three brothers, Al, LeRoy and Hilbery Chollet.

bearing its message to the world. America must be in the vanguard! To our men and women, young and old — to our priests, brothers and sisters of the marching Church in this Coun- try is given the task of making it that the Banners are waving in every land under the sun: **THE CHURCH MUST MARCH ON!** — Rev. John J. Connelley, M.M.

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