

### The Bell Tower



And Purple Hearts  
Two veteran Marines were bragging about their respective medals. "When we presented mine," said one, "all you could hear was slap, slap, click."

Shine For Sinners  
One evening while "hearing" our first grader's religion homework, I came to the question: "Which are the chief sources of sin?" Clearly and confidently he replied, "Pride, covetousness, lust, anger, butchery."

My son, just turned four years old, after coming home from his first day at nursery school was telling me all about the exciting day he'd had. "And in the afternoon, did you get a little snack?" I asked him.

Who's Ferocious  
The small college was losing the big game, and the football coach, in desperation, glanced wildly down the bench in search of a substitute who might turn defeat into victory.

Notable From Notable  
The bright pupil looked long and thoughtfully at the second examination question, which read: "State the number of tons of coal shipped out of the United States in any given year."

## Lincoln and the Nuns

By ANN TANSEY

The birthday of the Great Emancipator on February 12 recalls President Lincoln's deep regard for Catholic Nuns and his gratitude for their selfless devotion in nursing wounded soldiers during the Civil War. In this article reprinted from INFORMATION, national magazine published by the Paulist Fathers, writer Ann Tansey tells the impressive story of "Lincoln and the Nuns."

MORE BOOKS have been written about Abraham Lincoln than any other American. It would seem that all that can be known of Lincoln has already been written, but that is not true.

Lincoln had the highest regard for Catholic nuns and a deep sense of gratitude for the tremendous service they rendered the nation during its most crucial period—the Civil War. They went by the hundreds into hastily constructed military hospitals to serve as Army nurses.

Many religious congregations transformed their schools into hospitals for the sick and the wounded of both sides. Nursing nuns staffed many of the "floating hospitals"—ships and rafts plying inland waters—going as close as possible to the battlefields to evacuate the wounded.

There was no trained Army nurses' corps or Red Cross nursing unit ready for action in the middle 1800s. When Lincoln issued a call for volunteer nurses nearly every Sisterhood in the United States answered.

President Lincoln was well aware of the glorious work which they did. He wrote in his diary these passages which found their way into The Recollections of Abraham Lincoln:

"Of all forms of charity and benevolence seen in the crowded wards in the hospitals, those of some Catholic Sisters were among the most efficient. I never knew whence they came or what was the name of their Order."

"More lovely than anything I had ever seen in art, so long devoted to illustrations of love, mercy and charity, are the pictures that remain of these modest Sisters, going on their errands of mercy among the suffering and the dying."

"Gentle and womanly, yet with the courage of soldiers leading a forlorn hope, to sustain them in contact with such horrors. As they went from cot to cot distributing the medicines prescribed, administering the cooling, refreshing, strengthening draughts as directed, they were veritable Angels of Mercy."

"Their words were suited to every sufferer. One they incited or encouraged, another they calmed and soothed. With every soldier they conversed about his home, his wife, his children, all the loved ones he was soon to see again if he was obedient and patient."

"How many times have I seen them exercise pain by their presence, by their words! How often has the hot forehead of the soldier grown cool as one of these Sisters bathed it! How often has he been refreshed, encouraged and assisted along the road to convalescence when he would otherwise have fallen by the way, by some home memories with which these unpal nurses filled the heart."

