Sermon Cordon

# Moral Courage In War Time

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

Day after day in this time of global war, the newspapers carry stories of magnificent physical courage shown by men in the armed services and in the merchant marine. In the midst of sorrow and tragedy these stories are welcome. Whether or not we shall get a better world as a result of the war is a moot question. But one excellent by-product of war will be the accumulating record of bravery. Those especially who have charge of the education of the young will do well to make a compilation of outstanding heroic incidents which otherwise would only appear for a day in the papers and be promptly forgotten. When the war is over these stories can be retold as an inspiration to children—and indeed to all of us who need from time to time to have our confidence in the courage of the race renewed.

But even more important are stories of moral bravery. They too may be found in the papers, but you have to look for them. They are not usually on the front page, but tucked away inconspicuously, perhaps swallowed up and lost in the midst of a couple of hundred pages of print. (The New York Times on a recent Sunday comprised 225 pages!)

I say moral courage is more important than physical bravery. It is also more unusual. Almost any man can be brave in battle. His blood is up. Excitement carries him on. Emulation of his buddies prevents his feeling fear of holding back if he does feel it. Besides, as the Romans used to say (they were terrific soldiers), ther is *gaudium certaminis*, a fierce joy in fighting. A man who loves peace in time of peace can come to develop a love of killing soon after he gets into the front line of battle. With a death dealing instrument, rifle, grenade, machine gun, machete, bayonet, to work with, he forgets where he is and what risk he runs. He's a hero but he doesn't know it while in action.

Very different is moral courage. Different and more difficult. The moral hero may be all alone in his heroism. Perhaps, indeed, he is "a minority of one." All around him are not buddies, but enemies. Against them he has no defense. A gestapo, or an OGPU can waylay him and either kill him or hide him away for torture and a lingering death. No one knows where he is secreted and in his loneliness it must seem to him that no one cares. If he has friends, they have no weapons. Even if weapons were placed in their hands they could not or would not use them. The moral hero is as defenseless as Pope Leo before Attila the Hun, or Christ before Pilate. To be in that position takes nerve, infinitely more than that required to rush into bloody conflict, weapon in hand.

For this reason the example of the moral hero should be more "played up" by the press. Not that physical courage should be minimized; it is admirable and beautiful. But the bravery which is not spectacular will be in the long run a greater inspiration than the bravery of the battlefield. For over nineteen hundred years countless millions of souls have developed nobility of characters from the very thought of Jesus standing before Pilate the procurator and Herod the King, unafraid, undaunted. In spite of His helplessness He was Master of Himself, of the mob who were hounding him, of His judges and in a word of the entire situation. "Behold the Man" has more meaning than one. Perhaps we should translate Ecce Homo "Behold, A Man."

The example of one great Hero in the moral sphere is being repeated in this war. Much has been made in newspapers and books of the heroism of Pastor Niemoeller. Rightly so. But we Catholics could wish that secular journals, as well as our own papers would make more of the heroism of the Bishop of Munster in Germany. The Bishop, who as it happens is a Count, August Von Galen has repeatedly defied the Gestapo, and even the Fuehrer, in the interests of Christian morality. Together with Bishop Von Galen the united Bishops of Germany on a half dozen occasions have courted imprisonment, torture and death. They have run the risk of precipitating persecution of the whole Church by their uncompromising condemnation of the immoralities and the savageries of Nazism.

Just as Henry II of England uttered an impatient word and Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, was slaughtered in the Sanctuary, Hitler could make a gesture and any one or all of these German Bishops would be done away with. The Fuehrer has committed so many crimes that one more would mean nothing to him. He has so often affronted and challenged civilization that he has grown reckless of what the world thinks. Mere churchmen have really no defense against the gang of bandits that rule Germany.

In the conquered countries as well, Catholic Bishops have shown consistent heroism. Cardinal Van Roey in Belgium is in just as precarious a position as Cardinal Faulhaber in Munich, but he too, speaks out loud and bold against the Nazis. And let us not forget Cardinal Hlond of Poland upon whose head, no doubt, the oppressors have set a price.

The example of these courageous churchmen will if we have not lost our sense of values, be even more highly regarded than that of the heroes of the martial life. Cardinal Mercier was perhaps the greatest hero of the other war. Some one or more of these clergymen, helpless, with no weapon but moral courage will have an equal fame after this war.

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# FIVE and TEN Years Ago--

**From Jan. 26, 1933, Edition**

Announcement was made that Elmira Council, Knights of Columbus, had acquired the former Century Club building and was making plans to improve the structure making the upper floor into a large hall for social and athletic as well as Council affairs.

**From Jan. 27, 1938, Edition**

Joining the opposition to ratification of the so-called Child Labor Amendment, two bills for which were pending in the Assembly, Howard M. Woods, Rochester attorney, pointed out that preponderance of opinion among the American Bar Association was against ratification.

