The Literary Crusade

"A Heart's Clarion"

By John O'Connor

Many have noticed and not a few outsiders of the Church have misinterpreted the fact that the great Christian feasts have a definite relation to the season operations of nature. Particularly is this true of the Feast of Easter, a word itself originally deriving from pre-Christian times and signifying a goddess or rising light and the Spring.

The point to be stressed, however, is that Easter is incidentally the resurrection of nature and essentially the Resurrection of the Lord of Mankind, our Savior Jesus Christ.

Christina Rossetti, an immortal woman poet, caught the inevitability of Divinity arising in her poem Easter Even. She presents the thought and theme of the night before Easter Sunday, just as Christ was about to arise:

"There is nothing more they can do
For all their rage and boast:
Caiphas with his blaspheming crew,
Herod with his host.

Pontius Pilate in his judgment hall
Judging their Judge and his.
Or we who led them all and passed them all,
Arch-Judas with his kiss.

The Sepulchre made sure with ponderous stone.
Seal that same stone, O priest;
It may be tho shall block the Holy One
From rising in the East:

Set a watch about the sepulchre
To watch on pain of death;
They must avoid fast the stone if Oone should stir
And shake it from beneath.

* * *

George Herbert, religious poet of the 17th century, finds in his "Easter Song" that Christ had anticipated him in the boundaries of nature – that the re-birth of nature is a mere presumptious analogy with the fundamental resurrection:

"I got me flowers to strew Thy way,
I got me boughs off many a tree;
But thou wast up by break of day,
And brought Thy sweets along with Thee.

The sun arising in the East,
Though he give light, and the East perfume,
If they should offer to contest
With Thy arising, they presume."

Alice Meynell, a noble figure and a poet of note at the turn of the century, took a more realistic attitude toward the central fact of all time and all history. Equally able to contrast the background and the event, she wrote in "Easter Night":

"All night long had shout of men and cry
Of woeful women filled his way;
Until that noon of sunless sky
On Friday, clamour and display
Smote him: no solitude had he.
No silence, since Gethsemane.

Public was Death, but Power, but Might
But Life again, but victory,
Were hushed within the dead of night.
The shuttered dark, to secrecy.
And all alone, alone, alone
He rose again behind the stone."

Beyond time and beyond the tomb lies the omnipotence of God. Perhaps the most powerful and the most modern statement of the rebirth of Nature as the symbol of the grandeur of God is "God's Grandeur" by the converted Gerrd Manley Hopkins. Somehow the darkening horizon, smudged as it is with the errors and hatreds of men, still has a thin ribbon of silver along the edge. While there is reason for despair, there is also cause for hope—and ever will be:

"The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade, bleared, smeared with toil
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell;
the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings!"

Court Changes Ruled

Boston — (NC) — The Massachusetts State Senate has adopted a resolution praising the Holy Cross basketball team for winning the National Collegiate Athletic Association basketball championship.

Author

Bruce Marshall, whose spiritual novel, "The World, The Flesh and Father Smith" can now be bought at all newsstands and bookstores for 25 cents in a Bantam Book edition.

STAGE GROUP LISTS LAVERY

New York — (NC) — A first-rate symposium on playwriting is in store for the delegates to the tenth anniversary convention of the National Catholic Theatre Conference, with Emmet Lavery, Walter Kerr, and the Rev Urban Nagle, O.P., as participants, and Mrs. Christopher Wyatt as chairman, according o an announcement from the group's headquarters here. The convention will be held at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., June 20-23.

Mr. Lavery is president of the Screen Writers' Guild and author of several successful Broadway plays. Mr. Kerr is of the drama department of Catholic University Father Nagle is director of the Blackfriar's Guild, New York, and Mrs. Wyatt is drama editor of The Catholic World.

Subjects to be covered at the Convention include "First Place to the Playwright," "Lighting the Stage," "Creative Dramatics For Grade School," and "Say It With Voice and Movement." A performance at the Catholic University Theatre on Saturday evening, June 21st, will be a feature of the program.

Jo Mielziner will speak on "Lighting the Stage" and Dr. Josephine Callan of the Catholic University and Miss Louise Gifford of Columbia University will hold sessions on interpretation and pantomime respectively.