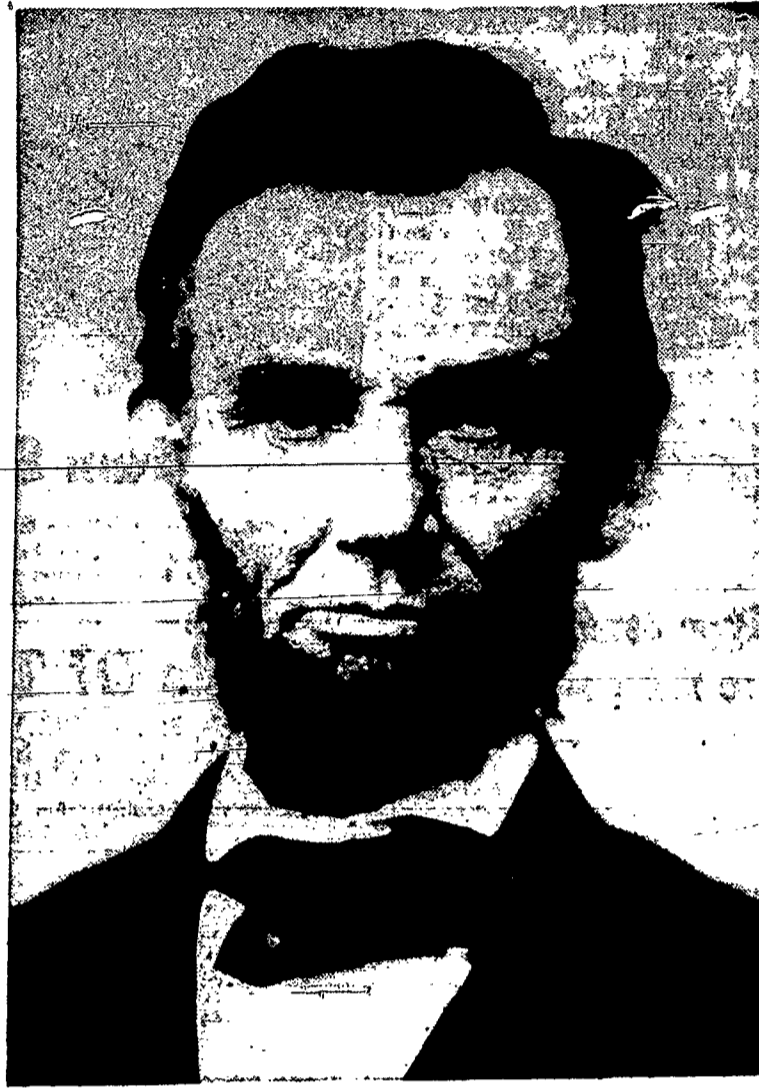
IN THESE passages Lincoln called attention to two pertinent facts: the nun-nurses worked without pay — of considerable help to a slender treasury taxed by a divided nation at war; and the number of deaths would have been considerably heavier had there been no nun-nurses to rescue the wounded and save their lives by tender and efficient care.

The earliest connection between Lincoln and the nuns is found in Kentucky where Lincoln was born and where a native Sisterhood was formed whose members played dramatic roles as war nurses during the war between the states.

Today log cabin shrines mark two historic places in Kentucky; one at Hodgenville where Lincoln was born, the other at Nazareth where in 1812 Bishop Flager founded the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth.

The roar of the Civil War's first shot had scarcely died away when the services of the nuns of Nazareth were offered to the President. Among the historical treasures stored in the archives of the congregation is a document which reads, "Let no depredations be permitted on the property or possessions of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Academy near Bardstown, Kentucky. . . (signed) Abraham Lincoln."

This directive was sent to Union forces in the area. The President was aware of the perilous position of the nuns in



ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
"More lovely than anything I have ever seen in art . . . are the pictures . . . of these modest Sisters, going on their errands of mercy among the suffering and dying."

—Lincoln's Diary.

often, their arms always laden with delicacies for the sick. Lincoln never neglected any of the hospitals. He visited them all. The chronicles of the Sisters of Mercy, who staffed the long row of frame buildings known as Stanton Hospital in the capital, tell of evenings when, with the war at its worst, a tall, slender man, with drooping shoulders silhouetted against the crimson sunset, came to comfort the sick and suffering.

Lincoln encouraged the nuns in their work and went from ward to ward telling droll stories to both Union and Confederate soldiers.

Many times after these visits, with the President's drawn face haunting her thoughts, Mother Rose Hostetter, superior of the Stanton nuns, asked her Sisters to pray for the illustrious visitor on whose shoulders the woes of the nation pressed so heavily.

ALL OF the Sister-Nurses of the Civil War, no matter where stationed, knew they had a sincere friend in Lincoln. They knew he would never fail them—and he never did.

When the Sisters of Mercy in Chicago found their supplies running dangerously low and official red tape hampering their efforts to obtain the food needed so desperately for the wounded soldiers under their care, they appealed directly to the President.

As a result they received an open letter "To Whom It May Concern: On application of the Sisters of Mercy of Chicago, furnish such provision as they desire to purchase and charge the same to the War Department."

LINCOLN AND the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg, Maryland, had common interests at Gettysburg where 140,000 men engaged in a three-day battle of terrible consequence. Union soldiers killed there numbered 2,834; 14,492 were wounded. The Confederate toll was 5,500 killed and 25,500 wounded.

One hundred and thirteen emergency hospitals were established hastily at Emmitsburg. Every public building, churches, schools, chapels and many private homes were turned into hospitals.

The Sisters of Charity were found everywhere, nursing the wounded. They did not even wait for the wounded to be brought to Emmitsburg, but walked the 10 miles to the battlefield to give first aid, using their own garments for bandages.

The Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg were asked to staff the military hospital named for Lincoln in Washington, D. C. The President and his wife visited the hospital

ment . . . (signed) Abraham Lincoln."

When the Sisters of Mercy who staffed Douglas Hospital found themselves in a similar plight, Sister Bernardine Keefe appealed to Army authorities for supplies but was curtly refused.

"Is this your final decision?" she asked the officer. "It is," was the uncompromising reply.

