

Church a Bugaboo To Tyrants

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

In an interesting review of what must be an excellent book on the Nazi persecution of Christianity, "Until That Day" by Kressmann Taylor, Dr. George Shuster says, "The first blow struck by the new religion (Nazism) was aimed at the Lutheran churches. This was in itself a surprise. Catholicism had previously been Hitler's foe."

That sentence suggests an adaptation and modification of Dana's famous aphorism about the man, the dog and the news. Dictator bites Catholic Church no news; dictator bites Lutheran Church: news.

We Catholics in our long history have learned that all new tyrants follow the tactics of the old: of Nero Domitian and the other Roman Emperors up to Decius and Diocletian; of Julian the Apostate, Genseric, Attila, barbarians who succeeded the Romans of Chorocea and a dozen other Orientals; of the Chinese who killed Theophane Venard; of the Japanese who crucified the Franciscans; of the Iroquois who tomahawked, washed and buried Jogues, Brebeuf and their companions; and indeed of all the persecutors and tyrants, savage or "civilized," for well nigh two thousand years.

We seem to be the beta male of every sadist who gets the reins of political power into his hands. All tyrants seem to recognize instinctively that they cannot get anywhere until they put us out of the way. Protestants have in general escaped. This is Germany they have enjoyed no immunity.

Dr. Shuster surmises that Hitler commenced with the Lutherans after the Jews—as easier to dispose of than the Catholics, postponing the more difficult job until he had done the easier one. That technique is at least a variant on the usual procedure. We Catholics have almost always received the complement of being the first object of the attack of these madmen.

You would think they would leave us alone after all these centuries. Perhaps they would if they

were not out of their minds. It is historical fact that every one who has attempted to dash the back of Peter has himself foundered. Every one who seeks the rock of Peter succumbs himself. As the old French saying says, "Qui cherche le Pape se noie"; he that seeks the Pope, drowns. We are prone to persecutors.

If this were only a theological theory or a guess, apparitions, it would not be so strange that tyrants do not "get wise" to it. But it is an historical fact, and it should have come within the orbit of their information. Naturally they could not be expected to have read De Mortibus Persecutionum in which the ancient Christian writer Lactantius records the dire fate of those who led in his day and earlier laid violent hands upon the Church. But Dr. Hildebrand never read in some convenient little manual of history, the story of Henry IV and the incident at Canossa? Tyrants, like the horsemen, learn nothing, and unlike the horsemen they forget everything. "What can we learn from history?" is the title of a chapter in a book by WALTER WADE. As far as dictators and tyrants are concerned, the answer is "Nothing." They learn nothing. Also there is an old saying (I forget whose). "The history of the world is the judgment of the world." The history of tyranny is the defeat and death of tyrants. We may say to them what Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Fools! Fools and blind!"

I have hinted at a theological reason in addition to the historical reason why Hitler and men of his ilk should give the Church a wide berth. There is indeed a theological reason. Call it, if you will, a mystical reason. You cannot kill God. You cannot kill God's truth. You cannot destroy the vehicle that bears God's truth. Father Edmond Peach, S.J., in his masterly work, "The Christian Philosophy of Life," quotes some anonymous "wise man" who said: "If I were not already inwardly persuaded of the truth which the Church teaches, I should be led to believe in it because of the very ignorance and rancor displayed by her adherents, of the hatred men bear towards her, and of the unanimity with which she is opposed by all that is evil, and depraved in human nature."

Father Peach's book appeared 40 years ago in Germany. Hitler apparently never happened upon it or upon that passage, if he had. The book is for Hitler. His persecution will not do us any permanent harm, but it will ruin us.

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STRANGE BUT TRUE

Little-Known Facts for Catholics

By M. J. MURRAY



EDITORIALS

(Continued from Page 12)

would be his guide in arranging for peace. Father O'Donnell, C.S.P., President of Notre Dame, has written to President Roosevelt asking him to set aside a day of prayer and fasting in which all the people will ask Almighty God to guide and direct our President in his course and bless his brave and courageous efforts on behalf of America with victory.

