

Pope Is Lover Of Pets, Birds Are His Favorites

By REV. JAMES J. TUCEK (N.C.W.C. News Service)

Pope Pius XII is a true Roman, and a noble one. This is shown clearly in many of his personal traits.

Perhaps the most obvious example of his typically Roman personality is his tender love of animals.

IN HIS love for animals, however, the Pope's character diverges in what might be called an Assisian direction from the Roman norm. Most Romans are notorious lovers of cats. The favorite pets of the Pope however, like St. Francis of Assisi, are birds. And his pleasure on seeing gamboling lambs is immediately apparent.

Whether he is in the city at the Vatican Palace or at Castelgandolfo, there are always birds in the Pope's private apartments. Often during the day he opens the doors of their cages and allows them to fly freely about the rooms. Italian publications never write about the Holy Father's private life without commenting upon his birds. "The noblest one of all," writes the magazine Oggi, "is called 'Domplaff' . . . The most lively and pretty is 'Gretchen'."

Even L'Unita, the official paper of the Communist Party in Italy, has referred to the papal birds. Ever ready with a caustic comment, the Red organ once complained about the number of Germans attached to the Pope's household

and added bitterly that in that Niebelung Ring even the canaries are German. Aside from other implications, this of course took no note of the fact that canaries from Germany's Harz Mountains have been celebrated for centuries.

But Gretchen is a native of Italy. A little green and yellow wild bird, she was given to the Holy Father by a gardener who had found her wounded in a thicket at Castelgandolfo. Now given relatively free rein in the Pope's apartment, Gretchen has learned to perch on the door handle of the dining room every day when lunchtime is near, remaining there until the Holy Father enters. During the meal she seats herself on his shoulder and helps herself to the bread he sets aside for her.

ONE OF the stories told about Pope Pius and his birds concerns a night on which he was very tired but felt compelled to continue on with the work in hand. Suddenly, so the tale goes, one of the birds flying freely about in his study landed on the paper on which he was working and made it impossible for him to continue writing. Very gently the Pope picked up the bird and moved it to one side. With a hop the bird was right back where it had been. This was repeated four or five times, until finally the Pope said smiling, "I understand you are right." So he interrupted

his work and retired earlier than usual.

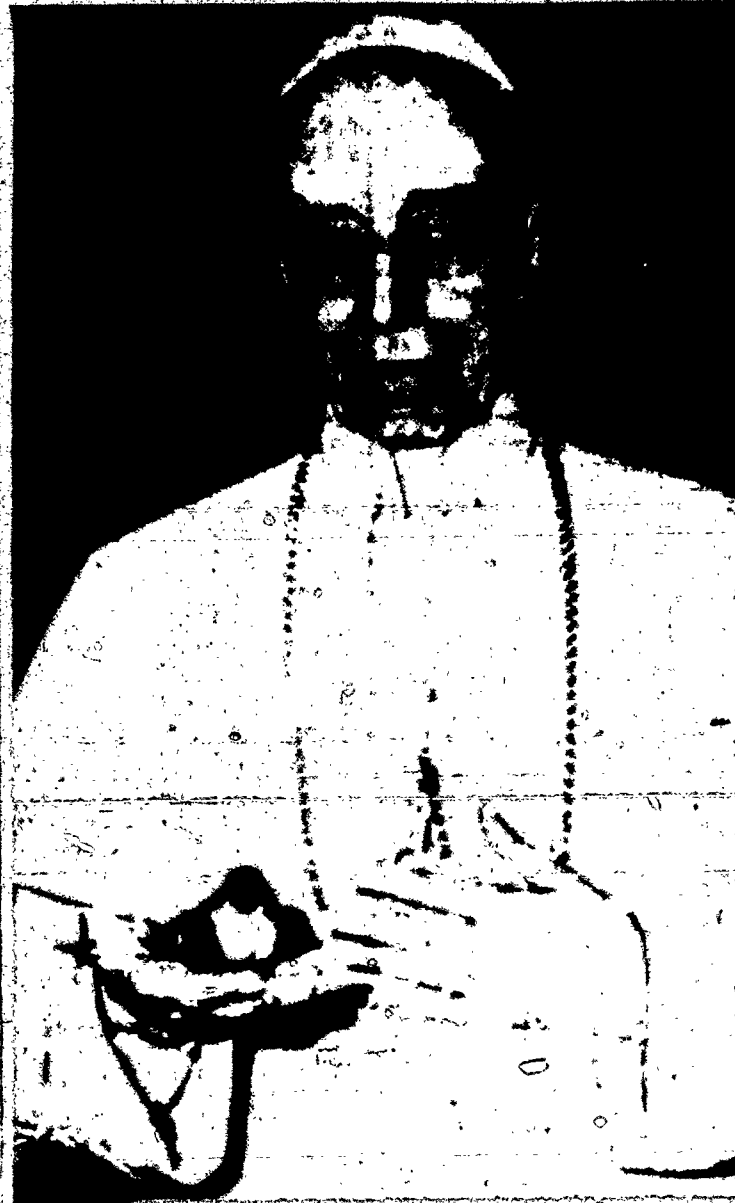
The birds are the intimate companions of His Holiness. But there is a small zoo at the Vatican, and since parts of the papal state at Castelgandolfo are farmed, there are many animals there: horses, cattle, sheep, pigs.

