Literary Signpost

Resurrection—Spring

By Rev. Benedict Ehmann

We of the northern hemisphere are fortunate to have the Resurrection feast in the springtime of the year. It is a season when Nature itself is like a sacramental, speaking to the soul in parables of warm sunshine, singing birds, and budding foliage, instructing us with its delectable and smiling pageantry in the meaning of the Resurrection.

FR. EHMANN

The springtime of Nature sheds its beauties through the windows of our souls, and helps us perceive more vividly the immensely greater beauties of that springtime which the Lumen Christi, Christ's Light, brings into our souls. Each year the miracle of the Paschal Renewal in our souls is signalized by the conquering warmth of the on-drawing sun, the alleluias of the returning birds, and the banners of the nascent flowers. Light and life are one in Nature, as they are in grace. The clarion notes of the deacon's Lumen Christi on Holy Saturday resound in hearts already stirred to hope by the recurring miracle of bud and blossom and singing bird under the crescent warmth of the sun. Thus to me, the listening heart is sure, will come bud and blossom and singing hope under Christ's Easter light renewed within me by the Paschal sacraments.

We owe our gladness in the springtime to the Risen Christ. In Him its miracles find their true meaning. As St. Thomas might put it, Christ is their signification. Apart from Him, they become cryptic and baffling, saddening the soul even while giving delight. So has it always been with the pagans, whose greatest poets have most marvellously portrayed the beauties of Nature, but deep within there was pathos and a sense of the void. The noblest of them all, Virgil, has crystallized this sentiment ... in the famous "lacrimae rerum"—the "tears in things" ... remain as an epitaph for the best that the ... Nature's secret.

... life, and love of the Risen Christ began to ... the pagan world, and Rome and Europe became Christian, the poets of that later time sang a new song full of the spirit of the Alleluia which now gave a splendid meaning to Nature's beautiful but dark secret. The new music sounds out, chaste and sweet as a Gregorian chant, in Prudentius of sixth-century Spain. In his Easter Eve, there is the old Virgilian majesty and sensitivity to the world's frail beauties, but it is wedded to the Psalmist's assurance that divine justice and mercy have kissed, and Heaven has come down to earth.

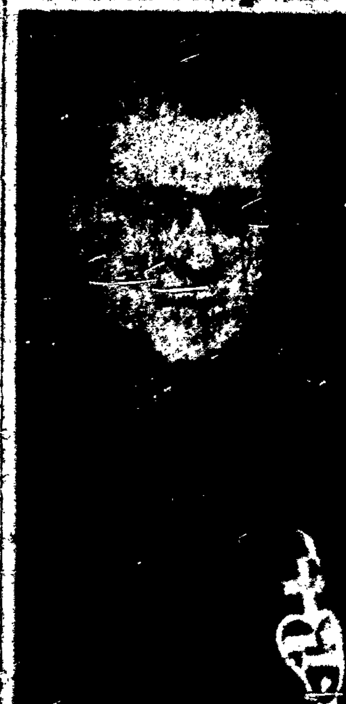
"The earth is sweet with roses,
And rich with marigold,
And violets and crocus
Are wet with running streams.

"And through the grassy meadows,
The blessed spirits go,
Their white feet shod with lilies,
And as they go they sing."

This singing joy in Nature's and Heaven's springtime rings down the Christian centuries. You find it in Chaucer's well-known Prologue about "April with his showers sweet," every line of which can be read as it was a parable of the soul, awakening from a winter of cold and darkness at the approach of the Easter sun; never perhaps in all the rich bounty of our own English has sheer joy in the springtime been so radiantly put into word-music. Merrie England was indeed merry, and there you find it rollicking with a genuine "shepherd's hey," although already the terrible Black Death had struck England and Europe, leaving with it the devastation that depopulated laity and clergy so dreadfully and made the Church a far easier mark for the Protestant rebellion.

