

Library Signpost

The Age of Suffering

By Rev. Benedict Ekmann of St. Bernard's Seminary

This is the continuation and conclusion of the United States editorial which was printed last week in this column. It is a solemn reminder to Americans that their post-war yearnings may not be a return to the flesh-pots of Egypt if our country is to have any lasting influence over a world that has emerged from an unprecedented period of horror and suffering.

The Pope at Rome has cried out against these indignities. His voice has been lifted in behalf of Jews and Gentiles, in behalf of human beings everywhere—but the inexorable hand of war is not stayed. Suffering goes on as the fury of man's contrivances of destruction mingles with the innocent as well as the guilty.

But it would be a mistake to assume that all this is not having or will not have its effect on human behavior for years to come. God moves in strange ways. His wonders to perform. Though war is man-made and is the result of man's errors, there must come out of it a different conception of man's duty to his fellow-man than has governed individual and national responsibility heretofore. It is here that God's influence will inevitably be felt as man begins to see again that in the reconciliation of the human spirit lies the only hope of an enduring peace.

The German people have traveled longest through the fire. For nearly ten years they have been under a tyrant's rule and they have been compelled to make sacrifices of unparalleled severity for the State. They have long been victims of the empty promises of life and they have yielded to total war's demands the sum and substance of their entire resources.

Such an obedience to any cause, however mistaken or misguided, cannot but arouse in all of us a desire to transform such a people into a useful and constructive member of the family of nations. What contributions to science and human betterment can such a people make if led along the path of constructive achievement rather than left by the vengeful hand of a conqueror to brood upon more war and the ingenuities of more engines of destruction?

SUFFERING MAY TURN GERMANS FROM EVIL AIMS

If we can see ahead only a continuance of hate and revenge then the war will have taught us little. If we can see only the subjugation for all times of an energetic, dynamic people, we will surely be creating out of the silliness of despair the festering sores of another world conflict. We will be compelled to maintain them at all times heavier and heavier armaments with back-breaking taxes and the social disorders of widespread economic chaos.

There must be some other way. Maybe the suffering which the German people have undergone already and will undergo before their last guns are silenced will cultivate a sincere desire to follow the wishes of God instead of the ambitions of an evil ambition.

The whole world will feel deeply the reaction of war this time as never before. Intelligent minds suppressed during the era of dictatorships will bring to bear a powerful influence for a sensible economic order and its corollary, a sensible international order.

AMERICA MUST FOLLOW PATH OF UNSELFISHNESS

But it is easy to leave it to the other fellow—to see it as the job of other nations as we forget that our own responsibility to be objective and cooperative in constructing such a world order cannot be ignored. We cannot lapse into a selfish isolationism or a cruel attitude of studied indifference toward the other peoples of the world, relying on our abundant resources and peculiar national advantages to render us immune from the after-effects of this war.

America's power in the post-war world will transcend any that she exerted in the last peace conference. Our disinterested position will make us the greatest mediating influence the world has ever known. We can help to make the kind of peace that will last for centuries by introducing into the councils of nations an unselfish yet insistent attitude which will be ready to help decide impartially and equitably the many disputes and economic conflicts which ordinarily are avoided but which will become our solemn duty hereafter not to shrink from resolving. For in that way peace can be preserved. It will not be easy and the inconveniences and irritations will be numerous but we will not be true to the many who will have made the supreme sacrifice if we fail to understand either the suffering of the living or the immortal spirit of those who died for us.

Suffering is no welcome teacher nor does its prolongation afford any satisfaction even though it is our arms which today are progressing bravely to the ultimate victory. There can be no happiness in a victory which inflicts suffering on the men, women and children who have had no part in the starting of this war. There can be no joy in the success of our arms if we start merely the brightness of its physical power and not the increasing influence of our moral forces to improve the lot of mankind.

Only through suffering have we somehow been taught in the past. Only through suffering are we perhaps being taught today that the road to human brotherhood is being opened wide to us again for this may be the true meaning of the War.

WHO WILL SIT WITH ME AT THE PEACE TABLE?



(Caption by J. McManis in The National Catholic Register)

QUERIES and REPLIES

Is the Bible Fact Or False? What About Genesis?

