Prayer In **War-Time**

By Rev James M. Gillis, C.S.P.

Here is a phenomenon: an entire column by a staff writer on the editorial page of The New York These on the subject of prayer. If this be an indication of the trend of thought in war time, one may say that the war is not an absolutely unmitigated calamity. The writer of the column, "Topics of the Times," says it is not atrange that "in days laden with grief and danger men should pray more than edinarily." He speaks of Idacoin in the desperate stays just before Gettysburg, and quotes Lincoln's words: "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwelming conviction that. I had "nobody else to go to. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient." We are not to suppose that Lincoln turned to God only when and only because he could get no guidance elsewhere. But like all men, and like ourselves, he was driven to God with special force when things grew desperate.

The writer of that column also refers to a state-

ment and the observes, he was driven to God with aspecial force when things grew desperate.

The writer of that column also refers to a statement of Lincoln that is not so well known. It seems that on the eve of Gettysburg the President made what he himself calls "a solemn vow" to stand by God (I suppose he meant to be faithful to God) if God would stand by our boys at Gettysurg. Cathelics especially can understand that kind of prayer. We are accustomed to the making of not a solemn vow (which we should not make without the consent of our spiritual director) but a solemn promise to do this or that in return for some divine favor.

It is no doubt easy to find fault with that kind of hargain between man and God. It could be interpreted as an attempt to bribe God or to cajole Him, and there might possibly be in the back of one's head the idea of running out on God (so to speak) if God doesn't give us what we ask. However, there is no need of being over-critical with people who make bargains with God It is very human. We all do it. And we know by our own experience that we don't cease to serve God because Ho sometimes seems to fail us In our hearts is the continuent entires of the continuent entires to the continuent entires of the continuent entires to the continuent entires to the continuent entires of the continuent entires to the continuent entires the continuent entires to He sometimes seems to fail us In our hearts is the sentiment expressed by the patriarch Job. "Though He slay me, still will I trust in Him."

But let's get sway from such sermonizing and come back to the fact reported by the writer in The New York Times. The fact is that the people, some of whom have not been too faithful to prayer when all went well with them and drith their country. are now praying fervently and with faith. So much

In that newspaper column I find one idea that I have often used in speaking and writing especially to non-Catholics or to unbelievers "Simplicity for the time has replaced artificiality" How many times have we priests tried to get that truth into the heads of those who imagine they have reasons logical or paychological reasons for not praying. They are victims of the artificiality of the civilization in which they live. Leave a man alone, don't clutter up his brain with skeptical philosophiles; let him act just as he would and as he does when no atheistic or agnostic professors stand over him to tell him that he must not pray; let a human being be human, and he will pray. In that newspaper column I find one idea that I

will pray. The celebrated psychologist William James said in one of his books. "Some people give us reasons why we should pray, others give us reasons why we we should pray, others give us reasins why we should not pray nobody seems to remind us of the real reason for prayer: we pray because we are made that way. Precisely. When we are simple straightforward, natural, uniphibited, we pray. If we become affected, unnatural, artificial, we cease to pray. You may try out that truth. It has been tried out over and over again since the race of man commenced. In calamity, in danger, in face of death in a terrible trial a man will pray instinctively. It is only when he becomes "sophisticated" that he pretends not to believe in prayer Prayer is that he pretends not to believe in prayer Prayer is as natural as breathing. It is the breathing of the

Now that the war is one and later when the tragic facts of war will be brought nearer to us, we shall shed our sophistication and our artificiality. We shall get back to nature and back to God We shall

So, thanks to that writer in the Times. Thanks especially for his significant sentence, "Simplicity replaces artificiality."

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Five Years Ago--

-in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From Feb. Es. 1937, Edition

Missioners from home were met in the Orient by the Rev. John M. Duffy and the Rev. Leo C. Mooney of Rochester enroute around the world, it was told in a story sent by Father Mooney to the CATHOLIC COURLER by clipper mail. In Rores they visited with the Rev. Patrick Cleary of Ithaca, Maryknoll missioner. In Shanning they met Sister Mary knoll missioner. In Shanghal they met Sister Mary of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, nee Anna Willig of Rochester. In Hong Kong they were met by the Rev. Charles P. Hilbert of Rochester, also a Maryknoll missioner.

As tension mounted in Mexico, Catholics forced the reopening of churches in Vera Cruz following the killing by police of two persons attending a clanderline Mass. At the same time tope was ris-ing in Washington circles for settlement of the tense Mexico church question.