So was it with all Christendom, and so is it still where Christian faith is the light of people's lives. But if we may regard the poets as "the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time," it would appear that once again the old pagan sadness is haunting our contemporaries. How else could it be when they are given over to a pagan philosophy and code of life? Baudelaire's "Flowers of Evil" is more than a curiosity; it is a symptom of the loss of life and light in our society. A. E. Housman's Shropshire ... flower and leaf, singing bird and running water; but not for him is there the healing of faith and joy for the wound that beauty gives. Nature is but sad and sheds only a moonlight glow on those for whom the Resurrection Light of Christ no longer shines. They need a Resurrection — such a one as came to Chesterton, who became thereby what someone has so aptly called the "laughing prophet" of our time. Let us beg the Risen Lord to burst His bonds in their darkened souls, so that once again our world may shine with joy and song and innocent dance.

From Hospital



Rev. Theophane Maguire, C.P.

BOOK, WRITTEN BY PRIEST AFTER LAST RITES, A HIT

Washington — (NC) — Thirteen months ago a sick priest received the Last Rites of the Church. The doctors condemned him to months in bed in a hospital, if he ever recovered.

Precisely one year ago this week, he began scribbling notes in his sick bed on his missionary career in China.

This week the first printing of the book he wrote — 20,000 copies—was completely sold out less than a month after publication. A second printing has already been started by the Bruce Publishing Company of Milwaukee.

The book is "Hunan Harvest" by the Rev. Theophane Maguire, C.P., widely known throughout the country, particularly as a former editor of The Sign magazine. It is the March choice of the Catholic Literary Foundation.

Father Maguire spent years on the China missions. He then served for eight and a half years as editor of The Sign. Ailing, he retired in 1942, but took up retreat work, in which he made a remarkable record. A year ago he suffered the attack on his health that put him in bed for months and that was the beginning of the writing of the book; his doctors told him it was a way to pass the time. He has now recovered something of his former health and was here this week autographing his book.

4,280 Army Chaplains Demobilized to Date

Washington, D. C. — (RNS) — Six hundred and twenty Army chaplains were separated from the service during March, making a total of 4,280 Army chaplains demobilized from Sept. 1, 1945, through March 31, 1946, Maj. Gen. Luther D. Miller, Chief of Army Chaplains, reported here.

At the peak of Army chaplain strength, there were 5,0.. Protestants, 2,2.. Catholics and 240 Jews serving in the Army's Corps of Chaplains, according to the report issued here.

Woman Architect Works On Vienna Cathedral

Vatican City — (NC) — Restoration of the Cathedral of St. Stefan in Vienna has been entrusted to a woman architect, Mrs. Michele Buchleser, Osservatore Romano, Vatican daily, reports. The apse of the Cathedral was considerably damaged during the war.

The Literary Cavalcade

An American Monument

By John O'Connor

One of the greatest cultural achievements in the history of this nation is quietly taking place in a brownstone house on New York's East side.

* * *

Recently The New York Times carried a front-page story to the effect that an English edition of the writings of the Fathers of the Church is being prepared by more than forty American scholars. There had been one commendable attempt by a non-Catholic group who published the Edinburgh edition some 81 years ago.

* * *

The present project will run to some 72 well-bound volumes and will be the fruit of the efforts of some of the great scholars of our time. I don't think I'm far from the mark in saying that this may well be the most noteworthy project American Catholics have contributed to the Church in the field of culture.

* * *

A few days ago I called on the man who is the spark and driving force of this project. He is Dr. Ludwig Schopp, a real scholar and president of the Cosmopolitan Science and Art Service. He is also co-founder and publisher of the internationally known magazine Traditio: Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought and Religion.

He received me in his workroom, a medium sized man with blue eyes and graying brown hair. Books line the walls; books are stacked on the window sills; books are stacked on the floors; books flank original paintings; books are on the stairs!

* * *

Neatly dressed, Dr. Schopp looks more the merchant than the scholar. Born in Pittsburgh, he studied abroad and was only 22 when he took his doctorate in philosophy, psychology and history at the University of Bonn, his dissertation dealing with Augustine and Boethius.

Nineteen years ago he returned to this country for good. Since 1923 he has given a great deal of time to philosophical and psychological research, translated Augustine De Beata Vita and his Soliloquies, and contributed to many scholarly publications before launching his lifetime work.

* * *

"The idea is mine," he said quietly, "but I am a fortunate man in having the editorial board I am blessed with."

