

Prayer Combined with Plasma Brings 'GI Jim' Through Ordeal

(Blood plasma and prayer are working miracles of body and soul on today's battle fronts. The following article, written by an American Captain stationed in South Pacific battlefront, gives a dramatic picture of how faith and blood plasma help our fighting men).

Last week one day I approached my quarters after having spent several hours visiting all the wards in the hospital. I brought with me candy and what cheer I could muster up; offering Mass in one of the wards where the ambulatory patients could attend, hearing confessions and bringing Our Lord to the beds of the patients unable to leave.

My clerk met me outside and said that several B-24s were on their way in from a mission and that there were plenty of wounded. I was to go right to the hospital where they were being taken.

I flew the distance in eight minutes and was able to meet the first patient as he was brought in. After doing what I could for the others, I stayed with the one, a Catholic, who was on the verge of death.

Once a Catholic

As soon as the doctors and nurses had placed him on the operating table I asked his religion, as he was fully conscious.

He replied rather diffidently: "I used to be a Catholic at one time, but I guess I'm not much of anything now." When the blood plasma was flowing freely in his veins, I requested all to leave the room.

When I was alone with the boy his great, rolling brown eyes followed my every movement. I heard his confession, anointed him and gave him the apostolic blessing for the dying. These latter two ministrations were in the presence of the medical crew working over him.

I stayed and helped where I could and let Jimmy hold my hand tightly as his big eyes never left me. Sixteen bottles of plasma, equal to thirty-two people giving a pint of blood each, were poured into his almost

emptied veins as the shock deepened and he grew shivering cold and corpse-like; he was unconscious.

I walked out of the ward to his nine waiting buddies who were his room and tent-mates—men with whom he had lived, and laughed, and faced hardships and danger, and confided his heart to, and bragged about his lovely wife and little daughter. All night these loyal pals had "sweated out" their friend's fate.

Prayer Only Hope

When I approached them their white faces asked the question: "Is there any hope, Father?" Sadly and calmly I told them there was in the hands of God, as He was the only one who could save him now. I then added: "If you fellows know how to pray, now's the time to do it." It was an unnecessary injunction, I discovered, for already, one by one, they had silently started to squat down in the dust.

I had to walk away, I was so touched by their devotion and earnestness. As I walked up and down telling my beads, they continued, each in his own way, to implore the same God that "Thy

Will be done; but oh God, if it's possible, please spare the life of Jimmy."

When I finished my rosary, I returned to the still praying men and with a gesture, walked back into the ward. No one had done a thing for our patient in the meantime—nothing human could be done. But when I reached over and took his hand his brown eyes opened and he breathed: "Hello, Father" and gave me a wan smile. He squeezed my hand and closed his eyes to a normal rest.

Later I told his buddies to come in, and singly and in pairs they came over the general to Jim's bed. Tenderly, each took his hand, squeezed it while, petting his brow and with glowing eyes, whispered: "Good boy, Jim." "We're with you, fellow." "Stick in there, old man." "God bless you, Jim."

Each one received a smile and turned and walked away to hide his tear-filled eyes in order not to betray the fact that his voice couldn't get past the lump in his throat. It was one of the most touching scenes I have ever witnessed and reminded me mightily of Ernie Pyle's description of the death of the much-loved Captain of the outfit on the slopes of Cassino.

When I remarked to the men that they must have prayed, they chorused: "We did! They'll never forget how God answered their prayer!"

I have been seeing Jim daily and he is always cheered by the visit of "his Father."

Sunday night I received a call to come to the hospital, as Jim wanted me. As soon as my last Mass was finished, I hurried there. Jim greeted me with a warm smile, held my hand and said: "I've got my kind of bad news for you, Father."

Comforted on Loss

I know what was coming—the doctors had told him he was going to lose his leg. In the darkness of the sleeping ward, I whispered all the encouragement into his ear that I could think of in my tired mind; I told him that Our Lord had suffered for us and what an opportunity this was for him to suffer for Our Lord; I pointed out what miracles of science had done for limbless men and bolstered up his spirit with the prospect of a trip home and I ended with: "Besides, you still have your leg—and who knows but God?"

He asked me to pray with him as he made the sign of the cross with his thumb on his brow, lips and heart. I prayed. After a while, he said, drowsily, "I feel all right now, Father, and I'm not afraid. What is to be, will be. Besides I'll be going home. Will you write my wife? I guess I better go to sleep now." He was content and not lonesome any more, though his buddies had returned to their base in another valley early the afternoon before.

Jim still has his leg, and still only God knows!

'Prodigious,' Says Paraguay Priest of Catholic Activity

WASHINGTON—Catholic activity in the social, educational and public welfare fields, as well as in the civic life of the United States, was described as "prodigious" by Capt. Ernesto Perez Acosta, Chief of Chaplains of the Paraguayan Army and Vice-President of the Paraguayan Federation of Boy Scouts, during his visit to the headquarters of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, in this city.

Father Perez, a Salesian Priest who has been traveling in the United States and Canada at the invitation of the Boy Scouts of America and under the auspices of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, said he was returning to his country with a feeling of great satisfaction in being able to present first-hand information as to the significant status of the Church in the United States.

Poles Executed

LONDON—Official Polish sources here have reported the execution, in public, in Warsaw of the Rev. Mieczyslaw Konia; the executions in Cieszyn, Silesia, of the Revs. Paulus and Szymek, and the arrests of many religious in the Warsaw area, including Father Dzik, aged 78, and 12 priests and twelve Brothers of the Society of St. Francis de Sales.

Again Name Fr. Schwab As K. of C. Chaplain

ELMIRA

Announcement of the appointment of Rev. Leo G. Schwab as Chaplain of Elmira Council, Knights of Columbus, has been made by Grand Knight Eugene F. Agan.

Other appointments are as follows: Frank K. Rhode, Lecturer; House Committee, Samuel L. Le-Mark; Finance, Henry P. Farrell; Basil J. Vallancourt, Edward C. J. Marks, Thomas R. Burns, Frederick E. O'Herron, John T. Nugent and Anthony B. Cleri. At a meeting held last night in Columbus Center Joseph H. Berrigan and John Allen were appointed co-chairmen of the annual outing to be held at Cold Brook on Sunday, August 6.

4,100 Gary Pupils Attend 'Released-Time' Classes

GARY, Ind.—In its first year of operation, 4,100 children in 28 public schools here attended "released-

time" classes sponsored by the Religious Education Committee of the Gary Council of Churches. Students were limited to pupils in the elementary grades who elected to attend with the consent of their parents.



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