

Catholic Courier

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With the Approbation of the
MOST REVEREND JAMES EDWARD KEARNEY, O.D.
Bishop of Rochester

The CATHOLIC COURIER has my most enthusiastic approval. A diocesan newspaper has become an essential part of the program of Catholic action in every diocese. The CATHOLIC COURIER should be found in every Catholic home in this diocese. I find it hard to understand how any Catholic can be so indifferent as to what is transpiring in his church throughout the world as to rely upon unreliable sources of information or even to seek an information whatever. Let us have a brief slogan "The CATHOLIC COURIER in every Catholic home."

— JAMES E. KEARNEY, Bishop of Rochester.

LAYMEN'S RETREATS

For many years laymen of the diocese have gathered for a three-day retreat at St. Bernard's Seminary. Each year found new faces present, and each year found the great majority of the original attendants on hand for the new retreat. The movement has grown here as in other dioceses, and it was felt that proper care of the men called for a house dedicated entirely to this work.

Now we have the beautiful and commodious building just outside Geneva on Geneva Lake which has been dedicated as Our Lady of the Lake Retreat House. It is in charge of the Redemptorist Fathers, with the Rev. J. P. Murphy, C.S.B., as Retreat Master. Laymen's retreats will now be spread over all the weeks of the year, not confined to just one week as heretofore. Certain week-ends have been assigned to particular parishes, and the men of these parishes are asked to make their retreat at the time assigned as far as possible.

It is a wonderful experience for a Catholic man to leave all that is worldly behind him, to lay aside for a time his worries and responsibilities, and give himself from Friday to Monday morning entirely to the interests of his soul. Faith takes on new life, religion assumes its rightful place at the forefront of our activities, God comes close to us, as we make our retreat with brethren from all parts of the diocese. Rates are moderate, low enough to permit all to make the retreat. The location at Geneva makes the Retreat House easily within reach of all parishes.

Retreat time is now on! Some have finished theirs, some are now at the House, some are planning to report within the next few weeks. The COURIER urges its readers to use this fine opportunity for spiritual betterment: the veterans of other retreats to continue, the new retreatants to make their own splendid advantages offered by the Redemptorists in their Retreat House of Our Lady of the Lake.

THE STORY OF BERNADETTE

Perhaps it is one of the concomitants of war, to find men's minds turning to religion with renewed interest, revived concern. Indeed, war conditions may even be the cause of his renewed interest, this awakening to the realities of divine truth. Surely the tremendous sale of "The Song of Bernadette" by Frana Werfel, must indicate a real longing for the type of literature that tells of God's dealings with mankind.

To the Catholic there is nothing new in the story of Bernadette Soubirous. All the intimate details of her life have been for us a matter of study. The Shrine of Lourdes with its history of miraculous cures stands as a continuous reminder of this little girl and her life-story.

But the "Song of Bernadette" gives a new meaning, a new reality, to the wonderful happenings of that life. It is an epic in prose, the fulfillment of a vow made by one who found in Bernadette a new meaning for life when despair had nearly driven him to the thought of suicide. The recital of the facts of the apparitions, the intimate narration of all the circumstances connected with them, the spiritual understanding of all that these appearances of the Lady meant to Lourdes and to the world, make the "Song of Bernadette" a gripping tale.

With the art of a master writer, Werfel contrasts the cold contempt for religion of so many leaders in Lourdes and in the country beyond with the simple understanding faith of Bernadette and her friends. Well does he bring out the unwillingness of the scoffers to consider the facts as they occurred: a blindness they justified by quoting the alleged principles of their unbelief.

No one can read this providential book without feeling a new thrill at the realization of the nearness of the supernatural to the natural, of heaven to earth. The dignity of man stands forth in new emphasis in these pages that deal so simply, yet so effectively, with things that happened in the last century, and which are repeated in our own day. It is like a spiritual retreat to study the pages of this wonderful "Song of Bernadette."

THE BASILIAN NOVITIATE

With the coming of September the diocese welcomes the opening of the new Novitiate of the Basilian Fathers in Dewey Avenue. It is a milestone in the growth of religion in the diocese. It will be the means of developing in the souls of young men the spirit of religion that will enable them to become members of the Basilian Congregation. It will be the center around which will gather the aspirations and the hopes of those who feel within their hearts the call of vocation.

It is the first religious novitiate for men in Rochester. From its halls shall go forth new candidates for the Holy Priesthood in this splendid teaching order. The boys of the city and vicinity have had the happy experience of securing their High School training from the Basilian Fathers. Many of them will now find their own way into the order through the facilities offered by the new Novitiate.

A look into the future presents a rosy picture of growth and development of the Basilian Congregation and its work. With Aquinas Institute as the great school of the Basilians in this district, with the Novitiate to welcome vocations as they present themselves, with the

(Continued on Page 19)

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Little-Known Facts for Catholics

By M. J. MURRAY



QUERIES and REPLIES

What Do The Letters I. M. R. L. Mean?

I. M. R. L. are the first letters of the four word Latin inscription which Pilate had placed over the Cross on which Christ died. "And bearing His own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha. Where they crucified Him and with Him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the middle. And Pilate wrote a title also, and he put it upon the cross. And the writing was: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (Jno. 19, 17).

In the early ages of the Church the persecuted Christians used symbols to represent the death of our Lord on the Cross. When the persecutions came to an end with Constantine they began to make realistic images of Christ's death, using a cross to which was attached a figure of the dying Savior. Above the figure was affixed a small tablet inscribed I. M. R. L. Thus the origin of our present-day crucifix. (From the pen of Father Richard Felix, O.S.B., Defenders of the Faith, Casper, Montana.)

