



Love Speaks From The Cross

By MONSIGNOR PATRICK J. FLYNN

— "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)

THESE FIRST WORDS of the dying Christ from the cross reveal the immeasurable love of His Sacred Heart. What boundless charity is exposed in this prayer. Christ has come into the world to save sinners—even His enemies, even those now crucifying Him!

Centuries before the prophet Isaias (53:12) foretold this moment: "He hath borne the sins of many and prayed for the transgressor" that is, for those crucifying Him.

This dramatic scene on Calvary—when Christ hangs nailed to a cross and dying—marks the hour of triumph for His enemies. Here before the cross has come the High Priest Caiaphas. He is the mastermind of the plot to rid the world of Christ. Standing with Caiaphas are the Sanhedrin leaders who had joined the High Priest in voting to send Christ to death.

These dignitaries, all enemies of Christ, did not usually grace public executions with their presence. But today is different. Today these co-conspirators come to Calvary expecting to hear the Victim of the cross cry out curses upon their heads. Instead all they hear from the cross and its Victim is a prayer for their pardon.

This Friday—the blackest Friday in all history—began with Christ's enemies demanding His death. "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" they cried. And in reply come those first words from the swollen lips of the Crucified: "Forgive them."

HEAR THE DYING Christ as He prays on the cross. "Father . . ." Sorrowfully but in accents of love Jesus turns in prayer to His Father in Heaven. Many times Christ had told His followers to pray with confidence to His Father.

Now in His own hour of trial, Christ prays to His Eternal Father with filial trust. He asks pardon for His enemies. His persecutors. This is the prayer of supreme charity.

This first prayer of the dying Christ to His Father is very significant. By crucifying Christ, Israel rejects not only the Son of God, it rejects also the Father who sent His Son into the world.

How many times Jesus had warned the Jews against the blunder of this day and this hour. "If God were your Father," He told them, "you would surely love me. For from God I came forth and have come." (John 8:42)

Once the Pharisees had challenged Him in the Temple, "Where is thy Father?" In reply Jesus warned them: "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would then know my Father also." (John 8:19)

This same blunt warning Jesus had given to the unrepentant towns of Galilee where His words were ignored: "He who rejects me, rejects Him who sent me." (Luke 10:16)

Now on Calvary has come the hour of final rejection. Israel has rejected Christ and His Father who sent Him into the world.

In the face of this supreme injustice, this cruel rejection, Christ does not turn His back on the world. He does not reject even His enemies, those who have rejected Him.

The outraged, innocent Victim of the cross, turns to His Father and pleads that nothing be held against His enemies, His persecutors. Even as His blood flows from the cross Jesus asks forgiveness from His Father for the chief plotters of this day.

FORGIVE THEM — Forgive those crucifying Him, Christ asks. Forgive the soldiers who scourged Him and nailed Him to the cross. Forgive the soldiers who only act blindly in carrying out their orders and are really ignorant of what they are doing.

Forgive, Christ asks, also the rank-and-file—the mob which this day has cried for His blood. These are only the misled victims of their spiritual leaders.

Forgive, Christ prays, even the chief priests and the leaders who have conspired against Him. These criminal leaders bear the main blame for Christ's death. In their hatred they have blinded themselves to all recognition of Christ's divinity as the Son of God. In their hatred they have blinded themselves to acceptance of His divine mission as Redeemer of the world.

Inclusion of these chief criminals in Christ's prayer for His enemies has been a shock and a scandal to many. This is why some early Christian scholars completely suppressed from the gospels Christ's plea for His persecutors. This is why others have insisted that the dying Christ's prayer for His enemies does not apply to the cold-blooded planners of His destruction.

But the prayer of the dying Christ is intercession for all His enemies—the criminal rulers as well as the blind rabble.

Here on the cross Christ lives His own gospel—the gospel He had preached to others. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you." (Matthew 5:44). This is the doctrine Christ preached on the hillside of Galilee. Now on the height of the Cross, He preaches the gospel of living example. "Father, forgive them."

In this supreme charity of the cross, the Church's first martyr, St. Stephen will find his inspiration. Bleeding and dying under a hail of stones, Stephen will remember Christ and cry out: "Lord, do not lay this sin against them." (Acts 7:60)

The example of Christ also will prompt Paul to tell the Romans: "Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse." (Romans 12:15)

THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY ARE DOING. The dying Christ seeks some excuse for His persecutors. They are not as guilty as they seem. They do not fully understand what they do. This does Christ plead for His enemies before His Father in Heaven.