To our boys so bravely facing the task before them, to the people sacrificing all things on the home front for their cause, there is lasting consolation in the certainty that our great Catholic leaders respect and trust those in civil and military authority in America, and look confidently to them to guide us in war, to protect our every civil and religious right in arranging for the peace that shall follow a victory with justice. "Then conquer we must. Since our cause it is just!"

HE CAME TO HIS OWN TOWN

Over the Sea of Geneseth sailed Our Lord till He came to His own town. Perhaps there came into His heart a thrill of memories connected with His earlier years. Here was His home, here were the scenes connected with His childhood and youth, here Mary and Joseph watched over Him. Here were places and homes and people that held for Him an interest beyond that of other towns. On this day He came into His own town!

And at once, as in other towns, He is called on to help an afflicted one. He grants a grace more than human, a divine grace in the pardon of sin: "Take courage, Son, thy sins are forgiven thee". When His unbelieving neighbors raised the voice of complaint against Him, denied He had power that belonged only to God—the power to forgive sin. He gave to the paralytic the human grace of healing: He wrought a miracle, that all could see. He bade the helpless one to arise and walk and take his pallet back into his house from which it had been carried by his friends. At this evident act of divine power, fear came upon all and they believed.

Jesus comes to our communities, counting each one of them in a sense "His home town". His children live in them, His blessings in things material and spiritual have been their endowment. His presence has blessed them. May He come to His own town to visit us with His power of healing, with His power of pardoning sin! May we see Him dwelling with us in every sacramental act of His priests at the altar, in the confessional, at the baptism, in the pulpit, in the sick room, in the house of mourning. May He dwell always with us in His home town!

'Quiz' Corner

Please explain the manner in which a person should prepare for a general confession.

In most cases and for most people the best preparation for a general confession is the intention to not make one. One should not make a general confession unless there be some real necessity or is so advised by his confessor. Though you may worry over your past confessions and may even fear that you have not confessed some mortal sins, try to forget them. This torment of conscience may be nothing more than a test or trial, or it may be that it is nothing more than a temptation from the devil. Before you make a

general confession ask your confessor whether or not it would be advisable.

What circumstances about a sin must a penitent tell to his confessor?

If the circumstances are such that what ordinarily would be a venial sin would under the circumstances be a mortal sin and you deliberately refuse to tell such circumstances, your confession is a bad confession. Frequently penitents do not realize this and may not be formally guilty of sacrilege. Should you believe that the circumstances of a sin would materially change the nature of the sin you should tell your confessor.

Library Signpost

Some Cues And Clues

By Rev. Benedict Ekmann

It was reported that Irene Dunne lost patience last week at a War Bond rally in one of our local factories because the audience was noisy and unattractive while a soldier of Britain was speaking to them. The actress gave them a piece of her mind, with no ill effects, though she was embarrassed by it afterwards.

The incident points one thing for me: our undemocratic American habit of using freedom as freedom to take, more than as freedom to give. Just as it is far more abused, so is it far more democratic, to give, than to receive. Your true democrat is a gentleman who thinks more on his duties than on his rights. I construe my freedom in a democracy to mean freedom to do the things I know I ought to do, far more than freedom to do the things I like to do. The things I like to do are not always the things I ought to do. My democracy means most to me because it guarantees my right to be a gentleman.

Read: Which Way, Democracy? by Wilfrid Parsons.

The way a Catholic artist works is very well revealed in a fine little poem of Eileen Duggan which I just came across. It's an autumn—which is quite appropriate, since this is the first week of that glorious season. As the poet sees the year going out in a burst of glory before the desolation of the winter-tide, she is reminded of Christ's entering Jerusalem with palms and hosannas before His Passion.

AUTUMN
Ah royal, surely royal, I concede you.
What else this rush of homage on their part?
But all these hot salutes, these dusty honours,
I see them with a wary, brooding heart.
If multitudes of fruits come forth to greet you,
If flowers and clouds give you a King's estate,
What is it but a justice, a fulfilment?
Why should I sadden that they about you great?
The trees have spread their garments down before you.

Larks lead you in, a living haze of cries,
Thrones and dominions in the hills arouse you,
The winds and the mid-roads unto you arise.
It is not long, God knows, you do the monarch.
This ardent irony that is the land
Sends you upon an ass into your winter
That drives a nail of sleep through either hand.