The scientist who scans the sacred pages of the Bible surely does not expect to find detailed information about the natural sciences set forth there in modern scientific terminology. It should be evident to everyone that the Bible was not written for a small group of men calling themselves scientists but for the common people at large.

The author of the Book Genesis describes natural facts as they appear to the senses rather than as they actually are in scientific statements. Moses spoke and wrote as does the average man today when he says that the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening. To be scientifically correct, the sun neither rises nor sets.

It is commonly held that before he wrote the story of creation, Moses saw creation unfold before him in a series of visions. He then described what he saw in the simple language of the people whom he knew and among whom he lived. Scientific terminology would have been lost on them. Moses therefore wisely adapted his words to their intelligence, intending his narrative of creation to be of religious rather than scientific import. (From the pen of Father Richard Felix, O.S.B., Defender of the Faith, Conception, Missouri.)

Check Upon Buying

The late George Horace Lorimer, for years Editor of the Saturday Evening Post, once wrote these words: "It is a good thing to have money and the things that money can buy, but it is good, too, to check up once in a while and make sure you haven't lost the things that money can't buy."

Movie Guide

- NEW FILMS REVIEWED: Good Fellows, Thr. A-1; Law of the Saddle, A-1; So This Is Washington, A-1; Claudia, A-2.
- AT THE THEATRES: PALACE: So Friendly We Hall, A-2; Nobody's Darling, A-2.
- LOEW'S ROCHESTER: Best Feet Forward, A-2; Good Luck, Mr. Youth, A-1.
- CENTURY: Stormy Weather, A-2; No Escape (Not classified).
- REGENT: Here is Hell, A-1; Alaska Highway, A-1.
- TEMPLE: Border Patrol, A-1; Revenge of the Zombies (Not classified).
- LITTLE: Yankee Doodle Dandy, A-1.

MINDS LIKE SOFT WAX

School starts on Tuesday. You'll watch the children struggle with mixed feelings. You'll be glad to see them come home last June and now, perhaps, you're glad to see them go back. They're such a responsibility and when they're at school, at least you can be sure that they're not falling out of trees.

But are you fully aware of the influence their teachers have on your children? They can make them holy, fervent, pious, decent, or godless, depending on their own attitude. Right now, your children's minds are like soft wax. They believe what they are told. Tell them there is a God—they'll believe you. Tell them there is no God—they'll believe you. Pray with them—they'll pray with you. Laugh at religion—and they'll laugh, too.

MUST IGNORE

It isn't that the public schools don't have good courses. They do, and they have first-rate teachers. Nor can one say that they don't favor religion and more than that they do favor it. The trouble is they have to ignore it. They're dealing with all kinds of pupils—Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, Jewish, nothing at all, and, unfortunately, Catholic. The teacher could hardly open his mouth on the subject without offending someone.

If you as a parent stand some day before the judgment seat of God, charged with having made a mess of their lives, it's more than possible that they may protest: "But we didn't know any better. We didn't have the catechism in our Twelfth Ward School. If only we could have gone to the parish school."

Then Jesus Christ may well rise and fix His flaming eyes on you. "I died for those children of yours. They were washed in My blood at baptism. For a few years, I gave them into your care. You have betrayed My trust!"

What will you say? What can you say? Isn't it much better to cover yourself right now by having all your children in Catholic schools? There may be some little inconveniences—cafeteria, perhaps, lunch money, books to be bought, maybe a trifling tuition charge; but on the last day, when the books are balanced, you'll be able to say: "Lord, honestly, I've done what I could. My children had all the Catholic training we could possibly give them. I kept thy trust as far as human frailty would permit."

Feast Days

- Sunday, Sept. 1.—THE SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.
- Monday, Sept. 2.—ST. PETER THE APOSTLE.
- Tuesday, Sept. 3.—ST. CLOD.
- Wednesday, Sept. 4.—THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.
- Thursday, Sept. 5.—ST. PETER CLAVE.
- Friday, Sept. 6.—ST. NICHOLAS OF THIEFSTEALING.
- Saturday, Sept. 7.—ST. PROTHAS AND REATENTIS.

