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Pearl Harbor Chaplains' Work Cited In Coming Talk

CORNING—The largest group that has been in attendance at the meetings of the Catholic Men's Club granted the Rev. Lawrence Gannon, pastor of St. Gabriel's Church at Hammondsport and formerly assistant pastor at St. Mary's Church, Corning, who was present at great speaker Wednesday noon, May 28, at the Elmer School Hotel.

'I Believe In God'

By the Fleet Chaplain, Pacific Fleet

He has kept the Faith ever the years. I first met my friend, the Destroyer Skipper, in 1918 at the naval base in Brest, France. The scene of that meeting—beside the ship's altar after Mass—was later transferred to many foreign corners of the earth, but the drama of our greeting was always the same. Commander M. invariably came to the altar twice on Sundays; the first time to receive Our Blessed Lord in Holy Communion; the second time to say, "Hello," to me.

Years ago we were shipmates in these Hawaiian waters. We both served in the Aircraft Squadron; my friend was the carrier Langley's Chief Engineer. I was then known as the "Padre of the planes."

Among my friend's many virtues, as a shipmate and as a father of devoted children, there has always stood out an ardent and practical faith in our holy religion. On many Sundays the past year (before the Jap blitz forced me to the windward side) he came to my ship, not alone, but always with a boat-load of Catholic soldiers of his command and led them to the fore-castle where Mass was to be offered beneath the deck awning. It was truly inspiring to see him emerge from the narrow passageway next to the five-inch guns, and pass the barbettes of the great guns and smile as he brought up a snappy Navy salute and exclaimed, "Good morning, padre. I've brought a few 'right-handers' with me." His intelligent, rosy face and his beaming eyes were a sight to cheer your heart. When his ship was in port I knew he would come aboard for Mass and Holy Communion, so I automatically ordered coffee for two to be served after Mass in my cabin.

But his latest expression of solid, prize-worthy faith in Divine Providence and the Communion of Saints, he made recently when he took his ship within range of the enemy's guns in the Marshall Islands, accomplished his mission, and handled his ship so superbly that not one of his men was hurt; and he won the Navy Cross for his pains.

The day before he sailed from Pearl Harbor my friend took his men aboard a carrier whose Chaplain is a priest. Delayed by last-minute preparations for rigging for a long cruise, they arrived late. But the Chaplain offered a special Mass for them and sent them off on their perilous mission with an affectionate blessing.

The night before the powerful task force's attack on the enemy's island stronghold, Commander R— sent for "Sti," the young quar-

termaster. The conversation went somewhat like this:

"Tomorrow morning, son, we go into action. We'll need God's help at dawn. Break out a new communion pennant during the morning watch and sew this St. Christopher medal in the corner."

"Aye, aye, Sir," replied the lad of Pollak blood, and he got promptly busy.

After the battle, "Sti" lowered the long, sleek pennant, begrimed now by the grime from the smoke pipes and handed it to the beloved Captain. St. Christopher had kept them safe.

A few days after their return to port, the Skipper layed me to have lunch with him aboard ship. He handed me the pennant and I felt with my fingers the medal which "Sti" had prayerfully sewed in the corner. The Captain spread the precious symbol of his naval authority across the wardroom table and said, "There it is, padre; I'll send it to my son, Charlie. He will treasure it some day."

This same Father Maguire was quoted in the June, 1942, issue of The Reader's Digest in the article entitled "Remember Pearl Harbor" by Blake Clark. Speaking of the memorial services held on New Year's Day for the Pearl Harbor dead at Honolulu, the author said "Fleet Chaplain Maguire spoke in a firm voice: 'Let me tell you that they died in vain. They saved their guns until the decks buckled under them from the heat. Not a whimper. Not a moan. It was glorious! Don't say we buried our dead with sorrow. They died manfully. They were buried manfully. And we will avenge their deaths, come what may!'"

The article appears in upcoming columns.

The Rev. John C. McSwain made an appeal for blood donors to register at the Red Cross.

Father Gannon read parts from letters received by him from the Rev. John F. Walsh, who was associated with Father Gannon at St. Mary's Parish, later being transferred to St. Columba's Parish, Elmira, and who last fall entered the Navy as a chaplain. Father Walsh was stationed at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7. He is now at Midway Island.

In the letter Father Walsh praised the boys of all creeds in the fighting forces of the United States for the Christian spirit they show. He also enclosed a clipping from a West Coast newspaper of Mar. 19, 1941, which was written by Father Maguire, Fleet Chaplain of the Pacific Fleet.

The parish has been without the services of a regular organist since the Elmira Reformatory, has been the resignation of Mrs. Joseph Kelly because of ill health. Jerry E. Thomas, director of music at acting temporarily as director of the musical programs at church services.

To assist Father Schwab in his quest for a regular organist, Mr. Thomas has kindly consented to donate his services in giving a course of instruction in organ playing, choir directing and the presentation of Gregorian and church music to anyone desirous of qualifying for this position.

Mr. Thomas has had 26 years experience as a music instructor, band and orchestra leader, radio, theater and church organist and choir director. He is willing to conduct an audition for those who have had sufficient training and experience in piano playing to undertake instruction as a church organist.

To the person qualified for such advanced training he will give a complete course on the organ as well as in all phases of arranging and directing church programs. Persons desirous of applying for the position of organist at Our Lady of Lourdes Church are asked to apply to the pastor, Father Schwab.

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Sunday will be observed as First Communion Sunday at Our Lady of Lourdes Church when 29 children, including 18 boys and 10 girls will receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist for the first time.

The class will include the following:

- John Conidine, John Charles Donovan, John Dwyer, Joseph Godwin, William Leahy, John Lynch, William Mace, Charles Mace, Tracy Mace, James MacDowell, Hugh MacFarland, John Mashine, Joseph Nagle, Leo Joseph O'Brien, Peter Totin, William Updyke, James Vaughn, Fred Wurzbarger, James Serio.
- Joan Connelly, Margaret Diehl, Patricia Farley, Ellen Specht, Katherine Sullivan, Judith Toomey, Mary Vaughn, Ardythe Vaughn, Dorothy Woods, Margaret Louise Wynne.

The Rev. Leo G. Schwab, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, has invited applications for the position of organist and choir director at the new West Elmira Church.

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