

BOOK SHELF

Helen Keller

By Sister Margaret Teresa Nasareth College

1000 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON CATHOLICISM, by Phillip O'Belly Holt '54, 321 pp., \$3.95. With an Imprimatur. Available at Tucker's.

HELEN KELLER: SKETCH FOR A PORTRAIT, by Van Wyck Brooks. Dutton '54, 165 pp. A Book-of-the-Month. Available at all bookstores.

1000 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS is an attractive quick-reference volume answering in clear, friendly, up-to-date fashion all sorts of questions, the usual and the unusual, about the faith.

The author has been concerned to put matters in "the most informative and interesting sequence" so that an inquirer might enjoy reading the book right through: first come questions on God, man's need of Him, Christianity, the Bible, the Church's doctrine, moral teaching, liturgy; then the view of the Church on Protestantism, on social, political, economic affairs, on education.

Statistics are given on Catholic population, participation in this or that field, growth lapses — and statistics are useful either to document or destroy prejudices.

THERE IS a chapter on converts (marred by a whopping error in its first paragraph, the listing of Belloc as a convert, when as he said, "I was baptized into the Faith at my birth, and I have known it all my life.") — and I am sure the ardent Norwegian heart of Sigrid Undset would kindle in the very grave to find herself labeled Swedish, even though she was born under Swedish rule — but despite this carelessness there follow ten pages of interesting comment and advice on conversion, and then a chapter on "Personalities and Orders of the Church" that ranges the centuries and highlights saints and churchmen whose names have a familiar ring, giving a vital fact or two about each that perhaps we knew

in the dim long ago. Decidedly a useful book to keep in the family.

There is a fascination in renewing acquaintance with the brave blind woman who has been a part of the education of every American child—these fifty years — this woman who broke through the walls of her world of darkness to surpass in useful activity, most of us who see and hear and talk.

VAN WYCK BROOKS, so long a specialist in America's "Confident Years," (1885-1915), and biographer of Mark Twain and Henry James and other friends of Helen Keller, is surely the right person to bring us up to date on her achievement and to make us feel her remarkable goodness, her holiness, founded on courage and indomitable service.

She has worked without rest for blind and deaf people everywhere, in every practical way; she has made herself a globe-trotting fund-raiser, a one-woman drive for their sake — she, who more than all others might have said, "What can I do?" Brooks quotes an undying tribute paid to her by Henry James: "The sum and substance of it is that you are a blessing."

The details of her sensitive penetration of character are endlessly interesting; through her "ten eyes" (her fingers) and through the vibrations all about her she read her world sometimes more surely than those who can be distracted by the visible.

BY THE "SOUND" of your footsteps, by the feel of your hand, she knew your nature; in a restaurant, she could sketch the character of those at nearby tables through the perfume and the soap they used and the food they ate (which she could "see"). She met many V.I.P.s of the 30's and 40's, (Truman, Roosevelt), and perhaps her judgments of them will not be an unimportant part of the record.



Chaplain Cracks 'Sound Barrier'

Edwards Air Force Base, California (NC)— Father (Col.) John J. Wood, C.S.V., receives his "Sound Barrier Certificate" from Captain J. S. Carson of the Fighter Operations Branch of ARDC's Air Force Flight Test Center, Edwards AFB, California. He is believed to be the second Air Force Chaplain to have flown faster than the speed of sound. Father Wood is assigned to the Air Research and Development Command Staff of the U. S. Air Force.

Centenary Parish Fastest Growing

St. Louis — (NC) — While the flight to the environs is making many suburban parishes boom, the fastest-growing parish in the St. Louis archdiocese is 103-year-old St. Bridget of Erin, in the oldest part of the city. Some 30 new skyscraper public housing apartments have been built in the last year across the street from the church. Some are for Negro housing, and the others are for St. Louis's first experiment in interracial housing. Two years ago St. Bridget's parish had 27 Catholics. Today there are 400 families, and the number is growing monthly. There were 15 converts in a recent first Communion class of 47.

The parish is located in a once-Irish section that is now predominantly Negro.

Religion Queries Urged In 1960 U.S. Census

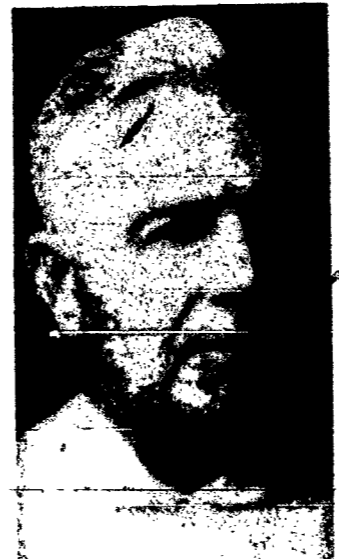
Minneapolis, Minn.—(NC)— Inclusion of questions on religion in the 1960 U.S. census was recommended by Father Paul Bussard, editor of The Catholic Digest magazine, in a talk before the Religious Writers Association convention here.

