Library Signpost

Hope For Tomorrow

By Rev. Benedict Ehmann

(In LIGHT BEFORE DUSK, Helen Iswolsky has written a soul-stirring account of certain spiritual stirrings that were shaking the heart of Europe before the crash came—movements of the spirit which are now suffering their Calvary with their eyes set confidently on tomorrow's Easter. Harriet Hoeck, a member of the Rochester Catholic Worker group, sends us this review of the book.)

Light Before Dusk, by Helen Iswolsky (Longmans)

There are two significant messages in Light Before Dusk, Helen Iswolsky's recollections of her life in France from the close of the first World War to May, 1941. First of these is that the Russian people, despite the impositions of atheistic Communist leaders, are still deeply religious. To bear out this claim, Miss Iswolsky cites the survival of the Russian Orthodox Church over persecution and the bitterest opposition—a survival due in no small degree to the heroic efforts of her priests to keep the faith alive.

For a Roman Catholic only vaguely aware of the differences between Orthodoxy and Catholicism and of the problem of Union which confronts sincere men representing both, what Miss Iswolsky has to say of the situation of the Russian Church is of the utmost interest. Nicholas Berdiaeff, one of the most articulate spokesmen for Orthodoxy, was a fellow refugee with her in France, and she was in constant touch with him and many others of their compatriots during all her years there, both before and after her conversion to Catholicism. Berdiaeff and Maritain, the Thomistic scholar, of whom also she was a friend, often discussed the problem of Union, arriving always at a state of courteous mutual disagreement. Miss Iswolsky's appreciation of the profoundly mystical character of her people is keen; she knows well their high aspiration and searching love of truth, and it is with sympathy and fine understanding that she tells of them.

Her second message should bring hope to those who despair of the fate of France. It is her belief that the "mystical energy" which pervaded France before the war (the "light before dusk")—energy typified by movements such as "the friends of Esprit" and the Jocists has not died though the country is enslaved. The Catholic social movement which was led—and still is—by men whose lives are "rooted in prayer" cannot fail to bear fruit. The Christian humanists in France escaped the intellectual pitfall into which the French people as a whole were plunged: they did not consider that a choice must be made between Communism and Fascism as between good and evil, the error into which the French people, already split hopelessly into extreme rightists and extreme leftists, fell so easily.

Of the work performed quietly and confidently by intellectuals such as Maritain, Father Bernadot the Dominican and his fellows of La Tour Maubourg, Stanislas Fumet, editor of Temps Present, and many others whom she came to know well through her work in social service, Miss Iswolsky has high expectations. Her association with the leaders of Christian thought leads her to the firm conviction that the great soul of France will never die, but will find through suffering its lost glory.

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In the feverish rush of the news, the Government evacuation of 112,000 Japanese on the West Coast seemed perhaps like a minor item. Yet, says Father Charles McCarthy of the Maryknoll Missionaries, "it is the largest movement of population ever attempted within the United States."

In an article in the June Field Afar, Father McCarthy presents some interesting facts about this great evacuation of the Japanese to the interior. The Catholic Worker for June writes up the business as a wretched affront to human rights and dignity. But the Maryknoll priest testifies that "the majority of the Japanese were anxious to go. They realized that the evacuation, with all its bitter trials and material losses, had nothing of the nature of a persecution: it was, on the part of the United States Government, merely one of the stern necessities of war and not an expression of racial hatred."

There were abuses during the transition time, swindling the evacuees, for example, who had to dispose of their property quickly. "But such vultures," writes Father McCarthy, "are always and everywhere ready to batten on human suffering." The Government quickly set up agencies to protect the property of the evacuees."

It was the Army which was entrusted with the staggering job of moving the Japanese inland. Says Father McCarthy, "It is doubtful if the soldiers of any army, since the days of the Crusades, have grasped as have our 1942 United States servicemen, the meaning of eternal and spiritual values. Our soldiers of today express their faith not only in chapel attendance and devotion to God, but also in their Christian conduct. The hearts of our soldiers are playing an important role in the evacuation of the Japanese. A Japanese woman in Seattle tells the story that soldiers assigned to escort the evacuees from their homes did so with Emily Post courtesy, and that some soldiers were not ashamed of the tears glistening on their bronzed cheeks, while they performed their duty. One young draftee knocked at her door and asked to use her telephone. He was heartbroken by his experience in uprooting a typical family from its home and, in her presence, he spent $25 of his good army wages to call his mother in New York and talk with her at length to still the loneliness in his heart."