Hidden Period

During the hidden period of our Lord's life He devoted himself to prayer for the welfare of men, to patient endurance in obedience to His Father's will, and to highest love and contemplation of the Divine Spirit.

Diocesan Recordings

AMERICA FIGHTS

"America Fights for God-Given Rights" With this as their slogan, members of the Fourth Degree, Knights of Columbus, are carrying on a nation-wide campaign to make American citizens conscious of the place "that God occupies in our democratic system of government."

The coming exemplification of the Fourth or patriotic degree of the Knights of Columbus in Elmhurst, Sept. 27, is spurring members in this diocese to carry on the campaign ordered by Supreme Master Timothy P. Galvin of Hammond, Ind.

Pocket-size cards and large placards are being distributed with this message:

AMERICA FIGHTS FOR GOD-GIVEN RIGHTS
The American Act of Faith
We hold three truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

This vital message should be spread widely, in shops, schools, wherever true Americans can be reached. Copies of the above are available from the air knights or from the Supreme Office, New Haven, Conn.

A four-page pamphlet has been prepared with this purpose: "Today, as the world faces the choice between Christianity and chaos, the Fourth Degree of the Knights of Columbus stands prepared to assist actively in directing the thought of all Americans to the principles upon which true democracy can survive."

An 18-page booklet brings the message of "God in Government" from the book by Clarence Manning, Notre Dame University professor, and an authority.

All Catholic lay organizations can give their cooperation to this work of maintaining morale among those on the home front. Keeping high that morale can be done by bringing home to every citizen the essence of true Americanism—"God in Government."

Along The Way

McVicker's In Chicago

By REV. DANIEL A. LORD, S.J.

Like most of the old theaters of the land, McVicker's in Chicago is now a motion picture theater. Yet I never pass it without a wistful recurrence to the days when it was a "legitimate" theater bringing to Chicago the Drury Lane melodramas.

In those days of my youth, melodrama was to the theater what action pictures are to the screen. And Drury Lane in London had developed the technique of a fast action play, full of suspense and danger, with one magnificently spectacular scene that kept the audience on the edge of the chair.

My mother, theater lover that she was, always got our seats early; and as the theater was what was called moderately priced, we managed the first row in the balcony. Later I learned that that was Al Smith's favorite seat. There we saw "The Price of Peace" and "The Great Ruby" and "Sporting Life" — and the other English dramas that were the legitimate ancestors of the thrillers of the screen.

There was plenty of gun play and sudden death. But all was prelude to the big spectacular climax. In "Sporting Life" it was a horse race, with the start and climax played by real horses who galloped across the stage. . . . the right horse always in the lead. (To show the incurable instinct of people for gambling, the stagehands and the orchestra always bet on the number two horse. They knew the right horse had to win. But they could bet on which horse would come in second.)

In "The Great Ruby," the climax was a fight in a balloon. The hero escapes in a balloon with the ruby; the villain grabs the rope ladder as the real balloon ascends into the files. . . . then, in a stage setting of realistic clouds, the two fight, until finally the villain falls from the balloon and through the trap door of the stage — to his ruin.

Of course, the intense realism of the movies and their ability to put on scenes like that in a fashion never dreamed of by Drury Lane producers has killed melodrama on the stage. Yet I wonder if kids today have half the thrill out of the super-feature picture on the screen that we got out of our melodramas.

At any rate, I bow to McVicker's and happy memories of other days and other ways.

Barrymore Again
My comments on John Barrymore brought a pleasant letter from a former reporter of the Dramatic Mirror. "This should interest you. One holy day at Mass in St. Malachy's Church on 42nd Street, I saw John Barrymore in the pew ahead of me. He remained for the entire Mass, a high one at that, and when he was leaving, genuflected and blessed himself. I noticed that he waited in the last seat until the crowd dispersed, and then alone walked down the street.

"My first job after leaving my Catholic college was on the Dramatic Mirror. Once I was assigned to interview Barrymore, I went, waited while he ordered up drinks, but got little out of him on the subject I'd been sent to discuss. Then he asked me what school I'd gone to. I told him, and he remarked, 'That sounds like a Jesuit school. Well, there's a fine organization of teachers.' I told him that my teachers had been the Franciscan Brothers; whereupon he lifted another highball with the toast, 'Here's to the Franciscans. They're good scouts too.'

"The Alms I noticed him at Mass, I mentioned the fact to my managing editor. The boss said merely, 'Oh, you're likely to meet John anywhere, even in church.' I suppose he meant that churchgoing was with John a pose. I don't believe it. I was convinced as I watched him at Mass that there was something much more than vanity in what he did.

Nice to know that before death drew near, Barrymore did sometimes remember his faith.

Major Catastrophe
Sadder than any of the war news was the article and picture run across the country's newspapers recently. A sixty-three-year-old actor with an honored Irish name marries the divorced wife of his own and still living son.

A look at the picture of the two was explanation enough. But when God looks down on a land where the laws make it possible for a father to marry the wife of his own son, He must have a little difficulty in recognizing it as His country.

And that should worry all of us.

Saved By An Accent
There's a city in Missouri called Japan. Don't worry. The local inhabitants never will confuse their own town with our enemy's land; for it is called either Jaypan, with an accent on the first; or Jappan, also accented on the first. A good American can handle Japan even with a mispronunciation.

A slogan appropriate for wartime is don't put off till tomorrow what you can put over today.—Detroit "News."