Mrs. Rothschild's Conversion Told

Milwaukee — (NC) — The story of the conversion of Mrs. Walter Rothschild, wife of the former Berlin publisher, written by Marie Cecilia Buehrle, has been published here by the Bruce Publishing Company, under the title, "Out of Many Waters." It has been chosen as the current selection of the Catholic Literary Foundation.

Mrs. Rothschild, who with her family, was a refugee from Nazi Germany, spent some time in England before coming to this country. While a child, she had been given some teachings in Catholicism by a housekeeper and had developed a deep devotion of the Blessed Virgin. She was baptized in Washington in 1941. Miss Buehrle who met Mrs. Rothschild in California, decided her story should be shared by as many others as possible and wrote it.

$30,000 Book Contest Set by Christophers

New York—One of the most notable literary contests ever conducted under Catholic or any other auspices has been announced by The Christophers, who are offering a total of $30,000 in three awards for the best book-length manuscript submitted within the next 30 months.

The Christopher movement is comprised of those who undertake individually and personally to restore Christian principles to the various phases of public life. By prayer and [illegible] especially with the fields of education, government, labor-management and communication of ideas (newspapers, motion pictures, radio, magazines, books and other media). To be a Christopher one need not "join" any additional organization; each works as an individual. There are no meetings and no dues.

"Much of the tragedy of our times," holds Father James Keller, M.M., director of The Christophers, "seems to be due to the fact that anti-Christian elements have swarmed into key positions in every field of human endeavor. These anti-Christ crusaders are causing hundreds of millions over the earth to have a false outlook on life, to ignore their eternal destiny. On the other hand, most Christians, without intending any harm, have remained aloof in their own small worlds, leaving the running of the big world to those who hate Christ or know Him not."

To Encourage Writers

The contest which The Christophers now announce is part of their aim to bring Christian principles into the field of communication of ideas. To encourage potential writers with a Christian sense of values, The Christophers are awarding the $30,000 in prizes for the three book-length manuscripts submitted before midnight November 15, 1948 which are deemed best by the judges. The awards are to be outright gifts, and not, as in most other contests of this kind, partly as an advance against royalties. The first award will be $15,000, the second award $10,000, and the third $5,000.

The manuscripts may be either fiction or biography, adventure, romance, mystery, or any choice of the individual — so long as the entries are based on Christian principles and not against them. The contest is open to all authors, residents of the United States or its possessions, whether new or established writers, of all races and religions, according to Father Keller, who wrote "The Priest and a World Vision" and was a co-author of "Men of Maryknoll."

The following judges of the contest have been announced: Myles Connolly of Hollywood, motion picture writer and producer, author of "Mr. Blue" and other works; Father John S. Kennedy of Hartford, author and critic literary editor of The Catholic Transcript of Hartford; Clare Booth Luce, former Congresswoman, editor, author, playwright and lecturer; Mary O'Hara of Wyoming, author of "My Friend Flicka," "Thunderhead," "Green Grass of Wyoming," and other works, and Fulton Oursler of New York, a senior editor of The Readers Digest and noted author, novelist, radio director and lecturer.

Positive Approach

Asserting that the vast majority of negative and indecent literature, vulgar, boring or subversive radio programs, and cheap movies is to supply something positive and good to take their places The Christophers hope to encourage writers where new and better writers can be found and honored. "Why not from the people of normal, sound, healthy values —the vast groups of Americans who constitute the very backbone of our nation and of all Christian civilization?" It is explained that there are possibly thousands of thoughtful, decent-minded Americans who might well take up a writing career and achieve success in it, if they were given proper encouragement. The Christophers' contest aims, so far as it can, to encourage such potential writers.

It is stated that "hundreds of Christopher writers" have already taken positions on newspapers and magazines, in publishing houses, radio stations and movie studios; that "they are helping to restore high standards to the writing profession," but that they are yet only a handful. "What splendid results would be forthcoming if they numbered thousands instead of hundreds!"