The members are: Rudolph Arbesmann, O.S.A., Fordham University; Stephen Kuttner, J.U.D., the Catholic University; Wilfrid Parsons, S.J., The Catholic University; Dr. Bernard Peebles, St. John's College, Annapolis; Anselm Strittmatter, O.S.B., Washington, D.C., and Rev. Gerald G. Walsh, S.J., Fordham University. Dr. Schopp has, in addition, secured the cooperation of 40 other competent scholars interested in the same good cause.

* * *

I asked him why the project was started. He smiled and said simply: "It has never been done adequately . . . and there is an aching need for the truth expounded by the Fathers of the Church who lived through such times as we are experiencing now."

He looked directly at me. "I am well aware of the great responsibility I took upon myself in launching this project . . . and the labor it involves. If the candle does not burn until dawn, I rise early. Scholars, religious, bishops and students are frequent visitors. Only the need for fresh air and exercise gets me away from my work."

* * *

I asked him what a volume would cost.

"About $4.00 — octavo size and bound with an eye to the years. It will take about 6 years to complete the work."

He shifted his weight in his worn chair. "A number of these works have never been translated. Except for Migne's monumental edition of 383 volumes — available only in Latin and Greek or else in expensive non-English translations, the limited editions of the past have afforded American students the only means whereby they could obtain firsthand knowledge of the Fathers or plumb the secrets of their profound influence upon civilization.

* * *

He continued. "The two world wars have awakened an enormous revival of interest in early Christianity and the works of the Church fathers. Serious thinkers find in these treatises the path by which humanity can perhaps retrace itself to the solidarity it has lost.

* * *

After an extended visit through the workrooms and apartment at 229 East 49th Street in the shadow of the 'el' this correspondent walked slowly towards the station in the shadows of a declining day. Somehow it seemed incredible, miraculous. The youngest nation on earth . . . finding itself a group of scholars dedicated to bringing forth again the traditions and the works that once built a Christian world. God surely writes straight in crooked lines. And I am certain that Dr. Schopp and his associates are going to be mighty effective penmen in the next six years as they erect a great American monument of eternal value composed of eternal truths.

Episcopal Church Again To Study Remarriage Law

New York — (NC) — Another attempt to relax the canon of the Protestant Episcopal Church governing the remarriage of divorced persons will be made at the triennial general convention in Philadelphia from September 10 to 20, it has been reported here.

For more than ten years, efforts have been made to ease the canon, which forbids an Episcopal clergyman from officiating at a remarriage of divorced persons, except in the case of an innocent party to a divorce on the grounds of adultery, and then only after the lapse of a year and with the consent of the Bishop.

Each effort has met defeat, but the report states that this year a joint commission, of which Bishop Cameron J. Davis of Buffalo is chairman, had agreed unanimously on a report proposing a new canon which would provide that every case be judged on its individual merits.

Poem on Radio

His Eminence Cardinal Spellman will read his poem "Resurrection" on a Mutual network broadcast, Easter Sunday, at 7 p. m. The poem is included in the Cardinal's latest released book, "Prayers and Poems."

New Hampshire Charities Organized in Diocese

Manchester, N. H. — (RNS) — Most Rev. Matthew F. Brady, Bishop of Manchester, announced here that articles of incorporation for the New Hampshire Catholic Charities have been adopted. The object is to establish and maintain here a principal bureau with branch bureaus in other cities and towns for the promotion and direction of systematic charitable and social work throughout the diocese.

Know It?

If you answer all five, you're perfect; three or four, good; if only one or two, not so good.

1. What are the traditional names of the three Magi who visited the Christ Child at Bethlehem?

2. A person that brings misfortune to another is called a "Jonah." What incident in the Bible is the basis for that phrase?

3. Is the pallium—a round neckband with tassels of white wool, sent by the pope as a symbol of jurisdiction to a newly appointed bishop, archbishop, or cardinal?

4. What State, founded by a Catholic lord, bears the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary?

5. Complete the phrases below by prefixing an adjective descriptive of a certain attribute for which that Biblical man is well known:

........as Methuselah
........as Samson
........as Solomon
........as Moses
........as Job
........as Aman

(Answers on page 11)

Holy Childhood Association

Rev. John S. Randall Director

(Twenty-fourth of the winning essays on mission topics is the following by an Eighth Grade girl of St. Hyacinth's School, Auburn).

