

Art Is Long Haste Is Fatal

By Rev. James M. Galla, C.S.B.

I didn't complete the article that appeared last week. In fact I had just about commenced it when my allotment of space ran out. You will perhaps remember that the subject was the comparison of several of Dickens' novels into one volume, cutting out perhaps seven-eighths of the original because of the impatience of the modern-day reader.

But what really concerns me is not so much whether one who turns to Dickens for entertainment and enlightenment will read "The Pickwick Papers," "David Copperfield," "Oliver Twist" and "Martin Chuzzlewit" from beginning to end. I would imagine that people would either have Dickens or avoid him, and that those who love him would never find him tedious. But let that rest with what we call a week ago.

Quite obviously, however, impatience in reading is only one phase of the rush, rush, rush, in which we live our lives. We are becoming so accustomed to hurry that the chances are we shall soon find it impossible to appreciate art or literature or music or—here I come to what worries a good many of us—religious worship. I wonder how many Catholics know, for example, that what we call "Low Mass" (horrible word!) is only a fragment of the original Sunday Mass of centuries ago. In the good old days when people came to Mass they sat down for a prolonged period of adoration and prayer and petition. They communed with God in very deed, and when out he being entertained by God it had manners to look at one's watch. Away back in the Catacombs the Christians made a whole night of it.

But the paradox of it is that when we were free to come up out of the ground and spend all the time we wished at worship without fear of interruption or of modern death, we commenced to cut down on the time we gave to God. The process has gone on now for many centuries, and the tendency is to be more and more sparing of the moments we give to God. I should be ashamed to put down here in print, where any critic of modern Catholicism might happen upon it, what I have heard from the lips of some of our brethren in regard to their desire and their demand for a "quick" Mass. St. Alphonsus who wrote a great deal for priests, (and to tell the truth didn't spare his malignancy) laid down some rules that make it trouble if we commend too much to the people, or to our own indolence and rush the Mass.

But I refrain. I shall not say what I would fear of scandalizing the "little ones." The wiser and better type of Catholic will know what I mean. Suffice it to say that the speed with which some of

us "hurry our obligations" is doing us a great deal of harm. The old Head of Christ was an obligation to himself also in spending. And so for centuries there was when a Catholic congregation would gather for High Mass and settle back for a good long period after the Gospel and later follow the benediction (granted he wear a good preacher) until he had to go to bed. Also at evening services there was no particular hurry. In my younger days I remember going to Catholic and non-Catholic to church preached for 45 minutes to Catholics and for an hour to non-Catholics. In addition there was an instruction of 20 minutes or the recitation of the Mass from the Question Box for a half hour. Believe it or not, the people enjoyed it. I have been in parishes not a few where they claimed the Mass was "shortened." An hour and a half of services and the quarters of an hour more for questions delighted them.

But now—cut, cut, cut! And the worst part of it is that a preacher, no matter how good he may be, or how important his subject, is "shoved out of the pulpit" in twenty minutes. I don't say it is an improvement. In fact I don't say enough for "Mr. Kinsler" or "Mr. Kinsler." Oh but that's different—a picture is not a sermon is not. Why not? If you cut this off at the business it is because the ability of the ordinary worshiper to put his mind on anything is slight and keep it there for a reasonable time is becoming less and less.

So with art. The old joke about "being the gallery" is really no joke. It is pathetic. Tourists who went once to Europe and may never go again get a quick glimpse at Michel's "Immense Conception," or Rembrandt's "Light Watch," or Raphael's "St. Anne Madonna," perhaps two minutes or three or five for a world master piece, and on they rush. It is ridiculous. Worse than ridiculous, outrageous! I know a man who spent two hours a day for a whole week at the gallery in Dresden looking at its one greatest treasure and nothing else. He was right—art is long, and art appreciation is longer. To rush in and out, to give a quick glance at the richest and best and most beautiful works that man has wrought is a profanity, just as to rush in and out of Mass, the Work of God par excellence, is, or may be a sacrilege.

So of music. The people at large don't want a symphony that lasts half an hour or a concert that runs for twenty minutes. No, but a busy place that carries one along with hectic excitement and is quickly over.

