Old Army Buildings Become Parish Plant

Baton Rouge, La.—(NC)—Archbishop Joseph F. Rummel of New Orleans, officiated at the dedication here of Our Lady of Mercy Church — component parts of which are an old locomotive bell, a one-time Army camp chapel and an altar painted white and blue, the colors of Our Lady.

The Army chapel which stood at Harding Field, La., was purchased for the church, dismantled and enlarged before assembled here. Two brothers veneered the chapel with brick. The edifice has a capacity of 500.

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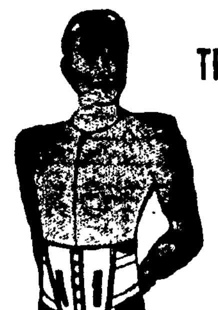
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Faith of Fatima Pilgrims Impresses U.S. Writer on Visit to Famed Shrine

By ROBERT S. LABONGE

Fatima, Portugal—(NC)—The story of Fatima is a simple story. It is a story of prayer, humility and sacrifice.

THIS IS THE reaction you have after flying trans-Atlantic from United States on a TWA Constellation and then motoring 90 miles to this picturesque town which annually draws millions of persons to the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima.

You feel here that the people love God sincerely.

They make great sacrifices to come here hundreds of miles from all parts of Portugal on the 13th of each month from May to October.

In complete humility they walk on their knees through pulverized dust and rocks around the shrine built on the site of an azinheira tree, where the Blessed Mother appeared in 1917 to three shepherd children — Lucia Abobora dos Santos and Francisco and Jacinta Marto.

Thirty-one years ago and within the lifetime of many pilgrims here today, Our Lady asked these three shepherd children to pray the Rosary; to ask consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and to receive Communion of reparation on First Saturdays.

SHE PROMISED if her requests were granted that Russia would be converted and there would be peace. If not, she predicted, Russia would scatter errors of communism throughout the world, provoking wars and persecuting the Church. The good would be martyred, Our Lady revealed and the Holy Father would have much to suffer, various nations would be annihilated.

Statesmen from Washington, London, Paris and Moscow confer on problems of the world's ills, but the Portuguese pilgrims know little about this. They come here to pray to Our Lady.

Before darkness on the 12th they gather on the hillsides of the Cova da Lira, just outside Fatima village Singing hymns of praise to Our Blessed Mother they march in candlelight procession around the shrine dedicated to her name.

WHOLE FAMILIES camp on the hills beneath olive trees or on the floor of the Basilica, which was partially completed this year.

Beginning at dawn on the 13th they fill the area in front of the Basilica and hear Masses from a several dozen altars, and receive Holy Communion from hands of many priests.

A pilgrimage to European shrines which might have taken months before the war is being made in a matter of days by two Catholic editors. Left to right: Robert S. Labonge, assistant editor of The Tidings, Los Angeles; Mary Ann Harper, assistant associate editor of Extension Magazine, Chicago, and Virginia Schwartz of Trans World Airline are visiting shrines at Fatima in Portugal, in Madrid, in Rome, in Switzerland, at Loudes and in Ireland before returning to the United States on September 1. (NC Photo).

Ceremonies continue throughout the day as thousands of pilgrims participate in various devotions Sick lame and blind are here to ask the intercession of Our Blessed Mother. Many have been cured, some have not.

As the noon hour approaches, huge crowds fall into procession, carrying multi-colored banners representing Fatima societies throughout Portugal and other parts of Europe.

AVE MARIA, . . . Hail Mary, full of grace — recitation of Rosary begins. Between each decade voices of pilgrims swell the countryside with hymns to Our Blessed Lady. Orphan boys and girls, dressed in smocks and gay gingham and plaid dresses, many with misfit shoes given them by wealthier families, recite their beads as they walk around the Shrine toward the Basilica on the hill.

From the rear of the procession comes a gold-leafed wooden platform on which rests the statue of Our Lady of Fatima. The procession moves around the grounds and up to the altar erected on the steps just outside the Basilica. Solemn Benediction begins.

"Work for Christ and you will be happy," exhorts Bishop Manuel Maria Ferreira da Silva, Superior General of the Portuguese Society for Catholic Missions, in a sermon to the pilgrims. He tells them of the great need for Fatima in guiding their lives in these days.

AMONG THOSE standing in the broiling sun to pay homage to Our Lady were several soldiers from various countries.

On one side of steps, Pfc. James Cravo of Naugatuck, Conn., who flew to Portugal on a TWA Constellation, knelt in thanksgiving for a favor granted by Our Lady of Fatima. He was in five major battles of World War II and vowed he would come to Fatima if his life were spared during the war.

An English soldier, with both arms missing, knelt at the foot of steps near the altar, his voice ringing out in prayers and hymns of gratitude.

As the day closed, the pilgrims gathered up their blankets and food baskets to return home. Many of them walked. Others journeyed to great distances on burros, in ox carts, busses and automobiles.

Anniversary day is over, but prayers to Our Lady of Fatima continue daily on the hillsides and in the humble homes of the Portuguese. They will return again to Fatima on September 13 and October 13 to pray to Our Lady in answer to her requests given the world in 1917.

They have the faith of Fatima in their hearts — the faith that Mary asked all the world to have for peace and the conversion of Russia to Christianity.

First Europe Priest Arrives at Mission

Tingchow, Fukien—Having finally obtained a travel permit from Soviet occupation authorities in Vienna, the Rev. Richard Krupitschka, Austrian Dominican, has arrived here, the first Catholic missionary to come from Europe to this mission since the beginning of the second world war.

