Kindnesses Tell Priest, Returning After 12 Years in China, He's Home

By MEYER BERGER
(In New York Times)

NEW YORK—Just before 11 o'clock last Thursday night, Brother Lawrence, a ribed figure, bent over a book in a pool of light in the darkened vestibule in the Franciscan Monastery in Thirty-first Street east of Seventh Avenue, heard the street door open and felt cold wind rush in.

A burly policeman with windreddened face, clinging to two battered valises, approached the grille. He let down the bags. "I've brought someone home for you, brother," he said. He stepped aside and Brother Lawrence stared at a hatless little man wearing the Roman collar and a tattered cassock.

Brother Lawrence knows all the Franciscan friars at the monastery, but he had never seen this one, nor had he ever seen one so shabbily dressed. The little priest stared at the stained glass windows, at the old woodwork and at the shadowed walls. He smiled at Brother Lawrence. He said: "I'm Father Dillon. I just got in from China."

The policeman shook Father Dillon's hand. He said, "Nice to have you home again, Father." He clumped out to return to his Hudson Tube beat. Brother Lawrence, lugging the bags, led Father Dillon into the monastery. A few seconds later the little priest was surrounded.

Went to China Twelve Years Ago

He is Mgr. Edward S. Dillon, born forty-seven years ago in Hartford, Conn., who went out to the missions in Shansi, China, twelve years ago and became perfect apostolic in the province eight years ago. He had not been in the monastery since 1932.

Father Aloysius Reilly, Father Vianney McGrath, Father Gratian Feltz, a native of Rochester, N. Y., and several other Franciscans crowded around him and studied his unusual garb. His cassock was frayed at the bottom and at the cuffs and showed a dozen patches. It covered a G. I. shirt and dark G. I. dungarees. He wore G. I. shoes.

They sat up far into the night as Father Dillon told of his journey of almost 15,000 miles from Shasi in Hupeh Province, back to the monastery, without funds and without his own wardrobe. He had held out against the Japanese through all the bombing and suffering for four years, protecting his flock.

He had left Shasi (the Road Market) in September, 1944, with no baggage, deprived even of his mass kit. A plane had flown him to Chungking, where he picked up the cassock. The GI garb was a gift from Yank soldiers he met along the way. He had hitch-hiked to Calcutta.

He got a convoy out of Calcutta, acting as chaplain for the Merchant Marine crew, and had acquired a new mass kit, but no new clothing. The merchant ship was fifty-three days on different seas before it glided into New York Harbor at twilight on Thursday.

Father Dillon finished his story. He was assigned a bed for the night and early Friday morning attended mass. At the mass were 300 members of the Police Anchor Club. After the service they invited him to attend as a guest their monthly communion breakfast in the Governor Clinton Hotel, across the street.

Only five feet seven, his dark hair touched with silver, he stood before them in his tattered cassock, khaki shirt, Army brogans and frayed collar and told the story of the last part of his journey home.

He said: "We were anchored a while in front of the Statue of Liberty last night, just before dark. As we started to move in and the lights came on in skyscrapers ashore, a great contagion came into my throat. There [illegible] I knew, when you [illegible] and still not laughed, [illegible]

[illegible] how he started [illegible] as the ship [illegible] moored in Jersey City [illegible] to chase down the gangway [illegible] Tiny [illegible] whose you [illegible] [illegible]

"Where do you want to go, Father?" he asked. The priest told him.

The policeman lifted the bags. "Follow me," he said. "I'll take you home."

Emotion caught Father Dillon's throat and it started the tears down the faces of men supposed to be hardened. "It is just such little acts of Christian kindness," the little priest said, "that tell a man he is home. I saw it in our American lads as they helped old folk and children in suffering China. I saw it in the two little newsboys, I saw it in the policeman the helping hand held out, the little kindnesses that mean little to you, but are fit to break the heart of someone who has been long away from it."

The dining room was silent. The little priest sat down.

When breakfast was ended, Sgt. John Boyle, head of the Police Anchor Club, and Father Bernard Cullen, it's chaplain, came to Father Dillon with a fistful of money donated by the communion breakfast guests. They took him to Rogers Peet and dressed him in the finest and the best they could buy.

Last night he called his mother, Mrs. Mary Dillon, at her home in Hartford. His father, Thomas, died two years ago. Mrs. Dillon, in her eighties, could not make out his voice. She could not grasp that he was her son, home again.

Father Dillon said: "She couldn't seem to understand. She's pretty old now, you know. I'll be going for a rest in a day or two. I'll see her then."

Father Brennan Serves on Leyte

The Rev. John Brennan, C.SS.R. of the Rochester diocese, is among the group of new chaplains assigned to serve the U. S. Army on Leyte Island, according to word received here.

Father Brennan, a Redemptorist priest was stationed at St. Joseph's Church, Franklin St., before he began service as a chaplain.

Tokyo Bomber

Brig. Gen. Emmett O'Donnell, Jr., commander of a wing of the new 21st Bomber Command, who was the leader of the B-29 Superfortresses which bombed Tokyo from Saipan. He is a member of Our Lady of Angels Parish, Brooklyn. (N.C.W.C.)

Allied Educators Insult To Germany, Says Scientist

(Belief that Germany must be re-educated from within by "good" Germans is expressed in the following statement by Dr. William Brown, director of the Institute of Experimental Philosophy at Oxford University and adviser to the British Government on the German nation).

By DR. WILLIAM BROWN

LONDON (INS)—What can we do with the Germans? We cannot exterminate them, even if, in a spirit of madness, we wished to do so.

They will have to be re-educated, but I feel very skeptical of any plan of sending educators from England and America.

If I understand Germany the implied insult would make any such plan utterly worthless.

Germany can be re-educated only from within.

There is a small minority of good Germans who have been deprived of all power up to now and who will be able to play their part in the reformation and re-education of Germany after the war.

Hitler said: "There are only a hundred thousand intellectuals; we need not take the slightest notice of them. We have got seventy million others"—or words to that effect. A more absurd miscalculation of forces was never made.

Haiti Honors Bishop Ready

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Rt. Rev. Msgr. Michael J. Ready, Bishop-elect of Columbus has been awarded the diploma and insignia of Grand Officer of the National Order of Honor and Merit of Haiti. The honor was given to Monsignor in recognition of his services to the people of Haiti.

The award was made at the Haitian Embassy here by Ambassador Andre Liautaud who acted in behalf of President Elie Lescot of Haiti.

Claims Polish Losses Exceed British, U. S.

LONDON (NC)—More than 900,000 Polish soldiers have lost their lives on the battle fronts compared with total British losses of 733,000 for the same period and United States losses of half a million, an article in Fighting Poland, weekly published here for the Polish Forces, points out.

"If one compares the population of the three countries, the significance of Poland's contribution becomes extremely impressive," the article comments.

Observing that "public opinion is beginning to forget the immense effort the Poles has put into the war compared with their limited material and human resources," the article points out two important contributions Polish armed forces have made.

First, it states, the Polish Army caused such losses to the Reichswehr in September, 1939, that it took the Germans six months to replace the casualties.

Secondly, it notes, the Polish airmen played a prominent part in the defense of Britain during the days of the air blitz.

EXACTLY

Carpenter: "Didn't I tell you to notice when the glue boiled over?"

Young helper: "I did. It was at five minutes to nine."

Edwards The Upper Story!

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