

St. Francis Of Assisi Artist - Dramatist
 By FRANK T. KETTER

It was wet, blustery and chill in the morning. Francis made his way with leaden footsteps through the drizzle. His heart was heavy and he had problems.

First of all was the thought of the little congregation he had just left behind him. Not one of them had been touched by the mystery, the drama of the birth of Jesus. How could he, make them see the glory of Mary's motherhood of God?

As though a portent, the drizzle changed to snow. Most unusual for this climate. He had had hopes it would be warm again because his brown robe, his habit, it was soaked and he had miles to go before shelter. How could he bring the Christ Mass home to these poor people?

FRANCIS came into a clearing and was confronted by a mule and a horned cow. They had been

chomping hay, put out by the farmer, from a cross-legged manger. Francis' head seemed to explode as the idea struck him.

HE PICTURED the scene in his vivid imagination—Mary, Joseph and the Child Jesus and that manger, while the mule and the cow stood contentedly by. Yes! And he would bring others, shepherds with their sheep and angels. They would be real, live persons impersonating the reality.

They would bring home the story of Christ's Mass as nothing on this earth could.

Disregarding the falling snow he turned about and swiftly walked and by the time he arrived he was a good half-hour ahead of his steps toward the village. His throat was not so raw as it had been. He breathed easier. He seemed to be relieved of his ill-luck. It was pure joy in the realization of his plan. He hurried to the church and luckily found four or five persons still there, the faithful, the loyal ones who always stayed to see that things were put to rights after Mass.

They were just the ones he wanted. His explanation of what he wanted to do seemed again to explode in the force of his dynamic idea. They caught his fever and scattered to obtain the necessary clothing and other things—like sheep, for example.

Francis went into the village and approached some of the more talkative ones to whom he gave an invitation to visit a certain clearing in the woods at a certain hour that afternoon. That very afternoon, that's how fast the saint's mind worked.

But it was a mild with the heart in it. His soul. His entire being. He returned to the forest and as he stumbled along in a snow and sleet storm he lit and wrote his plan. He laughed, cried, staid.

On his way he reviewed the entire plan. He must have the children's choir there. There was a cherubic youngster who would take the part of the angel. He hoped his faithful sang would not forget his instructions. No, who was warm, almost hot, clear through and the snow had ceased falling.

LONG MOUNDS of labor brought the idea to life. He placed them in his best memory of the Gospel. The people came in multitudes. The forest disgorged them in groups of five and ten. The clearing had been transformed. Stately pines marked the gloomy cave and extra branches were thrown against them as a backdrop. There was the manger, and Mary, and Joseph.

Singing in their most appealing manner were the children perched in the trees about the Nativity scene. A few steps away were the shepherds and their sheep.

St. Francis was forced to re-lit from sight for his eyes streamed tears in the joy of fulfillment of his idea. It was the idea that was to bring Christ and His Mass home to the world.

Rochester Priest's Books For Children Available



A new series of inexpensive Catholic juveniles, the **Christian Child's Stories**, has been initiated by Bruce with publication of four paper bound books. The authors of the first books are the Rev. Gerald T. Brennan, pastor of St. Bridget Church, and Mrs. John D. Fitzgerald, both successful juvenile authors.

Covers are in three colors, and the books, selling at fifty cents, are illustrated with black and white line drawings. Large printer type has been used to make easy reading for the child.

Three Father Brennan's Tales for Tiny Tod, Father Brennan's Treasure Chest of Stories, and Father Brennan's Christmas Storybook, contain best-loved material from earlier writings. The fourth, The Book of Prayers, contains selections from Montaigne, Fitzgerald's popular juvenile, *Sally Jane*.

BOOKS BY Father Brennan have been on youngsters' reading lists since 1938 when *Angel City* was published. At present he is the author of 13 books.

His ability to present religious truths to children on the open level accounts for the popularity his books have achieved through the last 16 years.

Requiem Mass Set Today For Father McLaughlin

A Solemn Requiem Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. today (Dec. 23) in Precious Blood Church, Detroit, for the Rev. John R. McLaughlin, C.S.B., a former Latin teacher at Aquinas Institute, who died unexpectedly Dec. 20, 1954 in the residence of the Basilian Fathers.