Here the mystery of God's love stands revealed in a new light. The defenseless Christ on the cross becomes the sole defender of those who destroy Him. Christ alone raises His voice to plead mercy for the criminals of Calvary.

Soon Peter and Paul will carry the story of the cross to the world. And the love of Christ for His enemies will keynote their preaching. Like Christ, Peter and Paul will blame the tragedy of the cross on ignorance and appeal to the merciful Heart of Jesus.

Jerusalem, the delirious city, will hear Peter say: "I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your rulers." (Acts 3:17). And Paul will tell the Corinthians: "Had they (the Jews) known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory." (1 Cor. 1:60)

The first words of Christ from the cross are a revelation of the mystery of God's love for men.

"Father, forgive them. . . . As we hear these words fall from the lips of the dying Christ, we discover the secret of Divine Love. Through Christ the world discovers that God's love can pardon the unpardonable!

Our service includes flowers-by-wire anywhere. And a special for busy hospitals. Flowers already arranged in appropriate containers in water, pretreated to prolong their beauty. At Blanchard, Florist, 58 Lake Avenue. Baker 5-9494.—Adv.

LAST WEEK'S PAID CIRCULATION 54,307

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Marriage In School? See Page 8

68th Year

ROCHESTER, N. Y., FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 1957

10 Cents

Cathedral Altar Ready For Solemn Consecration Rites

Altar Consecration Explained (See Page 6)

The newly constructed altar in Sacred Heart Cathedral will be consecrated next Tuesday morning when Auxiliary Bishop Lawrence B. Casey conducts the solemn rites permanently dedicating the \$70,000 marble structure to the service of divine worship.

Scheduled to begin at 9 a. m., the consecration rite will be followed by solemn pontifical Mass at 10:30.

Bishop James E. Kearney will preside at the Mass.

This will be Bishop Kearney's first appearance at a church function since his recent illness.

Installation of the new altar is the first step in an overall redecoration program for the Cathedral, located on Flower City Park, Rochester.

The church interior will be redecorated this June and new

A majestic bronze repousse statue of the Sacred Heart, patron of the Cathedral and of the Rochester Diocese, will dominate the center portion of the reredos above the altar.

Bishop Casey stated that the Sacred Heart statue will not be installed in time for the altar's consecration next Tuesday. The statue, handwrought in Italy, was shipped from there this week and is scheduled to be in place by April.

DEDICATION of the new Cathedral altar will fulfill Bishop Kearney's wish that the Cathedral have an outstanding altar with a majestic statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to inspire devotion throughout the entire Diocese of Rochester.

Bishop Kearney personally selected the design for the new altar and the Sacred Heart statue above it. He followed the progress of the new altar's construction from his sick bed while convalescing at St. Mary's Hospital.

Skilled craftsmen of Daprato Studios of Chicago, church decorators and architects, have spent four months assembling the specially designed new altar.

Funds for the new altar were raised in a two-hour drive Oct. 7, 1956. They pledged \$143,285 to cover 51 percent over the drive's \$285,000 goal.

The new altar replaces an historic white altar originally used in old St. Patrick's Cathedral at Plymouth and Platt Streets in downtown Rochester. The old Cathedral was dismantled in 1937. Its altar was moved to the Sacred Heart sanctuary. The white marble altar is now scheduled to be moved to Corpus Christi Church, Main St. East, Rochester.

Table portion of the new altar is built of Rojo Alicante (redish) marble. The "mensa" or flat top section of the altar is Botticino (white) marble. This mensa section is a single piece of marble weighing almost three tons.

At the foot of the altar's front section are bronze repousse symbols of the seven sacraments.



Cathedral's New Altar stands in marble majesty in Sacred Heart sanctuary awaiting solemn consecration rites to be conducted Tuesday, March 12, dedicating the 65 ton structure for divine worship. Red marble table is capped by bronze canopy supported on white marble pillars.

Two white marble pillars support the bronze canopy.

The reredos (backdrop of the altar) is red marble with white reliefs.

Ten bronze symbols representing titles of our Lord in the Litany of the Sacred Heart decorate the new altar's pilasters and side panels.