"Then I shall see the President," the nun answered.

Within an hour Sister Bernardine and a nun companion were ushered into the President's office where they unbureaucratically presented their problems. They also received an open letter:

When the Sisters returned to the hospital with their precious document the boys in the wards gave a rousing cheer for President Lincoln.

"One cheer more," urged a lad from Dixie, who sat in a wheel chair. "One for our Sister-Nurses at the Douglas." The cheer was given with great enthusiasm. Before the day ended needed supplies were delivered to the hospital kitchen.

THE GENERALS who served under Lincoln shared the high regard the President had for the nuns. When Sister Mary Joseph Kent and Sister Mary Regina Larkin called on General Sherman in Columbia, S. C., after he had captured the city, Sherman assured them no harm would befall their school or orphanage, and they would have his full protection.

As proof of his good will General Sherman, with his staff, visited the orphanage the next day. The children were asked to sing a song for him. They sang one very politely and then, with a burst of Southern spirit, broke forth into the strains of "To the Bonnie Blue Flag."

When General Sherman marched through Kentucky he was entertained by the Dominican Nuns at St. Catherine's convent, the Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters in the United States.

These Sisters served heroically at the terrible battle of Perryville where Generals Bragg and Buell crossed their swords.

Their convent-school was transformed into a hospital for the wounded. They also served as Army nurses in Memphis where they had become acquainted with General Sherman and Grant.

Later six nuns from St. Catherine's, all of them war-nurses, were sent to Jacksonville, Fla., to establish a new foundation and open a school. Two of them had a most unusual honor bestowed on them in behalf of Lincoln in 1874 when a grateful people erected a national monument to the martyred Chief at his place of burial in Springfield, Ill.

President Grant was to be present at the unveiling. He had placed General Sherman in charge of all arrangements. As both men had been very close to Lincoln during the closing days of the war and knew how highly he had esteemed the Catholic nuns, it was decided that a Catholic nun should have the honor of unveiling the memorial.

Because of his own high regard for the Dominicans, General Sherman visited a convent in Springfield and requested one of the nuns to do the unveiling. It was a stunning proposal but the nuns had to refuse as they were cloistered and could not appear in public.

"There was real consternation manifested at this announcement," the Chicago Tribune reported on October 16, 1874. "But General Sherman, as in the war, was equal to the occasion. His memory went back

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to the days of the campaign in Kentucky and to the appalling scene in Memphis where the Sisters of St. Dominic had ministered to the wounded and dying soldiers of his command."

"If I had my Sisters of St. Dominic near me, they would not disappoint me," he declared.

"His remark was overheard by Father P. J. Mackey, who said, 'I have Sisters of St. Dominic teaching in my school at Jacksonville. I am sure they would come with the permission of the Rt. Rev. Bishop Baltes'."

"Wherever the Bishop is," Sherman said, "We'll get his permission." And he did.

AT 6 A.M. on October 15th, the date of the unveiling, the Sisters of St. Patrick's School were at devotions in the chapel when Father P. M. Burke arrived bearing the President's invitation to Sister Josephine Meagher, the Superior.

Sister Josephine readily accepted and chose Sister Rachel, the oldest nun in the group and a former war nurse, as her companion.

The Sisters entered the one-horse carriage at the door of their little brick chapel and were carried to President Grant's special railroad car which conveyed them to Springfield in time for the ceremonies.

A huge throng had gathered and in its presence the silken banner concealing the statue was released into the waiting hands of the nuns.

As soon as the unveiling was over the Sisters slipped away and returned to the President's car which hurried them back to their schoolrooms in Jacksonville.

When Sister Rachel died in 1909 the greatest celebration ever held in honor of Lincoln was taking place in Springfield, commemorating the 102nd year of his birth. President William Howard Taft and a number of high government officials were present.

The committee in charge of arrangements inquired of Mother Meagher the proposed time of Sister Rachel's funeral.

The information was given and by order of the authorities, as the hearse bearing Sister Rachel's remains passed the Lincoln Memorial en route to Calvary Cemetery, the bell on the monument tolled, and a squad of soldiers stood at attention at the base of the obelisk.

Even these few incidents reveal how much Lincoln had in common with Catholic nuns. There are probably many other stories, long since forgotten, testifying to Lincoln's interest in the nuns who left the calm security of their convent homes and worked endless hours in dimly lit hospital wards, endured grueling hardships, and faced terrible dangers and witnessed harrowing scenes.

Be My Valentine — Ellen Blases and James Liposchak, first graders at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, Rochester, get an early start in honoring the third century martyr St. Valentine, traditional patron of lovers. Legends tell how the saint wrote notes from his prison cell to his friends urging them to persevere in their love and service of God. Valentine, a priest, was beheaded in the year 269. His feast is Feb. 14.

