

Society for Propagation of the Faith

The REV. JOHN S. RANDALL, Director

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Deo Gratias

For more than three hundred years now, grateful Americans have been setting aside one day a year for formal thanksgiving. Both materially and in the spirit of our people we have been lavishly blessed. This year is no exception, and the plight of our prostrate fellow-nations should cause us to redouble our thanks that we have been spared what they are suffering.

We Catholics have even more to be grateful for because we have our Faith, that infinite Gift which becomes stronger and more vital in times of adversity. Hope too is ours, personified by the Church through the centuries. Although the outlook seems black now for her missions, past events have proved that the darkest moments often turn out to be the brightest. People all over the world, who before the war either knew nothing about the Church or who were misinformed concerning her, today have the opportunity to watch her priests and nuns, as well as her laymen, in action. The reports which persistently trickle in of battle front conversions are only a straw in the wind, it will be years before the whole story will be told.

The best way in which to express our thanks for all that has been showered upon us is in charity to those less fortunate than we. The Society for the Propagation of the Faith is still getting money through its bombed-out missions and impoverished missionaries. Your diocesan director will see that your "thank offering" is sent on its way rejoicing.

Missionaries in the War

One Jesuit mission in Shanghai has sheltered 250,000 war refugees and other Catholic missions in China are "feeding the wretched victims homeless through the latest battles in Kiangsi Province," the Rev. Mark Tennison, American Maryknoller stationed in Chungking, wrote to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith on Sept. 4.

Estimating that 95 per cent of the missionaries in Free China have remained at their posts despite all restrictions and difficulties, Father Tennison gave a few examples of the courage and perseverance which is so characteristic. "The Canadian Fathers in Chekiang bicycled to the Maryknoll mission in Kweiilin and waited for the chance to return to their field." This opportunity now appears to have come, Father feels. "Many of the Fathers from Fukien sought refuge in Kaying and returned after the bombs and shells had ceased. Some stayed at their mission, braving the battle, and two priests were killed. In Nanning, the priests fled to the mountains but returned with their flock after the fighting."

All of these missionaries have helped China's host of refugees, from the great benefactors such as Father Robert Jacquinet de Besange of the Jesuits, whose world-renowned safety zone protected the lives of a quarter million neutrals in Shanghai, to the scattered mission forces who are aiding China's homeless. "The Church's 215 hospitals, 900 dispensaries, 584 asylums and orphanages, and thousands of mission stations are helping war victims from Peking to Hanoi," Father summarized.

Concerning the Generalissimo

The Monthly Calendar of St. Ignatius' Church in San Francisco not long ago carried this informative glimpse into the character of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, written by the Rev. Charles Meeus, Belgian missionary who became a naturalized citizen of China.

"Chiang Kai-shek, the Chinese leader, has inspired his people as few men have in the history of Cathay. It is interesting to learn that his own source of strength is spiritual and he urges his people to seek consolation in Christ."

"Every morning at dawn, he gathers his entire household and even his guests for a daily meditation that he would not omit even on the battlefield. Unlike Alexander the Great, who slept before big battles, Chiang Kai-shek seeks help from God. His meditation topics are taken from

(Continued on Page 16)



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