It's all wrong. No amount of explanation can make it right. And it's all of a piece—in literature, art, music, divine worship, haste is fatal. That, and a hundred times more than that run through my mind when I saw the car in the Mowbray supplement announcing that the Jules had been spotted out of Dickens out of existence by impatient readers.

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Library Digest

3 Great Saints In One Week

By Rev. Benedict Emswiler

This week: St. Patrick, St. Joseph, St. Benedict. I'm not overlooking St. Cyril of Jerusalem, a great Saint, too, and a Doctor of the Church, besides; but his memory has been somewhat eclipsed by the more familiar Saints who precede his Feast.

ST. PATRICK.—I recall having signalled his Feast in past years in this column by quoting excerpts from the rich storehouse of Christian Gaelic literature. This year I turn to the Second Nocturne of the Office for March 17, which is based on the well-known "Confession" of St. Patrick. There it is written:

"Besides his daily care of the churches, his invincible spirit never slackened in prayer. For it is said that he was wont to recite every day the whole Psalter (i.e., the 150 Psalms of the Bible), together with the Canticles and Hymns, and two hundred prayers; that he every day knelt down three hundred times to adore God; and that at each canonical hour of the day he signed himself a hundred times with the sign of the cross. He divided the night into three parts; first, he repeated the first hundred Psalms; and genuflected two hundred times; the second was spent in reciting the remaining fifty Psalms, standing in cold water, with his heart, eyes, and hands, lifted up to heaven; the third he gave to a little sleep, stretched upon a bare stone. Remarkable for his practice of humility, like the Apostles, he did not abstain from manual labor. At length, worn out by his incessant care for the Church, glorious in word and work, in extreme old age, he fell asleep in the Lord, after being refreshed with the divine mysteries. He was buried at Down, in Ulster, in the fifth century of the Christian era."

I don't know what historical source this derives from. Even if there are exaggerations in the report, it does express that devotedness to prayer which is so evident in the "Confession," in which he writes: "My faith was enlarged and my spirit was stirred. Till I prayed in one day a hundred times and at night nearly as often, so that I used to linger in the woods and on the mountain. Before dawn, I would awake to prayer in snow and in frost and in rain, and I was none the worse for it."

Must we not see in the heroic holiness of this Father of Ireland the cause order God of the ecclesiastical life of his Irish sons in the Christian faith through 15 stormy centuries?

ST. JOSEPH.—Really, if only a Saint can write about a Saint, what shall we say about the husband of Mary, and the foster-father of the Savior? In a sermon which we priests have to read in our Breviaries on Mar. 19, St. Bernard says:

"From the great honor of being privileged to be called and considered the father of God (though, of course, he was only the foster-father), we may judge the character and personality of Saint Joseph. And we must not forget that great patriarch, Joseph, who in ancient days was sold into Egypt; and of whom Saint Joseph was heir not only in name but in purity, innocence and grace. To the former was given the gift of knowing the mysteries of

dreams, the latter was graced not only with knowledge of, but even participating in, the mysteries of heaven. The former Joseph kept faithfully not indeed for himself but for all the people; but the latter received into his care the living Bread from heaven (at himself as well as for the world). We dare not doubt that blessed Joseph, to whom the Mother of the Savior was assigned, was a good and faithful servant; a prudent and faithful servant; I repeat, dear brethren, for the Lord appointed him guardian and counselor of His Mother, nourisher of His own body, and coadjutor on earth in the incomprehensible designs of heaven. (Trans. from the Short Breviary, Collegeville, Minn.)

ST. BENEDICT.—There is food for thought in the coincidence of St. Benedict's Feast with the first day of Spring. He founded an Order and established a way of life which were of supreme importance in the establishment of Christian Europe out of the wastes of the Imperial collapse. You may remember my saying two weeks ago that St. Augustine's life and work were a bridge between two epochs—that of Imperial Rome and that of Christian Europe. When he died the barbarians were sweeping over the Empire. For a century they laid waste the old monuments and institutions of the Empire, until finally toward the middle of the 5th century it was prostrate and helpless.