Last summer, however, a new sight on the villa grounds was a small flock of white sheep. A shepherd of the Castell region in which Castelgandolfo lies brought them to the door of the palace as an act of homage to the Holy Father. When the Pope was informed of the gift he directed that the sheep—symbols of Christ's gentleness and self-sacrifice—be brought to the palace gardens, where they frolic about the lawns.

Notre Dame Lists \$2-Million Gifts

Notre Dame, Ind.—The University of Notre Dame received a total of \$2,236,101 in gifts and grants during 1953. It was reported here today by Rev. John J. Cavanaugh, C.S.C., director of The Notre Dame Foundation. A record number of alumni and corporations contributed to the University last year, Father Cavanaugh said, and there was an increase in industrial and government grants for research on the campus.

The former Notre Dame president paid tribute to the "traditional loyalty and generosity" of the University's alumni. 68 per cent of whom have received their degrees since 1940.



HOLY FATHER — Italian papers never write about the Holy Father's private life without talking about his birds. The noblest one of all is called "Domplaff."

BOOK SHELF

The Broken Sword

By Sister Margaret Teresa Nasareth College

THE BROKEN SWORD, by Covelle Newcomb Dodd, Mead '32. \$1.50. 334 pp.

THE BROKEN SWORD — adventure-crammed story of a greathearted conquistador, who at thirty-five turned missionary in a stirring life's effort to save the Indians of South America from his own kind. His patrons were kings and Popes across the sea, his enemies were powerful adventurers, blue-blooded and otherwise, close at his side. Of the friends of his heart, one kept faith and one did not.

Covelle Newcomb is a little lady, who has always been able to tell a tale. Her Vagabond in Velvet and The Red Hat (Cardinal Gibbons) climbed right out of the high-school category and delighted adults. The present work has the stature of a full-length novel, the strength of agonizing and brutal fact (for it tells the story of Faith-versus-greed in the fifty years following Columbus), and the rewarding joy of knowing a great character. Don (and Father) Bartolome de las Casas, Protector of the Indians.

Trudging the vast reaches of a new continent in his humble and daring company, we see the true victory of the Faith, in the many sully-risen and rock-rolling cities of churches, over intolerable cruelty and massacre on the part of the conquistadors — and we must show the teen-age reader that the lesson is not against Spain — who has paid

her debt several times over—but against all abuse of power.

THE GREEDY land-grabbers of the story wanted to believe that Indians had no souls, that they were not men, and their conquerors were not in mortal sin in enslaving them. In the same century, he it remembered, England declared that the Irish were less than men, that they must be exterminated. In our own day, the Big Lie has gone further: men are not men; that is, they have not souls; they may be burned in ovens, the gold having been first extracted from their teeth; they may be enslaved until they die, helping the Soviets to make atomic weapons against the free world. Father las Casas is a great companion with whom to face the Lie. He is real; he lived, fought, wrote, made mistakes, corrected them, struggled on.

Buffalo Diocese Sponsors TV News

Buffalo, N. Y. — (NC) — Television viewers in western New York are watching a new 15-minute Catholic Action Newsweek sponsored twice monthly by the Buffalo diocese. The latest time has been donated for one year by WGR-TV, one of Buffalo's three TV stations.

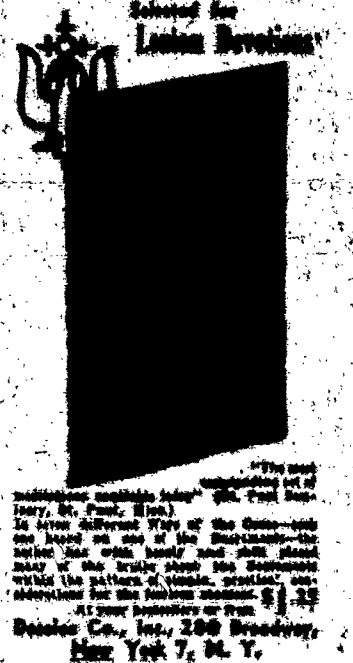
COURIER-JOURNAL
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French Leftists Hit School Aid

Paris — (NC) — As France's new National Assembly met here for the first time, leftist parties started a campaign to repeal the laws granting government subsidies to Catholic schools.

The communists, who now have 50 more seats than the 100 they held in the old Assembly, took the initiative. They called on the parties belonging to the Republican Front — Socialists and the Radical-Socialists — to join them in pushing a repeal bill.



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