The Catholic Worker article is helpful to keep us from being complacent about the grim corollaries of war. But Father McCarthy's report gives us another aspect of the picture which it would be uncharitable to disregard the kindly, cordial spirit with which, in general the United States Army performed its stern task.

In the Gospels the enemies of Christ are always men, while the women with whom He is brought into contact, are faithful and devoted.—Bishop Spalding.

Sandpaper is recommended as a means of removing the shine from blue serge trousers. If applied vigorously it may also remove the trousers.—San Diego "Union."

Every man must educate himself. His books and teachers are but helps; the work is his.—Webster.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Little-Known Facts for Catholics

By M. J. MURRAY

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EDITORIALS

(Continued from Page 18)

as a giant to run his course, the very unction of the Priesthood still moist on his hands, are a power to make us rejoice at our membership in the Church of Christ. So also the coming of a priest who has borne the labor of the day and the heats in other fields, is a matter of rejoicing for us. Always the Priesthood of Jesus Christ, but manifested anew in different personalities. Always the preaching of Jesus Christ, but in new accents and novel methods of presentation. Always the Sacraments of Jesus Christ, but conferred by a new minister in newer circumstances of time and place.

The good Catholic welcomes heartily to his parish the newly assigned priest of God. He sees in him a spiritual friend, a needed helper along the road of life, a trusted adviser in the most intimate problems of the soul. The children have a particularly warm welcome for him: He is their spiritual father, and they instinctively repose in him that confidence and trust that belongs to one sent by God to minister to them, Emmanuel, God with us! Through His Priesthood, Jesus remains with us! The coming to us of the new priest is a new visitation of the Master, with all its promise of grace through the Sacraments and the Preaching of the Word. The happy event recalls to us the words of the Catechism on our attitude towards the priests of the Church: "We should look upon the priests of the Church as ministers of God and dispensers of His mysteries."

SIMON'S PARTNERS

It was a fishing corporation. Its place of business was along the shores of the Lake of Genesareth. Its equipment included several boats, strong nets, oars, sails perhaps, and a portion of the shore with some form of dock or landing place. Its stock in trade was the fish the partners would be able to catch in their daily trips out into the lake. Simon and James and John were the owners of the business. Simon was the one first noticed by Our Lord: He used Simon's boat for the great draught of fishes. He spoke of James and John as Simon's partners. To Simon He gave the call answered by all three: "Fear not, from henceforth, thou shalt catch men." Leaving all things, they followed Him.

The fishing firm was broken up, but James and John continued to be Simon's partners. Nine others joined the company by invitation of Jesus Christ. It was to be a corporation unique in the history of the world. Simon and His partners were united in a company that should never be dissolved. They were to catch men for God: catch them out of the deeps of a wicked world, and make them Sons of God. They were to profit by their membership in the Society where they were Simon's Partners: God's grace in abundance, the joy of the Lord, the blessings God gives to those who serve Him well, was to be theirs. They were to suffer loss because of their membership in the new Society: all earthly things, the tools of their trade, their boats and nets, the comforts of home, they gladly gave up for the sake of Christ.

Simon's Partners have brought many blessings to the world. They were the earliest followers of Christ. His first Bishops, the earliest bearers of His message to men. Gladly they laid down their lives for the Master and greatly have they profited by their loyalty to Christ. To keep close to Simon and his Partners should be our most sacred desire.

Knowing that you are not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold and silver . . . but with the Precious Blood of Christ. I Peter, 1, 18, 19.

Those new plastic, transparent boats should make things tougher for anglers. Now the fish can see you bait the hook.—Richmond "Times-Dispatch."

Screen Cords

Any Good Out Of Radio?

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

An intelligent adult who happens to tune in on the radio at random, and who searches the dial from bottom to top in the hope of hitting upon a program not too inane, not too redolent of Broadway or of Hollywood, not too heavily saturated with the semi-savage, semi-decadent musical jargon of tin-pan alley, may easily become discouraged, disgusted or appalled or infuriated, according to his mood of the moment or his abiding temperament. There surely is a plethora of stuff that appeals presumably to the clientele of the newspaper "funnies." Indeed, of all the miraculous modern inventions, the radio has been most generally appropriated to the purposes of the moronic, the semi-moronic and the sub-moronic.

