

Library Signpost

Matters of October

By Rev. Benedict Erasmus

Beautiful, isn't it, the way Nature turns Franciscan around St. Francis' Feast? Her green robe changes to brown and saffron, as the clouds clear to the abrogation of December. With marvelous chemistry, the Divine Artist turns all into the hue of fire for the immolation of November. Like Abraham setting fire to the wood for the sacrifice of Isaac. But before the final holocaust of red, Nature celebrates the harvest in Franciscan brown, and like a jewel in the ring of these lovely days is the Feast of the Poor Man of Assisi who praised God for flowers and fruits and trees, for sun and moon, for fire and water, and for all His wonderful works.

Don't we Catholics owe it to God to use Nature as an instrument of praise? Especially now, when men are making a titanic effort to mold Nature's gifts into instruments of death and blood-fury. Are we the slightest bit uncomfortable when we ought to be downright aghast and appalled, at seeing our natural powers so diverted, so converted, so wasted, so turned against our brothers and away from God's peace? Necessity, if you will. But an evil necessity not something to sell our souls to, not something to make us forget the very name of Christian, unless we are wholly vitiated by the brutish drive of the war tempo.

Let's do what we have to in what Christopher Dawson calls this "judgment of the nations." I'm not pleading anything against the war effort. But I insist we have our souls to keep. We have to preserve our wholesome view of life. We have to see Nature still as God's handiwork and the instrument of His praise. We may not get the miracle of October (pass unregarded and without its witness in the fever of war).

Only as men of peace, like Francis, can we observe and use God's gifts for His service. Soldiers and defense workers can be men of peace. They can have Franciscan hearts. I'm not talking through my hat. I know soldiers and defense workers who are men of peace, their minds are set on God and His charity, and their thoughts, like God's, are "thoughts of peace, and not of affliction." Such men are not many, to be sure. But they are a chosen guard who have made up their minds to preserve their souls from the contaminations of war. They are to be found, I'm sure, in every city, as they are in ours. They remind me of the ten just men for whose sake God would have been willing to spare Sodom and Gomorrah.

Read The Franciscan Message to the World Gemelli Characteron
Life of St. Francis of Assisi Fr. Cuthbert

Books on October Saints:
Oct 3 St. Therese Her Autobiography, and Gibson's The Secret of the Little Flower.

Suum Cuique

Word 'Standards' Again

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

There's that word again "Standards." What's wrong with the word? Standards. What's right with the word? Standards. What's the cause of the chaos in the world? Standards. What can produce order out of chaos? Standards. The present global war is a war of Standards. Men talk of ideologies. An easier and better word is Standards. Ideologies are mere philosophies. Standards are norms of conduct based upon philosophies. Philosophies don't fight. At least they don't fight bloody battles. Philosophies put on a kind of shadow boxing in clubrooms, lecture halls and debating clubs. But when somebody makes a standard of action out of a philosophy and starts to put it into practice, the result may well be war. That is what is happening now. One standard is at war with another.

It might be truer to say that such is the situation as we see it. How some other people see it, or some other nations, we cannot pretend to say. It is not humanly possible to get into the mind of other men. The mentality of nations remains a secret from us. But in our own country, those who make the most acceptable plea for the justice and the importance of the war, insist that it is a battle to the death between the "traditional" that is to say the American standard of right, law, virtue, and the pagan standard. As philosophies, Christianity and paganism have been in conflict in the universities, on platforms in the pulpits, in controversial conversations. The traditionalist, that is to say the believer in an American civilization, has always held that there is a Right and a Law and a Standard of conduct above men and nations that the Standard is fixed, immutable, universal eternal. In fact, the Standard is God. God revealed in the Decalogue - God revealed in the Gospel. The protagonists of paganism, on the other hand, have been teaching in lectures and books and magazines for two or three generations, that there is no permanent standard, still less a divine, sacrosanct, inviolable standard of conduct. The standard, they say, is not God but the mind of man. Man changes his mind and the standard of his conduct changes; with him. Which standard is right? The one he had formerly or the one he has now? The one promulgated at Sinai and in Galilee or the one held by the "moderns," the "liberals," the "enlightened"?