IN A STATEMENT issued this week to the Cathedral parishioners, Bishop Casey expressed thanks to Bishop Kearney who inspired the project.

Bishop Casey also paid special

Pope Raps Lust In Field Of Entertainment

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Pius XII, at his traditional audience to Rome's Lenten preachers, condemned immoral film advertising in Rome as a violation of the Italy-Vatican concordat of 1929.

He made the protest during a lengthy talk to 230 preachers in which he declared that Rome is "far from being a city according to God's desire" because many of its people continue to violate the divine commandments.

The Pontiff also condemned pornographic magazines and immoral films and television shows. The Pope's reference to film advertising was apparently prompted by posters announcing the showing of the film, "Zarak" featuring the Swedish actress, Anita Ekberg, and others advertising "Trapeze," in which the Italian actress, Gina Lollobrigida, is featured.

C-J To Mark New Record In Circulation

Subscription records will hit a new all time high when final figures are tallied following February's Courier Journal circulation campaign, Elmer Grapenstetter, circulation manager, forecast today.

Reports already in from nearly 100 parishes show a significant increase over last year's totals, he stated.

Annunciation parish, Rochester, will adopt the "total family coverage" plan of the Courier Journal for the first time this year, according to Rev. Albert L. Simonelli, pastor. He announced this week that the diocesan paper will be sent to 522 families attending his Norton Street church. This total represents an increase of 500 over last year's Annunciation subscription report.

Two parishes also made circulation history this week by soaring over the thousand mark for their first time.

St. Stephen's parish counts an all time record high in that Geneva church of 1,002 subscribers, an increase of 50 over last year.

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Expansion Cost Set At \$2,000,000

Mercy Nuns Plan Novitiate, Teacher College Building

A \$2,000,000 expansion of the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse facilities on Blossom Road, Rochester, will provide a Novitiate and Junior College building for the religious and professional teacher training of novice members of the community.

Construction plans also call for the erection of a "Campus School" for elementary pupils. This school will provide practice training for Sister Novices enrolled in the Junior College.

THE SISTERS revealed their plans along with announcement of their centenary celebration marking 100 years of service in the Rochester Diocese.

Ground breaking for the new construction on June 9 will herald the diocesan celebration of the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in Rochester on June 9, 1857.

A Pontifical Mass on June 15 at Old St. Mary's Church where the Sisters were first located, and a Pontifical Requiem Mass on June 1 at the Motherhouse for the deceased Sisters will mark the religious celebration.

A pageant scheduled for May 26, 27 and 28 at Our Lady of Mercy High School Auditorium will depict the work of the Sisters in the diocese for the past 100 years.

Construction of the new facilities which will adjoin the west

side of the present Motherhouse on Blossom Road, will entail heavy financial burdens for the community, according to Mother Mary Magdalene, Mother General and graduates of the parochial and high schools staffed by Sisters of Mercy.

Assistance in fund raising for the new buildings, the Mother General indicated, is expected from the Mercy Guild and graduates of the parochial and high schools staffed by Sisters of Mercy.

ACCORDING TO plans, prepared by architect Walter M. Nugent, a new four-story building will provide Novitiate quarters

for the young Sisters and junior college facilities for a 3-year course of teacher training.

The present Novitiate, occupying the 4th floor of the Motherhouse, will be completely moved to the new wing with sleeping and recreational facilities for the young Sisters. Overcrowded conditions in the Motherhouse require this expansion.

Facilities will be available for a practice teaching program of the Novitiate Sisters in a modern one-story "Campus School" also included in present plans.

The Junior College, opened in 1951 under the University of the State of New York and was chartered in 1954 as a three year junior college to take care of the teacher education of the young Sisters. Its courses of study meet the full approval of the State Education Department.

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Watch & Jewelry Repairing Fine Workmanship! Low Prices! William S. Thorne, Jeweler, 318 Main St., East, HA. 6-5081.—Adv.

MERCY NUNS PLAN NOVITIATE, COLLEGE WING — This architect's sketch shows Sisters of Mercy plans for \$2,000,000 expansion of their Motherhouse facilities in

Rochester. Four-story building, left in sketch, will be erected to provide Novitiate and Junior Teachers' College for Novice Sisters in training. One-story building in right foreground will include a reading clinic and

"Campus School" where Novice Sisters practice teaching training. Campus school on June 9 will also mark centenary of the Mercy Sisters in Rochester Diocese.