Eileen Duggan is a newer star on the horizon of Catholic poetry. She lives way on the other side of the world—"down under," as the mariners say. She's from New Zealand, close to the Pacific theatre of the war. Her poetry is, in the words of the linerick, "exceedingly canny." But she is more by far than an able technician of words. She has something very extra to say. Here is a new note in the chorus of God's minstrels. Like all good Christian poets, she sees the world as the garment of God, and all creatures as couriers of His meaning. Such poets are evangelists of the Incarnation. For just as "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," so do they give the unutterable Truth and Beauty "a local habitation and a name," seeing its elusive signs where most of us pass them by like blind men. Let the Catholic poets open your weak eyes to see how close around us, everywhere we go, are the traces of God.

Read: the poems of Eileen Duggan, of Alice Meynell, of G. K. Chesterton, of Francis Thompson, of Hilaire Belloc, of Father Teilhard de Chardin, of

Both titles, of William Thomas Walsh, of Katharine Tegen, of Thomas Merton.

Visiting the Ladies of the Grail recently, I had a chance to see the simple little bookcase in the study of one of the girls who is planning in becoming a Catholic Action leader. These were the titles of her very excellent collection:

- Religion and the Modern State, by Christopher Dawson; The Public Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by Archbishop Goodier; The World's Great Catholic Feasts, edited by Wm. Walsh; Dark Night, by Laura Adams; The Everlasting Man, by G. K. Chesterton; The Mystical Body of Christ, by Father Sheen; The "Prison of Glory," by St. Elizabeth of the Trinity; The Sabbath School, by Francis Parkinson Keyes; The Song of Bernadette, by Franz Werfel; The Roman Rite, by Albert Verger; In Defense of Faith, by Dietrich von Hildebrand; Think and Pray, by Father McMorris; Meditations for the Night, by Dom John; Mystical Latin, by Mr. Desmond; Victory Over Vice, by Father Sheen; The Soul of the Apostolate, by Dom Chaitany; Progress and Religion, by Christopher Dawson; Thomas More, by Daniel Berrigan; The Question Man, by Father Conway; A Map of Life, by Frank Sheen; An American Woman, by Leonard Fahnestock; This War is the Passion, by Carol Houlihan; One With Jesus, by Paul de Jarvis; The Autobiography of St. Thomas; The Spirit of Catholicism, by Wm. Adams; Introduction to the Devout Life, and The Love of God, both by St. Francis de Sales; The Roman Breviary, in English translation; The Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and Mr. Egan's Fabulous Series of Catholic Masterpieces (which was noted in this column a few weeks ago).

I marvel at the ways of God. Here is a girl, how many another in our Catholic colleges. And yet she has caught on to the adventure and the wonder of the Catholic revolution, and most of the others look on living in their ivory towers. What makes her "click," while the others stay put? I think I know the answer, but it leaves the still in the dark, because it is a mystery that belongs to God.

FIVE and TEN Years Ago

—in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From Sept. 23, 1937, Edition
Catholics were called upon, in a letter from His Excellency, Bishop O'Hara, to cooperate with their fellow-citizens in contributing clothing and furnishings to the Community Drive being conducted on behalf of the poor.

From Sept. 23, 1937, Edition
"The law and the prophets of old tell me that the straightforward pathway out of the present obscure forest is to stick to the faith of our fathers." This was the Constitution Requiem centennial message of the Most Rev. James H. Kearney, Apostolic Administrator of Salt Lake and Bishop of Rochester delivered at the Requiem centennial celebration in Salt Lake City.

His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, received in audience, the Rev. Dr. J. Emil Coffel, pastor of St. Peter and Paul's Church, Rochester, and Matthew Henry Cloukey of Overbrook, Philadelphia.

Tenth anniversary of the founding of St. Theresa's Church, Rochester, by the Franciscan Friars, Order of Minor Conventuals was celebrated with solemn High Mass and other ceremonies and festivities.

Formation of a Nazareth College Alumnae Association Catholic Evidence Guild was announced at the first fall dinner meeting of the Association.