The pagan would have explained that the only right standard for a man is the one he holds today. The standards of our grandfathers were right for them. But if we follow the standard of our grandfathers it is because we have become stabilized, crystallized, ossified. Ethics, they say, - that is to say the philosophy and the rule of conduct - is not dead, but alive. It changes from generation to generation, and we must change with it. To hold the ethics of a by-gone generation is immoral. Yes, immoral. "Morals they say are 'mores.'" "Mores" are customs, habits. Standards. Good morals are the morals of the time in which we live. But people for

Oct. 2: St. Bruno His God's Holy Will, by Fr. Marchese.
Oct. 3: St. Francis Preaching to the Birds, by Margaret Yee.
Oct. 11: King St. Edward What Art Thou, by Fr. Marchese.
Oct. 12: St. Teresa Her own writings, especially The Interior Castle, was translated by Fr. Thomas Merton in Her Writings, Doubleday's 20 Cent. of Arden; Alhambra's The Best of Her Writings.
Oct. 17: St. Margaret Mary Three Three Hearts, by Margaret Yee; The Heart of St. Margaret Mary, by Henri Ghiesbreght.

Material on the other Saints of October may be found in Butler's Lives of the Saints or in the Catholic Encyclopedia.

Catholic Stages Department
DOWN IN BETHLEHEM

A Sequence of Nativity Dramas
A beautifully written series of seven dramatizations by Francis X. Talbot

on the beginning of Jesus' life, based upon Gospel words and facts. Told with simple language, each play reconstructs an episode of the Christ-history without recourse to melodrama. They may be produced without scenery, and may be used in classrooms. Simple, economical staging makes memorizing easy.

Synopsis: The sequence begins with Gabriel's announcement to Mary. The scene shifts from Nazareth to Bethlehem, thence to Egypt, and the period concludes with the loss of the Child among other children in the town of Heliopolis. The individual dramas are:

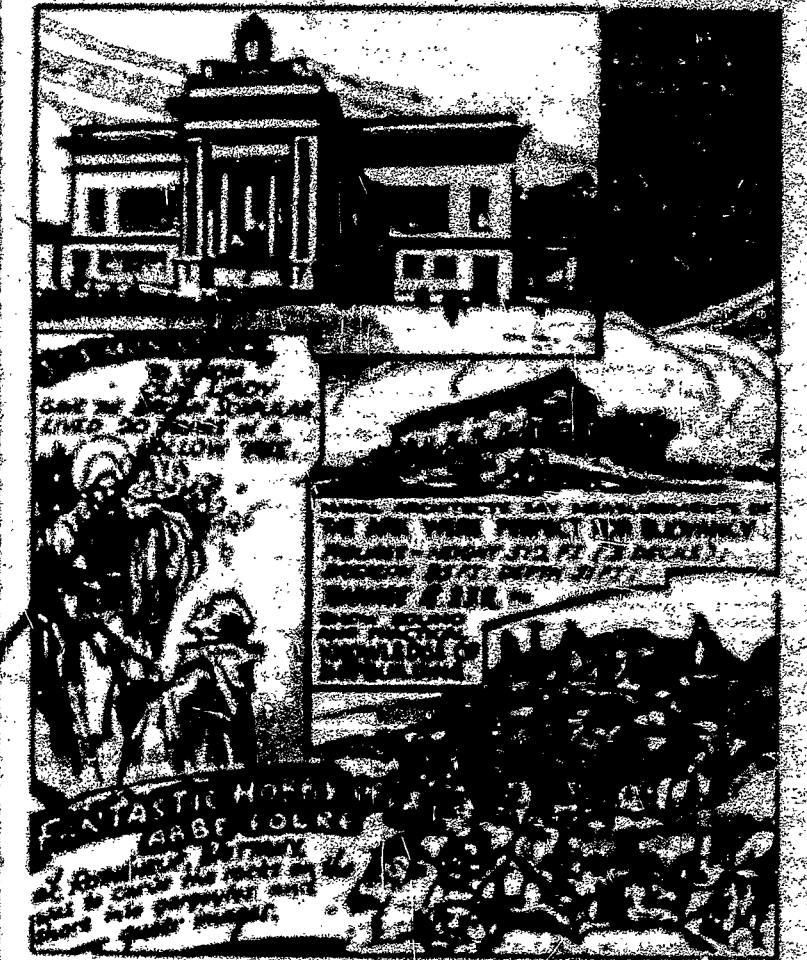
- 1-THE PROLOGUE: 2M, 1F, 10 minutes. GABRIEL announces the tidings to MARY.
- 2-UP FROM NAZARETH: 1M, 1F, adult, adolescent; 10 minutes. NAZARETH, Nazareth, bid farewell to MARY and JOSEPH.
- 3-DOWN TO BETHLEHEM: 2M, 1F, adult, adolescent; 10 minutes. MARY and JOSEPH arrive at Bethlehem, find shelter in a shepherds' hut.
- 4-OUT ON THE HILLSIDE: 1M, 1F, adult, adolescent; 10 minutes. JOSEPH hears the voices of the CHILD as shepherds see the light of heaven.
- 5-AN INTERLUDE: 2M, adult, adolescent; 10 minutes. JEHOIAH HEROD commands SOLDIERS to murder the CHILD whom his subjects are worshipping.
- 6-SUNSET TO NOON: 2M, 1F, adult, adolescent; 10 minutes. JOSEPH, MARY, and the CHILD escape from Herod, seek safety in another land.
- 7-AS OTHER CHILDREN: 1M, 1F, adult, adolescent, children; 10 minutes. In the Egyptian town of Heliopolis, JOSEPH and MARY find a haven for JESUS.

