

**BOOK SHELF**

**Victory of Father Kar**

By Margaret Teresa, Nazareth College  
**THE VICTORY OF FATHER KARL**, by Otto Pies, S.J. Farrar Straus '57 210 pp., illustrated, \$4.50.  
**GOD'S FOOLISH GENERAL**, by G. Stapleton, S.D.S. Salvatorian '57, 80 pp., paper-bound.

For an understanding of what the German Catholic endured in the third and fourth decades of this bitter century, and of what a harvest of souls may fall to the lot of one faithful young ordinand in this time of reaping, **THE VICTORY OF FATHER KARL** is a must.

Karl Lesner, a Catholic youth leader in his teens, struggled toward the priesthood under two heavy burdens: his own attraction to the happiness of human love, and the restrictions, suspicions, and compulsions of his Nazi rulers.

Compulsory service in the great bog undermined his magnificent health, a foolish word about Hitler caused his imprisonment in Sachsenhausen and then in Dachau, but no torture or illness of those atrocious five years preceding the American rescue lessened his fidelity to Christ or prevented Our Lord from claiming His priest in ordination.

**HE WAS ORDAINED** in Dachau itself, in danger from moment to moment, with full beauty of ceremony, with more priests present at his ordination than at any in the world. Hitler had earlier been forced, fearing revolt to grant "privileges," a "chapel" and the right to build services.

Father Karl had his first Mass, a little party afterward, a chance to bless the hundreds of imprisoned priests and other friends, before returning to his hospital out to resume the difficult business of dying by TB.

His Bishop came a prisoner from France with other resistance fighters. (There were fifty railroad cars when the Americans came, corpses of men who had never even emerged from the cars to begin their life in Hitler's Hell.)

The food that enabled him to stand upright for the ceremony came through the agency of a brave little German novice, Sister Josephanna, who risked her

life every week bicycling into the forbidden area with food and medicine.

**HER NARRATIVE** is included. She put gladiaols from Dachau, "flowers from Hell" as she said, on the convent altar, and at the end, Dachau primroses on the "new saints' grave. There are photographs of Father Karl, of Dachau, and of that grave.

Every page of this book brings forward tears. Some will be tears of joy. Attention is not directed to the background of torture (the mildest sample of which was an order that every prisoner, sick, starved, bruised, broken, must jump three feet in the air at his block leader's word, an order instantly changed by the block leaders to five feet), but to the central figure, a priest of Christ who brought human happiness and spiritual well-being into a man made Inferno.

The little pamphlet called "God's Foolish General" is the story of the founder of the Society of the Divine Saviour, Father Francis Jordan, a German priest who in the 1890's felt the divisive and destructive power of nationalism, and determined to work as the Apostles had, throughout the world and above all lines of race and class, to spread the Gospel.

**HE MET REBUFF** everywhere through wearying years, but found recognition at the highest level, and chose Rom, the ultranationalist as the center of his new order. He caused the foundation of two flourishing Sisterhoods, the first having separated from Salvatorian work to follow a different path.

The brochure is very well written and tells an inspiring story, making Father Jordan someone to pray to, a channel of God's loving kindness.

**St. Benedict, The Moor, Great Negro Saint Canonized By Church 150 Years Ago**

By THOMAS E. KISSLING  
 (Staff Writer, N.C.W.C. News Service)

One hundred-and-fifty years ago May 25, Pope Pius XII gave to the world a new saint—Benedict the Moor.

Born of slave parents, the humble Franciscan Brother was the first Negro to be named a saint by full canonical process.

Benedict Manasser's parents were devout Catholics, Negroes of a lowly station. Their ancestors had been brought to Sicily from Ethiopia as slaves.

**BENEDICT COULD** neither read nor write, but neither this nor his color was a barrier to his being chosen in 1578 as superior of the Friary of St. Mary in Palermo, Italy.

Born in the village of San Fratello in the diocese of Messina, Sicily in 1524, St. Benedict was the son of Diana Laran, a freed woman. His father, Christopher Manasser, was a slave and overseer on the farm of Vincent Manasser; the family took its name from the owner.

Christopher was urged by his owner to bring children into the world, promising that their first-born would be freed. Benedict was their first child. There were three other children, Mark, Battassara, and Fradeia.

Benedict spent his early years on the Manasser farm laboring humbly with his parents. At first he tended the flock and when he was older he helped cultivate the fields.