The Catholic mission of Tingchow has been entrusted to the German Dominicans since 1914. Today its personnel includes Chinese, Swiss and Italians as well as Germans, under Bishop John W. Lesinski, O.P.

Catholic Sporting Clubs Observe Jubilee In France

Paris — Ten thousand men and women athletes took part in the sports events marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Catholic Federation of French Sporting Societies, originally called the Federation of Church Clubs.

The Federation was formed at the Catholic Institute of Paris by the late Dr. Paul Michaux, a noted surgeon, who was impressed by the moral benefits which can be derived from sports.

"IN MINGLING in the games of young people," Dr. Michaux told priests and instructors, "do not fear to lose your influence or compromise your authority. A good game will often make more friends than a long talk."

Dr. Michaux's work progressed and at the outbreak of World War I in 1914 there were 2,000 Catholic Sporting Societies which provided 110,000 physically fit men for the French Army.

After the war Dr Michaux was decorated with the cross of the Legion of Honor, and at his death a square in the French capital was named for him.

ALTHOUGH the two wars caused great losses among its members the Federation today has nearly 5,000 societies with close to a million members. It has furnished a good number of international champions. Since the death of Dr. Michaux, the federation has been headed by Francois Hebrard, law professor at the Catholic Institute of France.

His Eminence Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Paris, presided at a thanksgiving ceremony in Notre Dame Cathedral.

'Stockport Roses' Bloom, Baffle Men of Science

(Continued from Page 1)

miracle. "Above nature," he says. "I claim no miracle. This is a question not for me to decide but for the proper authorities in Rome."

He described it to me simply as a wonderful phenomenon, obviously concerned with the immense good the roses have already done "to scores of millions throughout the world."

The roses, Dr. Turner told me, "retain the crispy, curly contour of delicate tea roses, just as on the day they were cut from the bush. They have no smell. They were attached to a single piece of wire, the shape of the head of the statue, and all were wired through the center to keep them in position.

"I have frequently touched them. As for the ferns hothouse grown asparagus ferns which form a background and which should have gone to powder months ago I can knock them about as much as I wish. They stand up to any battering. I have frequently demonstrated this operation to visitors.

"Dust does settle on the roses but it is periodically blown off. The dust settling on the statue is dusted off in the ordinary manner. The roses are blown with an automatic duster, like a bicycle pump but about four times as large."

DR. TURNER first noticed that something unusual was taking place about a fortnight after the May Day ceremony, when normally the flowers would have wilted. "By the end of the month I was convinced that there was something very extraordinary," he added.

No precautions have been taken to insure that the crown is not secretly renewed, he said. "No precautions are necessary. My people see the crown every day —two or three times a day and any substitute crown would have been immediately detected. It is most definitely recognized as the May, 1947, crown. Frequent photographs taken at periods prove this identity."

The matter was reported to Rome during the first week of October last year, the priest told me. The Most Rev. Henry V. Marshall Bishop of Salford the diocese in which Heaton Norris is situated— "is doing nothing about it. Last October he told the press that it was "'all a fuss about nothing', that it 'meant nothing to him' and that 'he deplored the publicity given to it.'

"Neither scientists (so-called) nor horticulturists have been called in," Dr. Turner explained. "They have severally given their ridiculous explanations, uttered their prophecies, but now they are eloquently silent. They have been taken to task for their absurd hypotheses (just a high-faluting word for guesses) but have not a word to say.

"Their prophecies that they would fall to dust, that the slightest breath of air would dissolve them into dust, are still waiting after 10 months for fulfilment. They prophesied last October but still not a single petal has fallen, and the formation of the roses is perfect—now—after 15 months.

"The parish priest has no time for these up-to-the-minute godless pseudo-scientists. They commence always with the denial of the existence of God. And so, for such unbelievers, no explanation is possible but for believers in the power of God and His Holy Mother no explanation is necessary.

"I could keep an audience rocking with amusement," said Dr Turner, "if I were to relate some of the explanations offered. I will give just one example: a 'feller' (university man), who no doubt had an enlarged and highly-developed scientific bump, rang me up and said: 'Don't you think, sir, that considering that these roses were cut in the full strength of their vitality, they have probably produced roots, embedded themselves in the wood of the statue, and drawn moisture therefrom?'

"I leave you to imagine my reaction to such an insane suggestion. This most definitely would be a miracle. To suggest that very delicate tea roses could produce roots and inbed themselves into hard seasoned wood, and draw therefrom moisture to keep the roses in their state of perfection well, preposterous is a kind word for it."

THE CROWN has not been used for blessings, Dr. Turner said. "We honour Our Blessed Lady on all her days (emphasizing the word "all") but no special prayers or devotions have been organized because of this wonderful phenomenon."

For himself, Dr. Turner refused "to blow his own trumpet" by saying that he had any particular devotion to Our Lady. "Others think so, rightly or wrongly," he admitted, however. "My church is dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary and I have done my utmost to encourage devotion to Our Blessed Mother."

As for the results: "Most definitely devotion has increased, not only in my parish but throughout the entire world," Dr. Turner asserted. "This wonderful phenomenon has resulted in a terrific burst of love, admiration and devotion to Our Lady from scores of millions. Definitely the Sacraments are more frequented.

"There have been conversions both here and abroad—reported to me in the thousands of letters I have received. Signal graces, of a spiritual or temporal nature, have been reported to me, and I hold the documentary evidence of them."

(To be concluded next week).

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