1,632 War II Vets Turn To Priesthood

[illegible] (NC) — A total of 1,632 veterans of World War II entered 121 seminaries and novitiates throughout this country to study for the priesthood, it has been revealed in an extensive nationwide survey conducted by a group of former GI's now studying for the priesthood with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at DeMazenrod Scholasticate, San Antonio, Tex.

The results of the survey were disclosed in an article written by Brother Dennis McCarthy, O.M.I., for the current issue of Our Sunday Visitor, Catholic weekly published here. The survey disclosed that the GI's-turned-seminarians came from all branches of the armed forces and from every ranking from private to lieutenant colonel.

"ONE VETERAN with the Jesuits," Brother McCarthy wrote, "a former Navy Lieutenant Commander, served as the skipper of a submarine. Another Navy veteran had served as a boatswain's mate on an Atlantic Cargo vessel, where his Captain decided there should be some type of regular church services held aboard ship. As a result, this conscientious, young fellow became ship's chaplain aboard the ship, where the crew affectionately dubbed him 'Deacon.' Today, he has completed his studies and is newly ordained as a diocesan priest."

Brother McCarthy wrote that the ages of the veteran-seminarians range from 20 to the late 30's. He said many hold degrees from leading universities and colleges before entering the armed forces. One who is studying for the foreign missions served more than five years as a flight surgeon with the rank of Major in the Air Force. Another had a military career of two years before entering a seminary.

BROTHER McCARTHY said the survey shows that the 1,632 veteran-seminarians during their service years accumulated a total of 600 battle stars, 16 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 32 Purple Hearts, 20 Bronze Stars, one Distinguished Service Cross, six Silver Stars and eight decorations from foreign governments. This record, he adds, seems to answer the favorite theme of the Blanshard-Osmun group which appears to say "Catholics who follow their religion can intentionally make poor Americans."

The survey statistics show, Brother McCarthy wrote, that 656 of the veterans entered religious communities to prepare for the priesthood and that 726 chose to study for the diocesan brotherhood. He said that the Jesuits attracted most of the former GI's—267, while the Trappists ranked second with 161. He added that the Dominicans have 76 former GI's in one House of Studies alone and that former GI's constitute 45 per cent of their community of scholastics. The Benedictines attracted 55, the Order of Friars Minor 48 and the Maryknoll Fathers 32.

TWENTY-EIGHT veterans are studying for the priesthood for the Philadelphia archdiocese, Brother McCarthy said, while the Diocese of LaCrosse ranks second with 19 and Pittsburgh third with 18.

"An Army second lieutenant, who served 60 months with the infantry," Brother McCarthy wrote, "had this to say: 'Only in eternity will I know fully what marvelous influence those self-sacrificing chaplains and Communion-rail buddies had on conforming my will to Our Father's. I shan't ever forget them!'"

He said that one convert from Judaism, a former Infantry Sergeant, is now a Jesuit novice. He added that the survey has no accurate account of veterans already ordained, but said indications are that there are almost 20. He said that the survey disclosed that a number of the veteran-seminarians are interested in returning to the armed forces as chaplains.

"It is not to be expected," Brother McCarthy concluded, "that these statistics represent the total number of seminarian-veterans, since many seminaries had not forwarded their questionnaires in time to meet the date of publication. The statistics will continue to be gathered until the entire story is told."

Archbishop Blesses American Embassy

Mexico City—(RNS)—Roman Catholic Archbishop Luis M. Martinez of Mexico officiated here at the solemn blessing of a newly-erected skyscraper building which will be occupied mainly by the United States Embassy.

Diocesan Priest In Germany

HEIDELBERG, GERMANY: Chaplain (Captain) Gerard J. Gefell, son of Mr. and Mrs. August B. Gefell, of 43 Lill Street, Rochester, N. Y., is shown with the group of 35 boys and girls on the occasion of their First Holy Communion, May 13, 1951, in Heidelberg, Germany. The children of this First Communion class are sons and daughters of military and civilian personnel of the Armed Forces on duty in the Heidelberg Military Post area. Formerly assistant pastor at St. Michael's Church, Newark, N. Y., Chaplain Gefell was commissioned in November 1948. His first military assignment was to Fort Monmouth, N. J. He came to Germany in August 1950 and was assigned to duty with the U. S. Constabulary in Friedberg. In April 1951 he was transferred to Heidelberg Military Post as Assistant Post Chaplain.