### For Goodness Sake

Newspapers today are playing a vital role in every American's life.

The press molds public opinion, shapes our way of life. One of the fastest growing segments of the American press is the weekly paper — especially in suburban and small town areas. Last year eight thousand weekly papers in the U.S. hit a peak circulation of over 18 million subscribers.

Added to that total is the 4 million circulation of Catholic edited weekly newspapers.

Editors of the metropolitan dailies necessarily concentrate on major world news events — leaving to weeklies the task of interpreting these events at the local level.

Catholics especially need their own independent press to clarify the Christian attitude in our rapidly developing world.

Keenly aware of the power of the press, Pope Pius XII on seven occasions last year stressed his personal conviction that journalists hold the key to public opinion. He admitted that dead-lines and the pressure to "beat" rival papers in publishing fast breaking news stories challenge editors with demands their predecessors never faced.

Despite these pressures, journalists must have an "incorruptible love of the truth," he said.

Catholic editors, the Pope said, are the watchdogs and sentinels of this truth — especially as it affects Christians in their duties as citizens and as parents.

Current events definitely affect the Church in its God-given apostolate for souls. Through their own specially published papers, Catholics can keep alert to the impact of world news as it helps or hinders the Church's work. It is also through the Catholic press alone that the doctrinal, moral, and devotional instructions of Pope and Bishop can be completely stated and interpreted.

Lay people — aware of their responsibility to be "good Catholics" — can see their Catholic newspaper one of the best ways to learn their role in making this world a better world, in making their home a more Catholic home.

Perhaps humorously, but still very accurately, the American Catholic journalists have taken as their motto for February's Catholic Press Month — "For GOODness sake, read your Catholic press."

### Joseph Breig

## Vodka Diplomacy Irks U.S. Public

We might move much faster toward solving world problems if statesmen would make an agreement, all around, to stop mixing diplomacy with vodka and flattery.

The vexing question of a Tito visit to America is, I think, a dramatic illustration. It should have been handled as a pure business proposition, with no overtones of sociability.

The trouble is that diplomats, with their cocktail parties and vodka banquets, have got themselves into a situation in which it is impossible to be simply business-like in international dealings.

If you and I, as neighbors, got into an irreconcilable dispute, we can go to a lawyer's office or a judge's ante-room, sit down, and try to arrive at an understanding, or at least a truce.

We don't have to pretend that we like each other. We don't bring a bottle along. We don't treat each other to caviar. We don't bandy nonsense about what marvelous friends we are.

We face in grownup fashion the twin facts that we don't (to say the least) see eye to eye, but that we've got to live in the same world. We try to arrive at some kind of practical, un sentimental method of doing so.

AT NO TIME in the negotiations do we feel called upon to pretend that we don't disagree. We are under no pressure of protocol to fall on each other's necks with glad-handiness and cries.



The State Department has involved us all in a highly embarrassing mixup; and no matter which way we now turn, it may well prove to be the wrong way.

It was an error, I think, for Secretary Dulles to send up an unheralded trial balloon about inviting Tito to America. My impression is that Tito is a man of considerable pride. Secretary Dulles must have foreseen that there would be violent objections which Tito would not find palatable. Why, then, did he not avoid creating an occasion for them?

IF HE HAD good reasons for wanting Tito to visit America, he could have prepared the people by stating the reasons in as much detail as possible. He could also have forestalled much unpleasant reaction by making clear that there would be no lionizing of the visitor.

AS IT IS, such organizations as the Knights of Columbus and the American Legion have stated their opinion of Tito in the bluntest terms. So have many influential individuals, including senators and representatives. I cannot see that much good has been accomplished in the

ways of improving international relations.

It seems to me that one of the basic troubles is that when a proposal is made to invite any head of state to the U.S., everybody instantly envisions a hypocritical orgy of fake goodwill.

We know that the visitor will be wined and dined, paraded, fawned upon and toasted. There are any number of people we don't feel like welcoming in that manner. Tito is one of them. Therefore we raise the roof when the suggestion is made that he be invited.

I doubt that there would be any such violent reaction if it were understood that Tito would merely come to America for business-like talks and for a quiet look around, without any sickening adulation and exchanging of two-faced toasts.

The State Department says that a Tito visit to the U.S. would serve both the cause of world peace and the best interests of America. Nobody wants to interfere with such laudable ends. What we profoundly resent is the accompanying hoopla and hoop-de-do over a communist dictator whose ideas and past record we cordially abhor.



This photo of oil painting in St. Mary's Hospital, Rochester, depicts Sisters of Charity in nurses' role which won the admiration of the Civil War President Lincoln.