But if one were to suffer such irritation by a casual glance at radio programs and an occasional hearing of radio renditions that he would abhor radio and refrain from using it, he would really lose a great deal. Not all that comes over the air is "tripe." Believe it or not, there are programs for adults with education and good taste. The radio is like the world: you can find good in it if you look in the right places. Or it is like this metropolitan city in which I write and from which so many of the programs emanate. You can find whatever you look for in New York. Good music (in great abundance), excellent drama (now and again, once in a while), pure religion—even high supernatural mystical religion (more than you imagine), wonderful opportunities for education and culture (surpassing those of ancient Athens or Imperial Rome and more accessible to more individuals than those of Florence in the days of the great Renaissance).

Everything good is here. And of course on the other hand everything bad, if you want it. Of course you may have to hunt for the good, while the bad flings itself in your face. But the good is there, even if you have to be somewhat of a connoisseur to discover it.

So of the radio. I am not enough of an addict to dare say what percentage of the programs is worth the attention of an adult intelligence; but it must be not inconsiderable. I shouldn't be surprised, after all, if the experts who make up the programs portion out the supply of music and talk, of entertainment and instruction according to the actual desires of their composite audience. It must be—since their bread and butter depends on it—that they give the public what the public wants. They probably have statistics to prove that they present as much intellectual material as is warranted by the demand.

And now it is reported that one, if not more, of the big systems is going to try out the public to see if it will "stand for" programs of perhaps higher standard than what has been common hitherto. They have commenced broadcasting the actual text of certain extraordinarily fine books. The first attempt was the opening chapter of Antoine de Saint Exupery's Flight to Arras, with what is said to be "a minimum of theatrics and sound effects." The reception by the listening public was favorable.

Another "bookish experiment" was the reading of Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter. The magazine Time says it "offered housewives a change of pace from other sin-and-suffer programs, and gave bedfast patients in hospitals something worth listening to." But it must have been welcome also to great numbers of non-invalids and to hundreds of other groups besides tired housewives. The reader is said to make "no attempt at dramatic emphasis, but to read 'articulately and quietly.'"

Now it must be obvious that I have no axe to grind in this matter. There are not specifically Catholic programs. And I am not selling the wares of any broadcasting system. But I do say that we who like good things on the radio should give encouragement to any such attempt to feel the cultural pulse of the people at large. I have a suspicion, perhaps more than a suspicion, that people do not write in to say what they have liked. At least not in proportion to the number of people who write furious letters about what they have not liked. Cranks and fanatics are usually more articulate than the good solid sensible portion of the public. It should not be so. The speaker or the singer who attempts a first-class program likes to have words of commendation and the producer or the sponsor will drop a program if the words of commendation do not come in.

Of course I am not saying that the reader of these lines must like this or that program. But it does seem to me that a reading of the classics, old or new, over the radio is what you may very probably enjoy. If you do enjoy it, the station that does the experimenting would like to know of your pleasure.

P. S.—By the way, how many of the readers of this paper make a point of writing occasionally to express satisfaction at the Catholic Hour programs throughout the year?

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FIVE and TEN Years Ago—

—in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From June 17, 1937, Edition

First Rally sponsored by the newly-formed Rochester Diocesan Holy Name Union attracted a throng of 20,000 persons to Red Wing Stadium. As His Excellency, Bishop O'Hern, officiated at Solemn Pontifical Benediction at the outdoor altar, the 11,000 members held aloft lighted candles to present a deeply impressive spectacle of religious devotion. Speakers were the Rev. Leo M. Shea, O.P., New York, and Judge Joseph A. Moynihan, Detroit.

From June 17, 1932, Edition

Hope that the dream of a new Nazareth College to carry on the fine work being done by the Sisters of St. Joseph for the Catholic womanhood of Rochester was expressed by Archbishop Mooney as he concluded awarding diplomas to 26 graduates at the annual commencement on the Augustine St. campus.

The Most Rev. Joseph F. Rummel, Archbishop of New Orleans, issued a statement attacking the action taken by the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association in approving birth control.