Chaplain.

Negro Convert Ordained In Buffalo

Buffalo — A convert to the faith is now serving in the Buffalo diocese as its second Negro priest.

The Rev. Peter J. Carter was ordained to the priesthood in St. Joseph's New Cathedral, Buffalo, by Bishop John F. O'Hara on May 19.

Father Carter became interested in the Catholic Church through a Catholic information section in a newspaper. He was then a student at the University of Michigan.

After college and post-graduate study, he served with the Army in Algeria, Tunisia and Italy. He then studied at Canisius College, Buffalo, and Our Lady of Angels Seminary, Niagara University.

Father Carter is the son of Dr. Peter J. Carter of Tuskegee, Ala., and the late Helen Carter of Buffalo.

Protestant Theologian Raps Public Education Defects

Minneapolis, Minn.—(RNS) — A conservative Protestant theologian charged here that this nation's scheme of public education "makes it difficult for American youth to believe in God and in an objective moral order."

"WE EDUCATE our youth in such a manner as to make them candidates for the very world outlook we are fighting against," said Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, professor of Christian philosophy at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Cal.

"Naturalistic philosophies have fastened their tentacles upon the free nations of the West to such an extent that they are threatened with moral paralysis in the midst of the present cultural crisis," Dr. Henry declared.

He said the theses "that the belief in God is a stumbling block to progress, that man is only a complicated animal and that morality is relative were not manufactured in Soviet Russia, but were urged with evangelistic passion by Continental and Angelo-Saxon thinkers."

DR. HENRY SAID the notion that modern science requires a naturalistic view of the world is "grossly unscientific." Some thinkers, he said, would make it appear that belief in the supernatural is a consequence of ignorance.

"But the shoe is on the other foot," he maintained. "They are ignorant of the supernatural and, since they deny themselves an experience of the spiritual and moral order, ought not to be considered experts in that area at all."

'Ear of God'

"The Ear of God," by Rev. Patrick Payton, C.S.C., the famed and fervent Family Rosary Crusade and Family Theater originator, has sold a total of over 30,000 copies since its publication by Doubleday & Company two months ago.

Bishop Sheen's Consecration In Eternal City

Rome (NC)—The solemn consecration of Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen as Titular Bishop of Caesariana and Auxiliary to His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York, will take place here in Rome on June 11.

BISHOP-ELECT Sheen will return to the United States at the earliest possible moment following his consecration.

The solemn ceremonies will be performed in the Church of SS. John and Paul, which is the titular church of Cardinal Spellman, here in the Eternal City. His Eminence Adeodato Giovanni Cardinal Piazza, O.C.D., Secretary of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, will be the consecrating prelate. Archbishop Celso Costantini, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and Bishop Martin J. O'Connor, Rector of the North American College in Rome, will be the co-consecrators.

BISHOP-ELECT Sheen made public these facts today. He has only recently arrived here from Germany, where he preached at a solemn Pontifical Military Mass in Munich on Sunday, May 27. Since his arrival in Rome he has been busy attending meetings of the directors of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Bishop-elect Sheen is National Director in the United States of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

Parting Hair Costly Job

Tarime, Africa — (NC) — "How much do you charge for a haircut?" asked the Rev. Alphonse Schiavone, Maryknoll Missioner from Waterbury, Conn., of the new barber who had set up shop under a shade tree here.

"With or without?" the barber wanted to know.

"With or without what?" asked the puzzled Father Schiavone.

"A part," explained the barber. "I charge twelve cents in American money for cutting hair off, and three cents for parting what's left."

Hospital Holds First Alumni-Alumnae Day

New Orleans —(NC)— Hotel Dieu conducted by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul here held its first baby alumni-alumnae day. Invitations were extended to babies born at the hospital within the last five years, and their mothers.

Sweden Lifts Bars On Catholic Church

Stockholm, Sweden (NC) — Serious disabilities which have hampered the Catholic Church in Sweden for centuries will be dropped on January 1, 1952, as the result of a new law on religious freedom passed here.

