

A Doctor At Calvary

By Pierre Barbet, M.D.

Selected from the book "A DOCTOR AT CALVARY—The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ as Described by a Surgeon" by Pierre Barbet, M.D., published by the Catholic Book Club. All rights reserved.

He starts on His journey, with bare feet, along the rough roads strewn with stones. The soldiers pull the cords which bind Him, anxious to know whether He will last out till the end. The road is fortunately not very long, about 650 yards, and the hill of Calvary is just outside the gate of Ephraim.

But the journey is a very checked one, even inside the ramparts. Jesus painfully puts one foot before the other, and He often falls. He falls onto His knees which are soon all raw. The soldiers who form the escort lift Him up, and are not too brutal about it, for they feel He might die on the way.

AND ALL THE TIME there is that beam, balanced on His shoulders, bruising Him, and which seems to wish to force its way into His back. His shoulders are covered with raw places, which open up again and get larger and deeper with each step. He is worn out. On His seamless coat there is a large patch of blood which gets ever larger till it reaches right down His back.

He falls again and this time at full length; the beam falls off Him. Will He be able to get up again? Luckily at this moment a man passes by, on his way back from the fields, one Simon of Cyrene, who is soon obliged to help Jesus carry the beam. There is at last only the slope of Golgotha to be climbed, and they make their painful way to the top of the hill. Jesus sinks to the ground, and the crucifixion begins.

OH, IT IS NOT very complicated; the executioners know their work. First of all He must be stripped. The lower garments are cast with easily enough, but the coat is firmly stuck to His wounds. They try to tear it, but when they do this, the wounds bleed and the stripping is a horrible business.

Have you ever removed the raw dressing which has been on a large lacerated wound, and dried on it? Or have you yourself ever been through this ordeal, which sometimes requires a general anesthetic? If so, you know what it is like. Each thread that sticks to the raw surface and that it is impossible to remove any one of the innumerable nervous ends which have been laid bare by the wound.

These thousands of painful threads add up and multiply, each one increasing the complexity of the nervous system. Now, it is not just a question of a local lesion, but of almost the whole surface of the body and especially of the chest and back. The executioners are in a hurry and not about their work roughly. Perhaps it is better that they have done this heavy, dreadful work, not being so familiar with it. How clean it is that from beginning to end He dominates. He directs the executioners.

The blood streams down yet again. They lay Him on His back. The wounds on His back, on His thighs and on the calves of His legs become caked with dust and

with tiny pieces of gravel. He has been placed at the foot of the vertical stake, the stripes, with His shoulders lying on the horizontal beam, the patibulum.

The executioners take the measurements. A stroke with an augur, to prepare the holes for the nails, and the horrible deed begins.

AN ASSISTANT holds out one of the arms, with the palm up. The executioner takes hold of the nail, the long pointed and square, which has for head is a third of an inch thick; he gives Him a prick on the wrist, in that forward fold which he knows by experience. One single blow with the great hammer and the nail is already fixed in the wood, in which a few vigorous taps fix it firmly.

Jesus has not cried out, but His face has contracted in a way terrible to see. His thumb, with a violent gesture, is striking against the palm of His hand; median nerve has been touched. An insupportable pain starts. His fingers, through his fingers and then, like a fruit of fire right up His shoulder, and burst in His brain.

The most unbearable pain that a man can experience is that caused by wounding the great nervous centers. It nearly always causes a fainting fit, and it is fortunate that it does. Jesus has not fainted; that He should lose consciousness.

Now, it is not as if the nerve were cut right across; it is only partially destroyed; the raw place on the nervous center remains in contact with the nail, and later on, when the body sags, it will be stretched against this like a violin string, against the bridge and will vibrate with each shaking or movement, reviving the horrible pain. This goes on for three hours.

THE OTHER ARM is pulled by the assistant, the same actions are repeated and the same pains. But this time, remember, He knows what is happening. He is now fixed on the patibulum to which His shoulders and two arms now conform exactly. He already has the form of a cross; how great He is!

NEXT WEEK: Jesus Thirsts.

Attorney Donates Site For Abbey

WISCONSIN (NC)—A site for a new St. Norbert Abbey in De Pere, Wis., has been donated to the Norbertine Fathers by Victor McCormick, Green Bay, Wis., attorney. Abbot Sylvester M. Killen, O. Praem., who is also executive vice president of St. Norbert College, described the gift as the "largest single donation received by the Norbertine Order in this country." He added, "Mr. McCormick's gift is in answer to our prayers. It is as fine a piece of property for the Abbey as could be found."