The old order was giving up the ghost; the new was in process of birth. When St. Benedict died the new order was already born; and he, more than any one else had helped to bring it to birth. He did it with the monasteries of his Benedictine Order. These were centers of peace and order in the harassed countryside where they were established. They became centers of learning in what a modern writer has cleverly grouped as cult, culture, and agriculture. Many of them were the nucleus around which grew some of our big European cities of today.

Says Dom Gabriel: "St. Benedict was a great 're-shaper' . . . since without leaving his monastery he stirred the Christian world more deeply than any of those who took a violent part in the politics of his time, thus modifying the course of events."

Historians consider the span of his life to have been approximately between the years 480-567.

Read: Saint Patrick, by Hugh de St. Victor; Give This Man Peace, by Hugh Francis Hunt; a book on St. Joseph, Saint Benedict, by Dom Fernand Gabriel.

FIVE and TEN Years Ago

From Thursday, Mar. 14, 1938
With the Very Rev. Thomas F. Conlon, O.P., National Holy Name Society Director, leading encouragement and inspiration, the permanent organization of the Rochester Diocese Holy Name Union was effected. Delegates to the first convention pledged support to President Roosevelt and Congress.

From Thursday, Mar. 17, 1938
"Only hypocrites or fools are taken in by the provision of religious freedom to be found in the new Soviet Constitution," declared the Rev. Benedict Emswiler in a radio talk on WHAM in conjunction with the Diocese-wide discussion club program on "Godless Communism."

STRANGE SUBJECTS



EDITORIALS

(Continued from Page 10)

The devil boldly who Christ is show him He is the Son of God. The three Apostles weekly they took faith in Christ, and with a sign or miracle to prove it. Peter had spoken for all the twelve when he answered Christ's question: "Whom do you say that I am?" "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." The revelation of the Father was enough for Peter and for the twelve, and they said nothing to the certainty of the faith they had. But now they were asked, the way of believing and doing lay before Christ. Now faith was now to be blessed with a vision of glory that would be a remedy for the vision of doubtless seen to come.

"He was transfigured before them." Their eyes were blinded by the brightness of the Holy Face that now shone like the sun, in the secret vestments that now became brighter than noon; they fell on their faces as they heard the words of the Father. Their eyes were now lay before them, they were to keep silent. The Father's voice till after the Resurrection. Our way of knowing him ever before us, we are in the second week of Lent. All our striving toward the better things of Christ become easy in our eyes as thoughts of His Transfiguration of Christ with our knowledge of His Transfiguration. Transfiguration is before us in life: glory awaits us in everlasting life.

'Quiz' Corner

What do you do as a Catholic when you attend court in a Protestant church?
To take part in lawful worship is a sin against the virtue of religion which prescribes the true worship due to God. Outwardly it is also a denial of one's faith, and as such it is a sin of scandal, which is contrary to fraternal charity of the love we owe our neighbor. Then, too, it leads to indifference to religion, which is the cause of those who regard all religions as equally good, whereas every Catholic knows that there is only one Church of Christ, and one true religion of which she stands as the guardian.

How can the Fifth Commandment forbid killing of another? How then can the Church approve of soldiers going into the Army and killing others in battle?
Assuredly, the Fifth Commandment does forbid the killing of another on one's own authority. God has, however, given to the State authority over life and death in certain circumstances, such as, e.g., the execution of capital criminals, and also the defense of rights against attack or oppression in war. Thus the individual soldier who kills an enemy in war does not do so on his own authority, but in obedience to the lawfully exercised authority of the State.

What are the four missions of the Ursulines or Gospel-writers and what do they mean?
(1) St. Matthew, a man or woman, because St. Matthew begins the gospel with the human words of Christ. (2) St. Mark, a Jew, because the gospel begins with St. John the Baptist, the

Value of our voting in the "primary" (1) St. John, an Jew, will depend on the way we vote. (2) St. John, the Jew, will depend on the way we vote. (3) St. John, the Jew, will depend on the way we vote. (4) St. John, the Jew, will depend on the way we vote.

It is said to be the duty of a citizen to vote. I am very anxious to know this.

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Spiritual Thought

By the obedience of St. Mary shall be made just.—Matt. 23:10