The new law strikes out many restraints forced on all non-Lutheran Churches since the sixteenth century, when the Lutheran creed became compulsory for all citizens. During the course of years since then many modifications were introduced. The latest previous general law on religion dates back to 1873.

THE NEW LAW includes the following favorable changes for the Church:

Marriages contracted before the representative of any Church will now have legal validity. Religious orders of men and women will be permitted to establish convents in the country, thus promising a new influx of missionaries.

Citizens who ask exemption will now no longer be inscribed in the parish registers of the State Church. They will also automatically be freed from paying special taxes collected for the benefit of the Lutheran Church.

THE INITIATIVE for the new law dates back to 1943 when the government created a commission to study the granting of greater religious freedom to now Lutherans. At that time Bishop Johannes E. Mueller, Vicar Apostolic of Sweden, was asked to submit the Catholic desires on the matter.

Anti-Catholic prejudices in Sweden have decreased considerably over the past decades. An essential factor in this development was the extensive Vatican relief work during and after the war. Another factor was the consistent efforts for world peace by the Holy Father and other Church officials. A third important element was the heroic stand of the Catholic Church against communist tyranny in the Iron Curtain countries.

Among a population of seven million there are only 16,000 Catholics in Sweden today. However, the Catholic population has more than doubled in the past five years. In 1946, the Catholic population stood at 6,300. The Catholic ranks have been swelled mainly by immigrants from Latvia, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Italy.

All Sweden is now a Vicariate Apostolic, headed by Bishop Mueller and his Coadjutor, Bishop Ansgar Nelson, O.S.B., who is a Danish-born American citizen. He was previously affiliated for ten years with the Benedictine abbey at Portsmouth, R.I.

Gustave Ordered Return Of Nuns

Stockholm, Sweden — (NC) While religious communities have been legally banned in Sweden the Brigittine nuns have for the past 13 years maintained a convent at Vadstena, where the community was founded by St. Bridget in the 14th century. Their return to Sweden came about in a novel way.

Some 15 years ago the late King Gustav V was traveling incognito in Rome. While there he entered a chapel of the Brigittine nuns and became intensely interested in the history of the order as narrated by the Sister superiors.

"Why don't you return to Sweden?" the visitor asked.

"We are not allowed," the Sister replied.

"I will see to it that you are," the visitor said. Two years later the nuns were back in the cradle of the order.

Colombia Increases State Aid To Catholic Church

Bogota, Colombia — (NC) — Testifying to the excellent relations between the Holy See and Columbia, the government has increased the annual subsidy to the Catholic Church from 82,000 pesos to 264,000 pesos ($105,600). The former sum had been the annual grant since 1919. The government funds are to go for aid to dioceses, ecclesiastic chapters, seminaries and missions.

The increase follows recent conversations between Foreign Minister Gonzalo Restrepo Jaramillo and Archbishop Antonio Samore, Apostolic Nuncio to Columbia. In the Concordat of 1887 the Colombian government obligated itself to make an annual grant to aid "the civilizing activities of the Church."

Actually, Catholics say, the government subsidy is nothing more than an idemnity which the government acknowledges for confiscations of Church property during the last century by anti-Catholic administrations. The amount granted, they add, scarcely represents the minimum interest on the capital represented by confiscated property.

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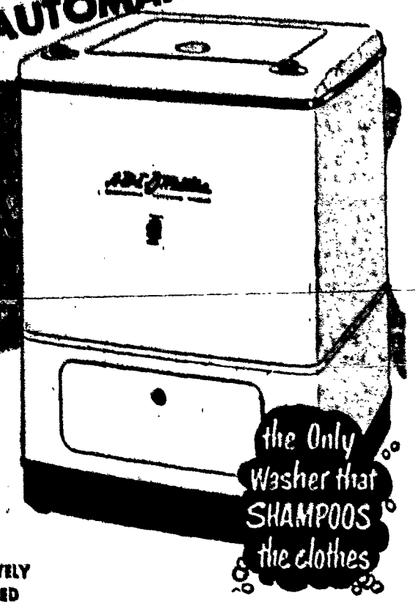

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