Information about the contest may be secured free of charge by writing to: The Christophers Book Award, 121 East 30th Street, New York 16, N. Y. Those who wish a copy of the 24-page booklet, "Calling Christopher Writers!", in which the purpose behind the Christopher awards is more fully explained, may secure it at cost by writing to The Christophers (5c a copy, $4 for 100 copies, $35 for 1,000 copies, all postpaid).

The booklet is a reprint of an article by Father Keller which appears in the April issue of The American Ecclesiastical Review. 100,000 reprints have already been made, and one advance order from California was for 20,000 copies.

No drive or special appeal is planned to raise the necessary funds for The Christophers contest, since it is felt that here and there persons who sympathize with the purposes of the contest will voluntarily contribute to the fund. One writer gave the first $1,000 toward the $30,000 needed.

"My means are rather limited," he said, "yet I would like to assist with this project, especially since I realize I have not the ability to become a great writer myself. This is a grand way to encourage thousands of new writers with a Christian slant to get out of their shells into the main stream."

Eastern Rites Conferences Held

New York — (NC) — The union of the Eastern and Western Rites of the Church is a constant challenge to the cynics who have insisted that East and West could never meet, Msgr. Joseph F. Flannelly, administrator of St. Patrick's Cathedral, asserted at a Solemn Con-Celebration of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom according to the Rumanian Rite, which closed the ninth annual Conference on Eastern Rites.

The service was held in the Cathedral and more than 2,000 persons assisted. His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York, presided.

Dignitaries who occupied places of honor in the Sanctuary included Bishop Bryan J. McEntegart of Gyderisburg; Bishop Ambrose Senyshyn, O. S. B. M., Auxiliary of the Ukrainian Greek Rite Diocese; Bishop Stephen J. Donahue, Auxiliary of New York, and the Rt. Rev. Mansour Stephen, pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Brooklyn, and Chor-Bishop of the Maronite Rite.

A LOOK AT LABOR

By J. C. Tuck

The Association of Catholic Trade Unionists this week, celebrates its tenth anniversary. In March, 1937, a handful of Catholic laymen met and gathered in the offices of the Catholic Worker in New York City to launch a movement that has endeared itself to workingmen all over this country. Its origin was among the poor. Its aim is to serve the poor. In ten years it has neither forgotten its origin or its aims.

Various commentators, to commemorate, will review on the occasion of this anniversary. "The work of the ACTU — its schools, its press, its legal aid and vocational services — has been dedicated to unity and peace. It — the strengthening of the American Trade Union Movement by the education of the workers. The ACTU is opposed to separatism of any kind. The workers must be one with the Nation and within the nation. Where workers know the truth of their traditional religious, social, and political heritage is more free and our nation more secure."

"In defending the principles, Christian and democratic, ACTU inevitably offended many. Corrupt leaders, Communists, anti-union management and timid religionists have been its persistent foes and sometimes allies. The ACTU is greatly honored by its opposition and by the affection of thousands of workers everywhere whom it has served as Christ."

Opposition to the ACTU has come from those who have a vested interest in the status quo. Many Catholics, too, feel that the ACTU should remain safe in a declaration of principles. They oppose the ACTU making any application of these principles. They argue that the application of principle will cause resentment and will offend. Consequently, they stay away from doing anything which might offend those whose dominant passion is keeping conditions as they are.

Opponents of the ACTU to this attitude is forthright. Catholics face the choice that was presented to Christ. They may speak softly in hushed tones and keep the friendship of captains of industry, Communists, power-hungry management, and timid religionists. But they will lose the friendship of those millions of poor workingmen who have become embittered by the injustice of modern economic conditions. Those are the same poor and the same workingmen who have been the glory of the Church. Or they can defend the cause of justice and fight for the rights of defenseless workers and thus win the undying gratitude of those whose loyalty springs from the heart, not from the size of the bank account.

Christ faced a similar choice. He recognized that the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Roman Officials, the wealthy, the powers that be, would not accept Him. The only condition on which they would tolerate Him was that He cease "stirring up the people." But Christ knew where his friends were. He knew on which side justice rested. So He went to the poor. And the powers that be put Him to death.