REV. JOHN R. McLAUGHLIN of Catholic Central High School, Detroit, Mich. He was 38 years old.

Father McLaughlin left Aquinas a year ago last September to join the faculty of Catholic Central High School in Detroit. He was struck with what appeared to be a heart attack as he was going to dinner in the residence about 6 p.m. He died there an hour and a half later.

FATHER McLAUGHLIN, a native of Cornwall, Ontario, Canada was educated in St. Michael College School in Toronto. After

spending a year at St. Basil Seminary he was professed on Sept. 12, 1950. He then attended St. Michael College of the University of Toronto and the University of Detroit and St. Basil Seminary of Toronto.

He was ordained in Toronto on Aug. 15, 1953. Prior to that he taught for one year as a scholar at Aquinas Institute.

He joined the Latin teaching staff of Aquinas Institute in 1946 and remained in that department until he left last year. In 1951-52 he was vice principal and in charge of Aquinas Annex for freshmen on 155 Grange Ave. When the Annex closed, he became freshman and sophomore counselor for boys at the Dewey Avenue School.

Father McLaughlin was always greatly interested in the sports activities of the students. He coached baseball teams in the P.A.L. league and also the Cooper Marines of the American Legion for several summers. Many of his students remember him for his great interest in hockey and lacrosse.

Among Father McLaughlin's survivors are his mother, Mrs. J. McLaughlin, of Northfield, Ontario; two sisters, Mrs. E. Beaudette, of Northfield and Sister M. Joseph, of St. Joseph Hospital, Farley Sound, Ontario; and two brothers, Frank, of Northfield, and Terrence, of Detroit, Michigan, and the Rev. Terrence P. McLaughlin, C.S.B. who is procurator general at the Holy See for the Basilian Fathers.

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'Quickie' Latin Course Set For Pre-Seminary Students

Chicago—(NC)—"You don't know Latin but you want to be a priest?"—Father Laurence E. Henderson, S.J., of Loyola University would like to fix that up.

In announcing plans for his Latin exam course next spring he promises:

"If you are willing to work honestly and steadily, he (Father Henderson) will put enough Latin into your head during the February semester of this year so that you will be able to enter a seminary or novitiate during this coming summer."

The course is especially designed to speed entrance into the seminary for veterans of military service, and since he began his intensive sessions with small groups back in 1945, Father Henderson has seen his "boys" enter seminaries of a dozen dioceses and nearly as many religious communities—ranging from the Paulists and Maryknollers to the Dominicans and Trappists.

Jewish Synagogue—Mormon Temple Now Catholic Church

Cincinnati—(NC)—A Jewish synagogue and a Mormon temple and now a Catholic Church.

That will be the story of the red brick building in Walnut Hills here, which the St. Anthony of Padua Maronite parish will take over for public worship, next year.

Erected in 1915 by a Jewish congregation, the edifice was purchased by a Mormon group in 1941 and has been used by the sect since.

It has been re-purchased by the Maronite parish under Father Joseph Aboué, Lebanon born pastor, whose present church will be torn down to make way for new bridge approaches and street improvements.

War-Race Convert On British Program

London—(NC)—Group Captain Leonard Chestnut, the British flying ace, who became a Catholic after observing the atom-bombing of Hiroshima, has been chosen to be the last speaker before the Queen on the British Round The Commonwealth Christmas Day radio link-up.

This program has become over the years the most sentimental broadcast in the British year. It features the exchange of Christmas afternoon-of-seasonal greetings between the home country and settlers scattered all over the globe, and ends with a "live" bedside chat from the Queen in her own home.

Group Captain Chestnut, holder of the Victoria Cross, highest and rarest British award for courage in battle, and one of the most daring fighter pilots and target markers of World War II, now devotes his life to the chronically sick and permanently disabled.

Himself a tubercular victim, he spends his time setting up homes for such people in Britain and organizing appeals for their voluntary maintenance. He is 47.

IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

We put aside all thoughts of day-by-day business, and extend to our many loyal patrons, our wishes that the Holy Spirit of Christmas and its blessings enfold you and your family now, and for all time.

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