

Moral Courage In War Time

By Rev. James M. Gills, 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 constant by-product of war will be the accumulating record of bravery. These especially who have danger 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 swamped up and lost in the midst of a couple of hundred pages of print. (The New York Times on a recent Sunday comprised 228 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. Execution of his duties prevents his feeling fear, or holding back if he does feel it. Besides, as the Romans used to say (they were terrific soldiers), there is genuine excitement, 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 samurai of one." All around him are not buddies, but enemies. Against them he has no defense. A gangster, 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 character 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 Niemöller. 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 Rocy 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. 24, 1938, Edition
Announcement was made that Elmsira 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 expression colored sunglasses?

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

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

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

If a girl wishes to enter the convent when does she consent?

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 canon 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 Trinius, a Carmelite of the Convent of Parma, who was instantly cured of Polio 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 places the Eucharistic element in the monstrance before or after Mass and in black vestments. On such occasions, he does not give the blessing.

No Priority on Prayer

By C. J. HELLER
The business man grows weary with the troubles of the day. The greatest methods differ from the old and trusted way. Priorities are needed. To get merchandise to sell. Each order must be allocated. Do not—use shown as well.

"This item has a selling 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 board."

"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 in 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 was 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. FENNELLY
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 Gennesareth, 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 our "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 unshaking 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 wit, the world!

New Books At The Library

By Rev. Benedict Egan

The following books are recent acquisitions at the Catholic Bookstore Library, Columbia Circle, New York:

The Family That Overbowed Christ
—Rev. M. Raymond, C.S.B.
A beautiful account of the family of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, by the author of "The Man Who Got Even with God."

The Mass of Brother Michael
—Michael Kowal

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

The Archer March
—John O'Leary

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

Salute at Four
—Raymond K. F. Larson

An admirable collection of some of the finest prayers of the twenty Christian centuries. An excellent feature is the fifty biographies illustrating each point 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... What business is... How religion comes about... What Philosophy has done to history... How the War is a war of Philosophy.

32 Faces the Land
—Cory McWilliams

This volume from Goldsmith's concept: "It faces the land, in listening to a prayer. What would be accomplishable and man away." Mr. McWilliams surveys 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 fascinating title. A "must" book for sociologists and "rural" illers.

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 message, but leaving no doubt as to what it stands for.

The Castle On the Hill
—Elizabeth Goode

The announcement of a new book by this author is usually a sufficient drawing card. Its title is in "this-time England, which some may feel we need a setting for Miss Girdler's particular kind of whimsy.

Four Years of Nazi Torture
—Hans 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 brutal.

Blessed Genoveva Galgani
—Rev. Benedict Williamson

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

In Fides of News: An Anthology of Verse, edited by Rev. Jas. M. Hayes

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

Dogged Apostles
—Alma Savage

The new 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.

Peak Hat
—Bishop Francis Clement Kelley

Since Anso's Fabrics, animal parasites have always been popular. Bishop Kelley gives us here a very modern variation, involving dietitians 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 glibness and pap.

A History of Social Theology
—Rev. Paul Hanly Furley

I do not know of many books on this very important topic, at least by Catholics. Father Furley, 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 Road and the Rock
—Theodore Maynard

Being a very readable account of that singular and altogether admirable priest, Simon Eyre (pronounced 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 confessor 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—1943

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.