WHAT CASTE MEANS IN INDIA

By Barbara T. Tams

The caste system places men by birth and sometimes by profession on various rungs of the social scale. Between castes there is no intermarriage, or social intercourse, or personal relationship.

There are four main castes, namely: the Brahman or priestly caste, the Kshatriya or soldiers and rulers, the Vaisya comprises the great industrial class of India, the Sundra or laborers and mechanics.

Every Hindu belongs to a caste. The different sects of Hindus are usually known by the way the caste marks are worn. Differently colored dots or different numbers of lines, indicate different castes. The purpose served by these different marks is that of identification.

The most cruel punishment for a Hindu is that of losing his caste. To become a Christian is to lose caste in most cases. He loses his relations and friends, sometimes even his wife and children. He has no rights at all. No one will eat with him or give him a drink of water. His daughters cannot find husbands, his sons cannot find wives. His rank is classed as the untouchable. India has some sixty million of them. They are forbidden to enter the Hindu temples, to use public roads or to educate their children.

Our missionary priests and sisters help these poor outcasters in every possible way to make their lot easier by gaining independence and human dignity. Let us all be missionaries thru the medium of a powerful prayer and alms for their conversions.

Air Chief Lauds Aid of Brothers

New York — (NC) — The "sincere gratitude of the Army Air Forces" for aid rendered by the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the Philippines is voiced in a letter received by their assistant vicar general, Brother A. Philip, from General Carl Spaatz, commanding general of the Air Forces.

"All Americans are justly proud of the glorious defense of the Philippines. It is due in part to such men as the Brothers of De La Salle College that such defense was made possible and victory over tyranny finally achieved."

Calendar of Feast Days

Sunday, April 21 — St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury. His episcopate was a constant struggle with kings William Rufus and Henry I, chiefly over the question of investitures. He introduced the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in the West. He died in 1109.

Monday, April 22 — St. Soterus, Pope, Martyr, was raised to the Chair of Peter on the death of St. Anicetus in 173. He was distinguished for his almsgiving and for his opposition to the heresy of Montanus.

Tuesday, April 23 — St. George, patron of England. He was a tribune under Diocletian and rebuked the Emperor for persecuting Christians. For this he was put to death.

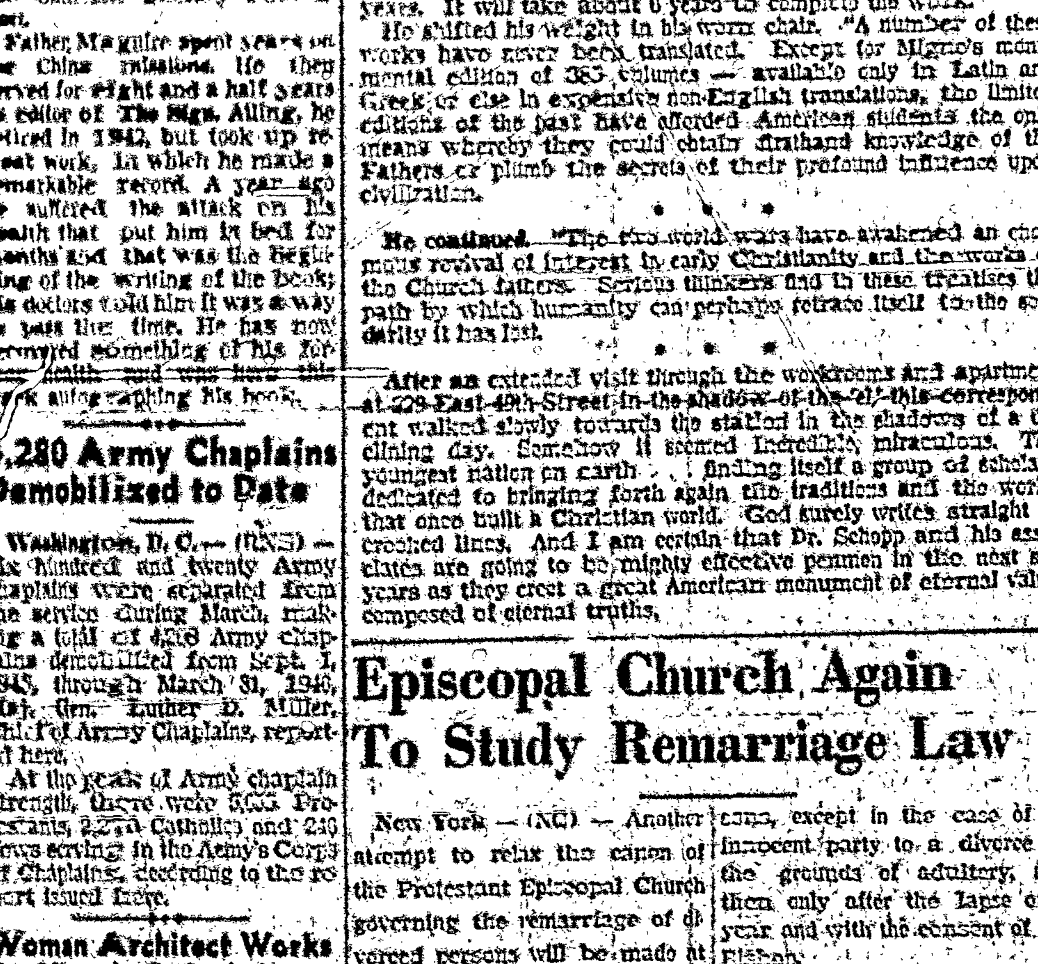
Wednesday, April 24 — St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, a rich and noble lawyer, entered the Capuchin Order. He preached against the Calvinists in Switzerland and after a sermon at Sevis was attacked and killed.