Completely redecorated and remodeled St. Theresa's Church of Stanley was reopened with special services to mark its first anniversary.

Afterney Cornelius O'Dea, executive chairman of Elmira Catholic Charities, was named chairman of the annual Elmira Community Chest campaign.

The darkest hour in any man's life is when he sits down to plan how to get money without earning it.-Horace Greeley.

The beauty of Thy neace: that is good and I am sure that the old lady in the picture, as well as the little feller, knew what that peace was a clean heart. W. P., in Catholic Freeman's Journal.

TRANGÉ BUT TRU Little-Known Facts for Catholics By M. J. MURRAY



EDITORIALS

(Continued from Page 18)

First in War. The enemy has assuited us in treacherous fashion, has found us so given to the constructive ways of peace that our material and human resources have not been sufficiently developed along war lines to match theirs. Our ships have been sunk, our men have died, our battles have been fought on uneven terms: victory has not been ours up to now. We are not now First in War!

But the spirit of George Washington still rules over America! His unfailing courage, his absolute trust in ultimate victory, are reflected today in President Roosevelt and in the might of America responding to his call to meet the foe. Man-power and productive power are all given now to the one call, the call to delend our liberties against ill who assail them. America aroused answers the call of duty! Her cuemies shall know in the ultimate report that she is First in War.

May the Birthday of George Washington be the inspiration to all Americans to face the future bravely and intelligently. Absolute cooperation with our leaders in promoting the highest productivity of our industrial plants, the fastest development of tank and plane and ship, the quickest possible preparation of an army of free men teady and anxious to preserve for America that freedom first won for her by George Washington. He was First in War! May his example help us to be First in War! He was First in Peace! May his spirit help us to make ready for the world a cessation of conflict that will mark our country among all the nations as the Champion of Liberty, First in Peace!

AND THE TEMPTER CAME

The devil knows when to tempt man. He comes when we are weakened, in spirit, when our defenses are down, when his appeal will

So lie came to Christ, when hunger showed its face after the fast of forty days and forty nights. The human nature of Christ was crying out for nourishment. No food, no drink, for forty days and nights: o answer to the body's lawful call for autonance vearning for food, for needed support of life. Satan in doubt as to the dignity of Jesus, wondering if He were telly the Son of God, tries Him first with that temptation that would appeal to his hunger.

So Satan comes to us. He loves to find us weakened for his approach. In material temptations he may look to our hunian appetites and offer us the unlawful opportunity to meet their demands: he can not be bothered with any attempt to offer us such fulfilment of these appetites as is lawful.

But much more frequently does he approach as with spiritual temptations. He finds us hungry, because we have denied ourselves spiritual food. Forty days and nights have we fasted from things our souls need. Prayer has been absent, hearing of God's word has been avoided, meditation on His teaching wanting, reception of His Sacraments lacking: we are hungly, spiritually hungry, after avoiding all the spiritual food God places before us. Then the devil comes!

Other temptations Satan put before Christ: vainglory, lust for power, were suggested to Him. And the devil then as today is ready with words of Holy Writ to bolster up his temptations.

Lenten practices should help us meet Satan's temptations in the manner related of Christ in this Gospel for the First Sunday in Lent. His closing words may stand for us as a constant reply to every temptation: Begone Satan: the Lord God shall thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve!"

Book Reports

By Rev. Benedict Ehmann

Introducing Father Brancis X. Connolly's review of Wiedswegt, current best-seller by Mary Elles

of Windawegt, current best-seller by Mary killen Chase:

"Windawegt is clearly an attempt to define the Amstloan way of life through a biography of the Maraton family and of their home, a lovely house set on an isolated head on the coast of Maine. Miss Chase has conjured an ideal family. Religious, telegrant, intellectual, they are far removed from the vices of the business world and the corruptions of the suburse. They befriend a Bohemian family and help them to dig their roots in America's soil. They read the Latin and Greek classics, form attachments with scholarly folk and simple faherment. They are, in fine, all that is meant by the Greek-Roman Christian itselft on, as a gentle, crudite Protesiant lady professor understands that tradition. In the course of her long novel, Miss Chase presents a Cathelle sun, most sympathetically, possibly with the idea of promoting some of Mother Radegund's views on life and education.