Production Notes: Type: dramatic episodes. Sets: no scenery required. Playing time: 1 1/2 hours in entirety. Costumes: Biblical. Director: simple. Production: simple requirements. Source: Longmans, Green & Co., 114 N. 4th Ave., N. Y. C. In SHINING IN THE DARKNESS, dramas of the Nativity and the Resurrection: 13 plays in the volume; Copyright 1942, all rights reserved. Consult publisher for royalty and production. \$2.00 copy.

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STRANGE BUT TRUE
Little-Known Facts for Catholics

By M. J. MURRAY



Feast Days

Tuesday, October 14 - ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR
Wednesday, October 15 - ST. GALLIENUS
Thursday, October 16 - ST. TERESA OF AVILA
Friday, October 17 - ST. WENIG
Saturday, October 18 - ST. MARGARET MARY
Sunday, October 19 - ST. TARCISUS AND HIS COMPANIONS
Monday, October 20 - ST. WILLIAM

EDITORIALS

(Continued from Page 12)

Wickersham Commission made a thorough and scientific study under government auspices of the whole situation, and condemned prohibition roundly for all the evil it had brought on the country.

May the sensible people in and out of the halls of Congress be ready to defeat any attempt to resurrect this old corpse of prohibition? May those who deal in alcoholic beverages and those who use them, show by their moderation that the right way to meet the liquor problem is through the conscience of the individual.

Patriotism will keep all but a few fanatics from injecting this lost cause into a country already fully occupied with problems concerning the winning of the war.

C. Y. A. MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The Columbus Youth Association is the organization that manages and directs the youth activities of the Columbus Civic Centre. Through the facilities of a well-equipped athletic building are made available to the young people of the community. The annual drive for memberships is now on, with earnest workers soliciting the support of men and women all over Rochester and vicinity.

War conditions increase the danger to the morals of our young people. Supervised recreation means much in planning programs for the spare time of the young. Character building agencies everywhere have a distinct responsibility at this time. Father Vogt and his co-workers in the Columbus Youth Association are doing their utmost for the youth of this city. Their work is made more effective through an increase in memberships. Each membership sponsors one boy for the C.Y.A. Friends of youth will be glad to support the work of the C.Y.A. by the patronage they give to this drive for memberships.

WHOSE SON WAS LYING SICK

Sickness assails all. No home is immune to it, no family is free from it. High and low, rich and poor, how before its visit. Sometimes it is the means of turning one's thoughts away from the pressure of worldly interests. It teaches pride to turn to God. It teaches avarice to look to the God of all riches. It teaches the self-sufficient to seek from God the help He alone can give. So in today's Gospel it turns the mind of the royal official to Christ: perhaps he had given little thought to Him and His works; he was too busy. Christ was unimportant. Until his son lay sick. Then he was not too busy. Then he found that most important was the Christ who cured others, who could also cure his son. That lesson of sickness brought humility to the royal official: the cure of the sickness was the occasion of bringing saving faith to him and to all his family.

Must we wait for sickness to learn our dependence on God? Must we await the merciful laying on of the Saviour's hands before we learn the goodness of God? Why not know now, learn now, to lean on God, to ask Him to be near us ever? Our humility, our faith, our devotion, should be of the present. Blessed are they who serve God

FIVE and TEN Years Ago

-in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER-

From Oct. 7, 1937 Edition

Dedication of a newly completed and modernly equipped parish school building was to take place in conjunction with the Golden Jubilee of St. Joseph's Church, Wayland, on Oct. 3, 1932.

From Oct. 7, 1937 Edition

Arrangements for opening a new St. Bridget's Church following a disastrous fire were being made by the Rev. Gerald T. Brennan, pastor.

"A rebash of irresponsible charges that have been since discredited," was how the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Michael J. Ready, executive secretary, N. C. W. C. answered the "open letter" published by 159 Protestant clergymen, educators and laymen attacking the Pastoral Letter of the Spanish Hierarchy on the