Thursday, April 25 — St. Mark, Evangelist, was converted by St. Peter, whom he afterward accompanied to Rome as secretary and interpreter. He founded the Church in Alexandria. After governing his See for years he was seized by enemies of the Faith and martyred.

Friday, April 26 — SS. Cletus and Marcellinus, Popes, Martyrs. Cletus was the third Bishop of Rome, reigning from 76 to 89. Marcellinus succeeded to the Papacy in 296 in the time of Diocletian.

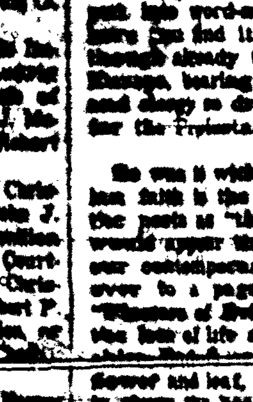
Saturday, April 27 — St. Zita, Virgin, was a servant of a citizen of Lucca. She fed the poor and by her gentleness overcame the jealousy of her fellow servants.

Honored by 4 Generations on Birthday



Four generations of the Bruce family gathered to honor William George Bruce, K. S. G., founder of The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, on the occasion of his 90th birthday recently. Pictured around William George are (standing) from left to right: Frank, Jr., grandson; William C., son; Mrs. Alice Bruce Gaunt, granddaughter; William George II, grandson; Robert, grandson, and Frank, Sr., son. Front row: Monica Bruce, great-granddaughter; Mary Alice Gaunt; Kathryn and Judy. Extreme right, Jane Bruce, granddaughter, juvenile book editor (NC Photos)

SACRED HEART MASS LEAGUE



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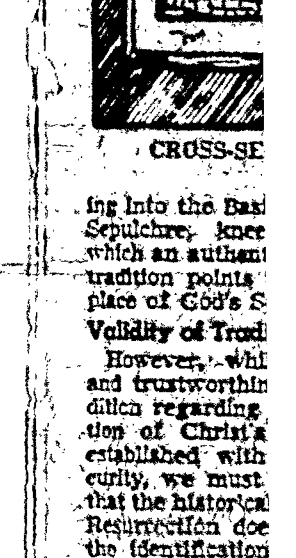

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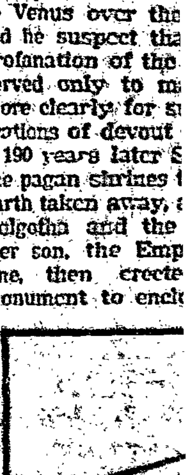

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