# 'Quiz' Corner

**What is the meaning of the different colored scapulars?**

The scapular, the word being derived from the Latin scapula, which means shoulder, is a piece of cloth slipped over the head, hanging down in front and on the back. It in the most important part in the habit of monastic orders, worn over the regular habit or cassock. The origin of the scapular dates back to the Middle Ages. Large sized scapulars, covering nearly the entire front and back of the wearer, were at first worn by the so-called "First" Orders. When later "Third" Orders were originated for lay people, these were small sized scapulars, which were the insignia of their membership. The various orders wore habits of various orders. The scapulars were of the colors of the habit, hence the various colors. The most popular scapular is that of the Carmelites. Tradition tells us that this scapular was handed to Simon Stock at Cambridge, England, by the Blessed Virgin hereself.

**If one says the penance after confession with distraction or without devotion, does that make the confession bad? Would it be correct to repeat the penance if you knew it was not said devoutly?**

The confession would not be rendered invalid if the penance were said with deliberate distraction, but deliberate distraction in prayer is a venial sin. In the circumstances, it would be advisable to repeat the penance.

**If a girl wishes to enter the convent whom does she consult?**

The best thing for her to do would be to consult her spiritual adviser or her regular confessor. If she has not been in the habit of going to one priest in particular for spiritual matters she should consult her pastor. Through these means she will find out what particular phase of religious life she is best fitted for. Even if one has already made a decision as to the community it would be well to consult her pastor in the matter. A recommendation from the pastor is required for entrance into a religious community.

**What were the miracles accepted in the cause of the canonization of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus?**

The first miracle which was accepted for beatification was the cure of Rene Laura, in religion Sister St. Germain of the Daughters of the Cross, who was instantly and completely cured of ulcers of the stomach. The second miracle was the case of the Abbe Charles Anne, cured of galloping pulmonary tuberculosis. The first miracle in the process of canonization was that of Gabrielle Trimusi, a Carmelite of the Convent of Parma, who was instantly cured of Potts Disease and tubercular arthritis of the left knee. The second miracle in the process of canonization was that of Marie Pellemann of Holland, who was cured of intestinal tuberculosis. All these miracles were attested by competent and unbiased medical authority.

**Why do some priests give the blessing after Communion and other priests do not?**

It may be that the difference was not in the priest but in the Mass. When a priest distributes Holy Communion outside of Mass he gives the blessing after he shows the Tabernacle unless it is immediately before or after Mass said in black vestments. On such occasions he does not give the blessing.

## No Priority on Prayer

By C. J. KELLER

The business man grows weary
With the troubles of the day.
The present methods differ
From the old and trusted way.

Priorities are needed
To get merchandise to sell.
Each order must be allocated,
Its end—use shown as well.

"This item has a ceiling price
No higher than last May."
"Sorry, merchandise is frozen
By the order of O. P. A."

"This is out of stock—limited
By the War Production Board."
"No more for the duration,
No need to try and hoard."

"The world is in an awful mess,
Nothing seems to make it better."
"I went straight to Washington,
—Wrote my Congressman a letter."

* * *

But the most important item
Has never crossed his mind.
He could talk to the "Higher-Up,"
Who is good, and just, and kind.

A heart to heart conference
With the "Man in Power" up there
Would be easy, for there isn't
A priority on prayer.

And our business man so weary
With the troubles of the day,
Could be happier indeed
If he took time out to pray.

## Soldier of Christ

By MARY E. FENNESSY

Priest of God, like soldier dressed,
The Cross of Christ upon your breast,
Go forth with courage in your heart
And nobly do your priestly part.

Soldier of Christ, along the way
You'll meet your brothers day by day;
With the banner of the Cross held high
You'll teach them how to live and die.

And many a lad will kneel in prayer
To thank his God that you are there;
And many a soul will finer grow
Because you're there Christ's love to show.

We'll pray each day that God will bless
And crown your efforts with success,
Then bring you home quite safe again
With the Peace of Christ in the hearts of men.

# EDITORIALS

(Continued from Page 18)

## HE WAS ASLEEP

Even with Jesus asleep in the midst of the terrific storm that raged on Genessareth, the Apostles had no right to let fear overwhelm them. They knew His power, they knew His concern for them, they knew His readiness to help them. They had seen Him care for others in time of danger, they had every right to surrender even their tense fear in imminent danger to utter reliance on Him. But they did not: they felt He needed arousing from His sleep, they felt He needed their urging.

Storms surround the children of Christ today. Peril has arisen on every side. For the time Christ's power over them seems to be dormant, Christ seems to be asleep. So many feel it needful to cry out "Lord save us, we perish!"

Christ sleeps today But Christ is mindful of all that threatens His world and His children. Christ has in mind the remedy for present ills. Christ foresees the end that must come to all who oppose the designs of God.

"Oh ye of little faith, why did ye doubt?" The sea and the waves of human wickedness are awaiting the command of Christ. The uproar of the storm awaits the voice of the Master, the voice of command. A great calm lies before us, which we shall soon see when the proper time is at hand.