Father Bussard said attempts to place such questions in the 1940 and 1950 censuses failed, but added that the U.S. Census Bureau has expressed "willingness to cooperate with religious bodies in America in providing accurate and truthful statistics."

Professional survey takers are in favor of such questions in the census, Father Bussard said, and have expressed opinions that the queries will not be resented by the public if giving census information.

At present there are "only guesses" on church membership statistics, but accurate information from a U.S. census would be of "great value to the churches to develop a scientific program of public relations," Father Bussard said.

He noted that three questions have been proposed by the association of Statisticians of Religious Bodies. The questions, he said, are: Do you believe in God? With what religion are you affiliated? Do you regularly attend church or synagogue?



FATHER MCCARTHY

Holy Name Gets National Director

New York — (RNS) — The Rev. Dennis R. McCarthy, O.P., of Providence, R. I., is the new national director of the Holy Name Society, a confraternity of Catholic men with a membership of more than 4,000,000 in the United States.

Father McCarthy replaces the Very Rev. Harry C. Graham, O.P., who has retired from the post because of ill health. He had served as national director since 1939.

Father McCarthy's appointment by the Very Rev. William D. Marrin, Dominican Provincial of St. Joseph, was announced at Holy Name headquarters here.

Author Jim Bishop Wins Annual Golden Book Award

New York — (RNS) — Jim Bishop, author of "The Day Lincoln Was Shot," received the annual Golden Book Award of the Catholic Writers Guild of America at a ceremony here co-sponsored by Fordham University.

The award is given to the American Catholic author who has written the book judged the best of the preceding year's literary output.

WILLIAM FAY, president of the guild, made the presentation before an audience of 300. Auxiliary Bishop Philip J. Furlong represented Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York.

In his acceptance address Mr. Bishop disclosed that his next book will be "The Day Christ Died." He said he had journeyed to Jerusalem for first-hand in-

State High Court Upholds Law On Obscene Literature

Albany, N.Y.—(RNS)— The New York State Court of Appeals upheld the constitutionality of a 1941 state law designed to prohibit the sale of obscene literature.

The state's highest court, in a 6-0 decision, said freedom of the press was not violated when a State Supreme Court Justice ordered the seizure and destruction of a series of paper-bound booklets entitled "Nights of Horror."

THESE BOOKLETS "are indisputably pornographic, indisputably obscene and filthy," the appeals court ruled.

The 1941 statute permits the chief executive officer of any city, town or village to seek injunctions against the distribution of books, pictures or other materials court ruled.

When New York City last year brought suit against three Times Square book stores, Supreme Court Justice Matthew M. Levy held that 14 issues of "Nights of Horror" were obscene. The justice enjoined their distribution and ordered them seized and destroyed.

THE COURT of Appeals last October granted a stay of the seizure pending an appeal by Kingsley Books Inc., one of the stores. Kingsley conceded that the state could prosecute and punish for distribution of an obscene book if the word "obscene" could be defined.

But the company contended that the remedy by injunction amounted to unconstitutional "prior restraint" and censorship of the press in violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution.

The court's opinion, written by Associate Judge Stanley H. Fuld, declared, however, that the word "obscene" and other descriptive words in the law such as "lewd, lascivious, filthy, indecent or disgusting" were "sufficiently well understood through long use in the criminal law to satisfy the due process requirement of definiteness and certainty."

JUDGE FULD added that the law "makes no attempt to subject writings to the scrutiny and

screening of a censor prior to publication."

His opinion also noted that while freedom of expression is "not absolute or unqualified under all circumstances, it is clear that any invasion of that right must find jurisdiction in some overriding public interest, and that restricting legislation must be narrowly drawn to meet an evil which the state has a substantial interest in correcting."

Judge Fuld said the broad question of general censorship "even in the area of obscenity," is not presented here.

A SEPARATE opinion by Judge Charles S. Desmond held that the only question before the court was the defendants' assertion that the law is unconstitutional because any prior restraint on publication or sale of obscene literature violates the First Amendment.

"Answering the one argument made to us," he wrote, "we hold on most ample authority that the First Amendment does not protect obscene books against prior restraint."

The Desmond opinion, in which Chief Judge Albert Conway and Judge Charles W. Froessel concurred, added: "It detracts nothing from Judge Fuld's fine opinion to point out that its discussion of many other questions not before us on this appeal is not binding on this court."

Pilgrimages Begin To Jesuit Shrine

Aurora, N. Y. — (NC) — The 71st pilgrimage season of the Shrine of the North American Martyrs here, which opens May 6, will honor the 300th anniversary of the birth of Kateri Tekakwitha, the Lily of the Mohawks.

Vatican Issues New Series Of Stamps

Vatican City — (NC) — A new issue of stamps has been released by the Vatican post office to commemorate the 450th anniversary of the institution of the papal Swiss Guard, which was called into service by Pope Julius II in 1506 to protect the papal palace.

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