Mistakes sometimes scare people away from doing things they should do. They would rather be "prudent," but they believe prudence to be "the art of doing nothing." The ACTU, on the contrary, rejects that definition of prudence. It believes that the Holy Father has assigned the laity a real apostolate dedicated to the reconstruction of the social order. The ACTU exercises the best prudence, therefore, in taking legitimate and direct steps toward that end. It is not afraid of mistakes, because it knows it is doing a necessary job, a work commanded by the Holy Father Himself, and because its methods of action are in accord with the best traditions of the Church.

A Do Nothing Policy is the biggest mistake of all. It does not correct injustice. It leaves workers wandering in their helplessness and discontent. It hands them over to the Communists and other groups who would seize their very souls. History teaches this lesson. Catholics will sooner or later be pressed into action in behalf of the workers. Shall it be now when the opportunities are abundant? Or shall we delay until the time when the workers have been taken from us?

Every Catholic Should Be An ACTU Member, particularly if he is a union man. The Association of Catholic Trade Unions can be reached at 226 Lafayette Street, New York. The phone number is Canal 6-9763.

On Army Chemical Group

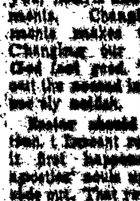
Notre Dame, Ind. — (NC) — Dr. Charles C. Price, III, head of the department of chemistry at the University of Notre Dame and recipient of the American Chemical Society's 1946 award in pure chemistry, has accepted an appointment as a member of the newly-formed advisory committee for the Army Chemical Corps, formed by Dr. W. Albert Noyes of Rochester, N. Y., president of the American Chemical Society.

Laity Speaks

Easter—New [illegible]

By Rev. [illegible]

I'm bothered about Easter. There's all the bunnies and chicks and candy and stuff about the Easter Bunny. Those things are cute, they are fun, they look swell. But if they are all we [illegible]



[illegible] Sunday, people (maybe) remember, everybody dressed up, everybody looking in the mirror, everybody filled with some sense of communion with a better world. But (God, oh God) how far all this really can be from the Real Thing — the Real Thing that Easter is meant to be. The Lord is due to be and He will really appear only [illegible] all these new outfits and bonnets, all these new suits and hats, really [illegible] Him. Master would be very [illegible] Easter — but some more real level to make shining [illegible] but a revolution to make [illegible] crooked and to trouble [illegible] love.

The best thing you can say about a Christian is that he is truly a witness of the risen Christ — not just a [illegible] a new outfit, but all the [illegible]

The old prophet said: Rend [illegible] the name of the Lord. Rend your hearts and not your garments. It might truly say to Easter Christians, Change your hearts and not your garments. Changing our garments makes us feel good. Changing the heart makes God feel good. The most difficult thing around is worthless and [illegible] unless.

Easter should mean repentance. I suspect revolutions were [illegible] first happened. It spelled together souls upside down, inside out. That revolution among the Romans really proved [illegible] faithful, unwillingly at first — but conquered it. That revolution through American centuries has overturned human pride and greed and selfishness, and has changed tons of [illegible] to living Christs, gentle, merciful, pure, brave, devoted to their brethren. For each [illegible] one, Easter must be found as a feast of transformation. The fact that many are [illegible] does not negate this [illegible] unintentionally [illegible] Catholic may undergo [illegible] conversion in his lifetime. Each of them will be a further removal of blindness and weakness — a new awareness of Christ and the meaning of the Church, a new strengthening of Christian responsibility.

There is an astounding ignorance about most of us. This paper is just meant for non-Catholic reading, and so I'm not telling out a family secret. And even if I did, it would give less scandal than the ignorance does. Imagine outsiders getting the idea that the divine Son's coming into the world and being riven with nails on a sinister Cross was only to produce the kind of specimens that many of us are. Nor am I overlooking myself as such a specimen. Sometimes the things overwhelm one [illegible]

A Priest as Your Spiritual Son

If you have no son in the Priesthood, you can have this privilege by adopting a Priest as your spiritual son. The Priests of the Sacred Heart invite you to share in the work of educating a missionary Priest by partial contributions toward Unfinished Burses, or by the establishment of a Burse in your own name.

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His entire support, [illegible] period through [illegible] Priest needs spiritual [illegible] with the [illegible] $100 a year [illegible] expenses [illegible]

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