Well, It's A Record, Isn't It?

By MR. DANIEL A. LOHR, S.J.

The priest was giving his instructions for First Holy Communion.

"Now each one of you must bring me a record of your baptism. Is that clear?"

A hand shot up. "We haven't got that record at home, Father. Would a small record 'do' I bring you a small record of 'O Susanna'?"

Mike, Mike, Who's Got the Mike

When he was a young priest (though really I wasn't a newly-ordained priest—he was just out to preach on Christmas Day in a small church—Father Brown, the famous rector of Lourdes, Mass., was telling us. He said that the church was packed with a public address system, which was a piece of heaven of an idea. No wonder, then, when he walked to the gospel side of the sanctuary. As he reached the microphone, he noticed that the microphone was on the other side of the sanctuary. He had crossed the altar, unperceived, and talked from the opposite side.

He told his second Christmas Mass somewhat later, and at the proper time for the sermon, he went to the opposite side in procession and arrived only to find that the altar boy, noticing his discomfiture at the spot, had moved the microphone to the gospel side. He once more crossed the sanctuary, genuflecting as usual to preach in the new spot.

When he came out for the third Mass, he carefully noted the location of the microphone, still on the gospel side. But as he turned for the sermon, the acolyte rushed over, grabbed the mike, and planted it in the exact center of the sanctuary. He was taking his chance this time.

Standing Content

The absolutely black colored man stepped into the structure. He was a magnificent physical man, with an alert, high type face. Yet across his forehead was an alarming mark—a white wound, not wide, but screaming for attention. I wondered how in the world he had got it.

Then he came closer and the wound moved. My unknown friend was balancing the white wood of a toothpick at a sharp angle to his face.

Barbecue

I haven't an automobile and never have had previously or now of one. But for various reasons, I carry a driver's license. In case some day you want to see two states and city. So before I traveled in the summer schools, I determined to renew both. One I was sure was a full year overdue. The other, I figured, had been out about six months.

The state Bureau Bureau was almost empty. The transaction was simple and swift. The city Bureau Bureau was crowded as I filled out my renewal papers and then took my place in the long queue that ranges before the desk. Suddenly it dawned on me how it irritated people grow before terms and patios and the food.

stallionated man and women who all day long go through the same performance with a series of nervous adjustments. For almost none of us had his mind fixed and correctly. These who wanted a Bureau for the first time had filled out renewal slips. "You can't renew what you have never had," I heard a clerk tell one of the men wearily. The applicants have filled out part of the card and omitted most important questions. Under the spot of under self-compassion I inspected my own application again—in find numerous inaccuracies, all sorts of mistakes. I hurriedly corrected them, being careful not to lose my place in line.

I watched with others how their eyes darted and tried out my eyes to be sure. I grabbed the state made form and read them through to a happy, but to me I was asked embarrassing legal points I didn't know.

As by the time I reached the clerk, I was both a bit of a nervous wreck and pretty sure that I at least was ready for my license, had signed a protest form, and could bear away my content under the grateful approval of a weary innocent.

The man behind the desk read my form wearily. Then he looked at the expiring license which I nervously presented according to instructions.

"Sorry," he said, "but you're two months too early. Your old license doesn't expire for two months. You can't have a new license until thirty days before the old one expires."

As I started away from the desk line.

You can't beat a Bureau.

Civic Candidacy

It took Francis Xavier an out-of-towner to recognize the fact that our St. Louis Post-Dispatch is lined for its own laugh with agreeous trash.

Five and Ten Years Ago

(From the Files of the CATHOLIC COURIER)

From August 25, 1933. Within a week of the death of the late Rev. Anthony Edward Manning, Apostolic Delegate to Japan at Fourth Meeting of Episcopate to succeed the late Most Rev. John Francis O'Brien was announced in word received from the Holy See.

From Sept. 1, 1932. In the annual meeting of the National Council of the Holy See, the nomination of the late Rev. Francis O'Brien was announced in word received from the Holy See.

Headly Political Club

From October 1, 1931. The National Council of the Holy See, the nomination of the late Rev. Francis O'Brien was announced in word received from the Holy See.