

Catholic Information

CELIBACY

The young officer slid open the door of the plane and stepped out into space. His body plummeted earthward like a bullet. Seconds later he was swinging upwards as above his head there suddenly blossomed a circle of glowing white silk. The wind hissed and fought through its fabric in vain as slowly, gently, the young officer maneuvered back to earth. Months of intense training had gone into that journey through the air. While a bit dangerous the experience could hardly be classified as hazardous. Recently a friend witnessing the

exercises of a group of parachutists remarked: "There's something enchanting about a parachutist... He moves quietly along the blue avenues of heaven, above earth—a strange spirit—just like a priest!"

The sudden twist of metaphor caught me unawares.

"You see," he continued, "we Catholics think of our priests as IN the world but not OF the world, as men of earth but not earthly."

"Sort of super-men?" I suggested.

"Not exactly. The priest is 'alter Christus'—another Christ; he is our mediator between God and man. We offer our official prayers and worship through the hands of the priest, and God sends down His grace, pardon and blessing through the same ministrations. In fact, one of the oldest words for priest is 'pontifex' which means 'bridge builder.' In a real sense the priest stands between God and man, bridging as it were the gap between the two. It is this relationship that explains the isolation of a priest's life. If he is to approach God in his official capacity he must separate himself somewhat from the world. Thus, like our parachutist, he strips himself to the barest minimum of all attachment to earth and re-clothes himself with an outfit of supernatural ideals in order that he may safely walk the exalted ways of God. St. Paul tried to express this isolation of the priesthood when he wrote: 'Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but likened unto the Son of God, continueth a priest forever.' (Hebrews 7:3)

"I've heard about your priests leaving home at an early age and foregoing the privilege of family life—celibacy. I believe you call it?"

"That's right. Celibacy means that a priest cannot marry, cannot identify himself with family life as such. This restriction, however, is essentially not so much a rejection of the goods and legitimate pleasures of this world as it is a complete, knightly dedication of self to God. Difficult, of course, but certainly not impossible. There is nothing about which we Catholics are so demanding and envious as the chastity of our priests. To us these celibate lives are a token of the genuineness of our religion, a symbol of its intrinsic worth—these straight, white, unblemished candles burning themselves out exclusively in the service of God."

"I understand. In fact I myself would exceedingly resent any overt insinuations against the purity of my widowed mother or my unmarried sister. To me they too are like the parachutists who suggests a strange spirit as he moves along the blue avenues of heaven—so enchanting, so unearthly."—(Catholic Information Society of New York.)

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WASHINGTON

Reconversion Deadlock Memories of Quebec Marshal Foch Anecdote

By TOM ROGERS

WASHINGTON. — One of the items for discussion in Quebec should be the report of Ambassador Phillips regarding conditions in India. The English have been quite annoyed by his revelations and Churchill, an Empire man from 'way back, will make this known to the President.

The final action of legislation relating to demobilization and reconversion may be postponed until after the November elections! Rep. Knutson of Minnesota and Senator Walsh of Massachusetts agreed that the House and Senate committees had reached a deadlock.

The House—where the power to coin money originates under the Constitution—refused to yield to Senate provisions for war-worker back-home transportation up to \$200 a family and the blanketing of 3,600,000 federal workers under unemployment insurance protection. Governor Warren of California, incidentally, is in favor of the latter proposition. But it was unanimously knocked down in committee by 10 Republican congressmen.

The coming conference in Quebec will naturally find the visitors putting up at the Chateau Frontenac. That is the regular parties. The most important figures, Churchill and the President will probably stay at the Citadel, famous old fortress of Colonial Days. We stayed at the Chateau last year after the Conference was over. Fondest memories are those of early Mass in the Chapel of the Ursulines—and the 50-cent steak dinners in the Old Homestead directly down the hill from the Chateau. Every Catholic owes himself a trip there, the most Catholic province or state in the world after Vatican City.

Look for a tempest in a teapot over sterilization of mental incurables. A recent report of a Grand Jury in Berks County, Pennsylvania, recommended this nefarious pagan practice—and the Judge, H. Robert Mays, concurred in the recommendation. The last time we heard of such actions they came from—oh, yes—a place called Berlin.

Anything can happen in Europe, BUT, if the Nazis can get many of their troops out of Greece and Norway—plus the factor of bad weather holding back the planned air and tank assault on the Western front—the hellish conflict may continue past expectations.

Don't forget the mailing dates for the overseas packages: Sept. 15 to Oct. 15. Get them in—and get them there on time!

A recently returned correspondent who knows Rome fairly well and the Church very well, tells the following amusing story:

A number of years ago, during the reign of the saintly Pius XI, a particular question arose relating to Church traditions and laws. The only opposition was from a Bishop in America, down in Little Rock, Ark. His opposition to the measure was based on the manner in which it was to be released, not on the matter itself. At any rate he happened to be in Rome at the time and his disagreement as to the timing of the news was known. A few days later he was received by the sincere man who occupied the See of Peter. The son of a fisherman was known for his quiet humor. Nor did he resist the opportunity to play on words. As the American prelate arose after kissing the ring of Peter, the white-haired pontiff smiled broadly and said in his best English:

"Ahh... big Rock crush Little Rock."

Such human characteristics in truly great people also comes to mind when thinking of the late Marshall Ferdinand Foch, one of the great generals of all time. During the closing days of the last war, the famous generalissimo of all the Allied Armies was held down at Chaumont. Every morning after Mass his first stop would be not his own headquarters, but the office of the American chaplain—a Jesuit. He dropped in for a smoke—seems that no one was permitted to smoke in French headquarters... not even the commander of millions of troops.

More family never made a man great. Thought and deed, not pedigree, are the passports to enduring fame.—General Skobeloff.

The Catholic Church advocated the betterment of the condition of working people long before Communism as we have it today was thought of.

Nothing contributes more to the cheerfulness of things than the habit of looking on the good side of things. The good side is God's side.

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Navy Chaplain Wounded in Marianas

TINIAN, Marianas Islands. (Delayed)—The Rev. Thomas V. Brody, Navy chaplain, formerly assistant pastor at St. Theodore Church in Chicago, was wounded by a bullet while working at a first aid station here, it has been announced. Father Brody became a chaplain in August, 1942.

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