"For some reason not quite clear in the story it-

"For some reason not quite clear in the story itsels, Miss Chase has Mother Radegund's nice.
Adrience, allegedly the victim of the laxity of Werld
War I morals, give birth to a child in a convent.
The circumstances are: unreal to a literally ridiquelous degree. Eventually the beby is deposited by
Mother Radegund with her friends, the Marstons,
an evidence, we presume, that nums are broadminded and human. This unfortunate lapse. . flows
from the common American immaturity concerning

ed and human. This unfortunate lapse. . flows from the common American immaturity concerning sex. Miss Chase apparently felt that she was being dramntle when she was alightly sophomorie." (Quoted from the Cathelic Book Club Newsletter.) The Commonwest editors cannily gave Miss Chase's novel to a nun for review, Eister Mariella, O.S.B., returned a sympathetic seport without taking the exception noted by Father Connolly. Of the convent phases of the book, she wrote:

"As memorable as the nuns in Kate O'Brien's Land of Splees" is the charming humanist, Mother Radegund, conspicuously more intelligent than holy, Miss Chase knows her convents. Everything from the painstaking, unoriginal handwriting of sisters to the pros and coins of traveling with chargy-fars books has been accurately observed."

And that is all. Not a word, you see, shout the

And that is all. Not a word, you see, about the incident which Father Connolly found so indicuously unreal. I make no decision. But it seems to me that if a mun was not offended, we needn't balk

Futher Joseph McSortey reports on John Gunther's India Latin America: On the credit side colorful writing . . . often well

On the debit side: (1) often superficial, exaggérated, inaccurate. (2) Lotten amperican protests have already come in on the book's inaccuracies. (3) There is strong bias against the Catholic religion. The author favors the phrase "violentity Catholic," and assumes that the crippling of Catholiciam is a

necessary preliminary to the complete rehabilitation of South America.

Comment: "Those Latin-Americans who are already disposed to entertain suspicions of the United States and to place more trust in the countries which helped Catholic Spain in her hour of distress, will not be reassured by the books of men like John Gunther." (From The Catholic World, December,

A propos of Catholic Press Month, Peter Cosmonin the current issue of Marykholl's excellent The Field Afar gives us a timely reminder of the early history of Catholic defense by men of letters. Some of the world's first books written to spread the Christian idea, were: Justin Martyr, Apology, A. D. 150; Tatian, Discourse to the Greeks, A. D. 160; Athenagoras, Plea for the Christians, A. D. 177; Theophilus, Three Bosks to Autolyehus, A.D. 180; Epistic to Diognetus, A. D. 190; Minucius Felix, Getavius, A. D. 192; Tertuillian, Apologetic, A. D. 197; Crigen, True Discourse Against Gelsus, A. D. 248, Lactantius, Institutes, A. D. 212; Saint Augustine, The City of God, A. D. 416-420.

"Let's ktop defending. Let's take the lead!"
That is Mr. Cosmon's plea to us Catholics. He proposes three avenues of action.

1—We must live. We must live richly and well our life of faith and good works.

2—We must talk. We must influence others by word of mouth. Nothing can strike film better than the human voice. A propos of Catholic Press Month, Peter Cosmon-

the human voice.

3-We must write or help to spread what is writ-

know of any more exciting adventure than to plant good ideas in other people's heads, either by direct

good ideas in other people's heads, either by direct ward or by broadcasting the printed word. Only God knows the final harvest of the good that He will gather from your sowing.

In this connection, Hilaire Belloc tells up the incident of a soldier in the last World War, with no brand of religion at all, who allowed himself to be court-maritalled without revealing the guilty person, that he might sheld an officer who was the father of a family, whereas he himself had no near relatives and all, because one day in quarters he heard the Godgel of Greater love than this no man hath. Theirs read and he took it to heart though he had no religious learnings at all. Such is the power of God's word. And it is in our keeping is spread.

Feast Days

Sunday TXOCH. Mer, Per. 21-ST. PETER'S CHAIR AT AN-

Menday, Pet. 21.-SE: PETER DAMIAN. Toodsy, Feb. 24.-ST: WATTHIAS, APOSTIX, Wednesday, Feb. 25... ST. WALBURGA. Thursday, Feb. 28... ST. NESTOR. Friday, Feb. 27... ST. GARRIEL. Salurday, Feb. 48... See ey, Peb. 14.—58. ROMANUS AND LUPKS

MIN. ABBOTS.