Seen My Glasses?



The gentleman's not delirious! Bet the same thing has happened to you many times. But what if the glasses were really lost? Then you would be in trouble. Be safe, be sure. Stop in at Bausch this week and be fitted for an extra pair.

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NUNS BUILD CONVENT



FREESTON, England—A post Mother Superior of the Carmelite Order wields a pick to break ground for a new chapel which 18 nuns are building here, along with a convent. Every morning the sisters don aprons over their religious habits and pitch into the construction of their new community. The nuns, who are using techniques learned from textbooks, recently moved into an abandoned house here leaving them with no available funds for their home. So they decided to pitch in and do the work themselves. Construction is expected to be completed in some 18 months. (BNS Photo)

'Do No Harm' Philosophy Called Spiritual Isolationism

New York (NO)—The "many strange people" who aim merely at never doing any harm to anybody, and who rarely do anything positively good and constructive are simply "spiritual isolationists," a nationwide radio audience was told.

Father Joseph T. V. Snee, assistant vicar for religious life for the Archdiocese of New York, declared that the "words of Christ teach us all very clearly that our salvation and sanctification is to be achieved not merely by avoiding evil but by doing good."

Mary's Shrines

Rochester

By REV. HENRY ATWELL

When our Holy Father Pope Pius XII proclaimed 1954 as Mary's Year, he asked of all loyal Catholics "... publicly and in the open to give glorious expression of their love toward the Virgin Most Holy."

The famous shrines of Mary, like Lourdes, Fatima, and Rome, will be the scenes of ardent devotion and splendid and thereby gain so rich an indulgence.

The Pope reminds us that "... in all cities, towns, and villages, wherever the Christian religion thrives, there is a sanctuary, or at least an altar, in which the sacred image of the Blessed Virgin Mary is enshrined for the devotion of the Christian people, and we desire that the faithful should throng to these shrines not only in private but in great numbers to offer their prayers and praise to our Most Sweet Mother Mary."

OUR OWN CITY of Rochester is especially blessed with many churches dedicated to our Lady. Since 1932, Old Saint Mary's on South St. has been the witness of our diocesan devotion to the Mother of God. Every Monday, there are devotions in honor of our Lady's Miraculous Medal; and on Fridays, the Novena to our Sorrowful Mother.

In the church yard is the exquisite shrine to Our Lady of the Highway, where visitors to our city often stop to pray for Mary's smile on their journey. Two other churches have become especially noted for their services to honor Mary—St. Joseph's on Franklin St. fills the church time after time every Wednesday for its Novena in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Little St. Francis of Assisi on Whitney St. has taken Mary's Rosary into countless homes of the diocese by its nightly broadcast of the Rosary for Peace.

ANYONE WHO visits these churches on any day this year may gain a Plenary Indulgence, provided, of course, the usual conditions are fulfilled: Confession, Communion, Prayers for the Pope's intention.

The faithful may also gain a Plenary Indulgence on any Saturday of Mary's Year, under the usual conditions as mentioned. If they visit in a group any church dedicated to our Lady. This is a wonderful opportunity to combine our Saturday Confession with a tribute to our Lady

rich indulgences are also granted to those who attend these services. A Plenary Indulgence is granted to those who attend any sacred ceremony celebrated in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

It has been said that this "Mary's Year" is the last great effort of Pope Pius XII to save the world, to restore it to peace, to restore it to Jesus through Mary.

Our Holy Father the Pope invites us, our Diocese has a great tradition to perpetuate. It is now up to us to honor Mary by imitating her in loyal and pure service of her Divine Son.

Within the city of Rochester, these churches may be visited any Saturday to gain that indulgence: Holy Rosary on Lexington Ave., Immaculate Conception on South Plymouth, Our Lady of Good Counsel on Brooks Ave., Our Lady of Lourdes on Imperial Drive, Our Lady of Mount Carmel on Woodward St., Our Lady of Perpetual Help on Joseph Ave., Mother of Sorrows on Mount Read Blvd., Annunciation Church on Norton St., and, of course, historic Our Lady of Victory—the French Church—on Pleasant St.

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