In power of faith, in certitude of unfailing hope, in utter reliance on the goodness of the God of love, let us in confidence look forward to the moment in which Christ shall command the sea and the waves of human aggression, and bring to the world a great calm. The calm of peace on earth to men of good will shall surely come, in God's own good time. Let us not be of little faith, let us never doubt! God's in His heaven, all shall be right with the world!

Library Signpost

# New Books At The Library

By Rev. Benedict Ehmann

The following books are recent acquisitions at the Catholic Evidence Library, Columbus City Center today:

**The Family That Overlooked Christ.**
—Rev. M. Raymond, O.C.R.O.

A novelized account of the family of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, by the author of "The Man Who Got Even with God."

**The Man of Brother Michael.**
—Michael Kent.

A novel of one man's tragedy and how it became transfigured with God's glory.

**The Avalon March.**
—John Cudahy.

The former United States ambassador to Belgium tells in gripping style a first-hand account of the Nazi twilight over Europe.

**Saints at Prayer.**
—Raymond E. F. Larsson.

An admirable collection of some of the finest prayers of the twenty Christian centuries. An excellent feature is the pithy biography introducing each Saint with a perfect one-page summary of his or her life: these miniatures are models of composition.

**Philosophy for the Millions.**
—Rev. J. A. McWilliams, S.J.

Chapters on: What Philosophy means to you . . . The advantage of being human . . . What the human mind is like . . . Philosophy in government, in business . . . How irreligion comes about . . . What Philosophy has done to history . . . How the War is a war of Philosophies.

**It Faces the Land.**
—Carey McWilliams.

Title taken from Goldsmith's couplet: "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey, Where wealth accumulates and men decay." Mr. McWilliams accepts the deterioration of the United States countryside because of the mechanization and urbanization of our way of life, and finds it so bad that he gives his report this foreboding title. A "must" book for sociologists and "rural liters."

**The Road to Victory.**
—Archbishop Francis J. Spellman.

The Ordinary of New York shows the Catholic principles which alone can secure the world after the war: a short book with a very simple and engaging manner, but leaving no doubt as to what it stands for.

**The Castle On the Hill.**
—Elizabeth Goudge.

The announcement of a new book by this author is usually a sufficient drawing card. Its locale is in "blitz-time England, which some may feel too stern a setting for Miss Goudge's particular kind of whimsy.

**Four Years of Nazi Torture.**
—Ernst Winkler.

I don't believe in putting harrowing books of torture in our Library. But this one justifies itself because it gives what on all counts seems to be a true story of the Nazi attempt to suppress the Catholic Youth Groups of Germany. The author was a national leader, and so a marked man: his account of his capture and imprisonment is not brief.

**Blessed Gemma Galgani.**
—Rev. Benedict Williamson.

This Passionist "beata" is attracting more and more attention in our day. Fr. Williamson gives a straightforward account of her life.

**In Praise of Nuns. An Anthology of Verse, edited by Rev. Jas. M. Hayes.**

An interesting collection of poems about nuns. Good, bad, and indifferent. The Poems, I mean, not the nuns! But the pensive reader will find many little gleanings much to his taste.

**Dogsled Apostles.**
—Alma Savage.

The now famous Alcan Highway to Alaska will bring that far outpost nearer to us. But it was very far away, indeed, for those intrepid missionary pioneers who brought the Gospel there. Miss Savage tells their story, and a fine human document it is, too.

**Pack Rat.**
—Bishop Francis Clement Kelley.

Since Aesop's Fables, animal parables have always been popular. Bishop Kelley gives us here a very modern variation, involving dictators and what they stand for. Those who don't like their whisky straight will find this mixture to their taste.

**A Time for Greatness.**
—Herbert Agar.

One great merit of this American editor, who is now with the armed forces, is that he sees our problems as moral issues. His book assesses the various American states of mind before the War. Its inclusion in the Library is not necessarily a total endorsement of everything it says; but it is a tonic book in the midst of a lot of godless pap.

**A History of Social Thought.**
—Rev. Paul Hanly Furfey.

I do not know of many books on this very important topic, at least by Catholics. Father Furfey, of the Catholic University of America, is highly competent for the task he assigned himself in this book. It fills a gap in our Library.

**The Reed and the Rock.**
—Theodore Maynard.

Being a very readable account of that singular and altogether admirable priest, Simon Brute (pronounce the "e"), who came from France to our country early in the 19th century, was appointed to teach at Mount St. Mary's, Baltimore, was counsellor and close friend of Mother Seton, and, out of a clear sky, was made Bishop of Vincennes, Indiana: the kind of man who shows us what humanity is.

**The 2nd National Liturgical Week—1941.**

These are the published proceedings of the "Week" held in St. Paul, on the subject: The Parish—One in Worship, Charity and Action. A gold mine of material for study and meditation on the part of those who are interested in a living Christianity.