**HIS MOTHER** taught him devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He fasted and frequented the Sacraments as often as possible. It is said that each morning he would offer himself to God and would pray constantly while he worked.

On his free days he spent much time in local churches, being devoted to the Blessed Sacrament. People called him "El Santo Moro," the holy Moor.

One day, while working in the fields with other laborers, a companion ridiculed his piety and made insulting remarks about his color and his parentage. Benedict suffered the insults patiently and remained silent under the scorn.

A passerby, who had overheard the remarks stopped and said to the group: "You joke now with this big slave fellow but in a few years you will hear of his fame."

The man who spoke these prophetic words was Jerome Lanza, a rich Sicilian nobleman who had given up wealth and honors to live a hermit's life in the neighboring hills.

**UPON LANZA'S** invitation, which was followed by prayers



**ST. BENEDICT THE MOOR**

for guidance, Benedict gave to the poor what little he had and joined the hermitage of St. Domitica at Caronia. Fellow hermits were not long in recognizing his many virtues and extraordinary holiness.

News of his piety and of some of the miracles he worked brought crowds to the hermitage. It had to be moved four times in an attempt to avoid the throngs seeking to approach the holy Negro.

St. Benedict Manasser's death occurred when he was 65, on April 4, 1589, after a month's illness at the friary. He had spent 21 years in the world, 17 years as a hermit, and 27 years as a Franciscan. His body remains incorrupt today at the Convent of St. Mary of Jesus, near Palermo. His feast day is observed on April 4.

Benedict chose to enter the Order of Friars Minor as a Brother. He was clothed in the brown habit and white cord of a Franciscan. He spent the next three years in the Convent of St. Anna of Galitana and the rest of his life at the Friary of St. Mary of Jesus, near Palermo.

Except for a brief period when he served as Guardian of the Friary (1578-81) and as Vicar (1581-84) Benedict worked as cook in the friary. That God had given him the power to work miracles during his life was authenticated in the processes which brought about

**President Asks Memorial Day Peace Prayers**

Washington, D. C. — (RNS) — President Eisenhower asked Americans to join in prayers for permanent peace on Thursday, May 30, as the nation observes Memorial Day.

In his annual proclamation the President designated May 30 as "a day of prayer for permanent peace."

"I call upon all the people of this nation to dedicate that day to prayer," the proclamation declared, "and I designate the hour beginning in each locality at eleven o'clock in the morning for a period in which all of us, wherever we may be, may lift up our voices in thanksgiving for the courage of our fallen, in supplication for God's aid in avoiding war and in dedication to unceasing work for the attainment of a peaceful world."

The President said remembrance of the sacrifice of those who gave their lives in war "impels us to seek divine guidance as we continue their search for a just and abiding peace."

**God's Message Seen In Stars**

Vatican City — (NC) — Fortunate is the man who can read in the stars the message they hold, Pope Pius XII told a group of the world's leading astronomers.

This message, the Pontiff stated, is one "equally as powerful as He who wrote it, worthy of rewarding the searcher for his perseverance and ability, but also inviting him to recognize Him who gives truth and life and establishes Himself in the hearts of those who adore and love Him."

The Pope delivered his address to 22 top astronomers from three continents who had come to Rome for a week of discussions sponsored by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on the problems of stellar populations. Among them were 11 from the United States.

**Catholic Students Barred From Graduation Rites**

Moundsville, W. Va. — (RNS) — Twenty-five Catholic members of the Moundsville High School graduated class were barred by their principal from taking part in commencement exercises because they refused to attend baccalaureate services in a Protestant Church. They sat at the exercises as spectators.

**DIPLOMAS WERE** given privately to the students by Principal L. D. Viant in his office after the public ceremony.

The 22, including the class valedictorian were forbidden by their pastor, the Very Rev. Benjamin F. Farrell of St. Francis Xavier's Church, to attend the class baccalaureate service in Simpson Methodist Church.

Louis R. Potts, Marshall County School Superintendent, upon hearing of the situation declared that all students were required to attend both "the baccalaureate

**Quick-Thinking Father Avoids 'Waste' At Clinic**

Soloma, Guatemala — (NC) — Children are the same the world over when it comes to having a tooth pulled — they don't like it. But a thrifty father of this area wouldn't let a visit to the mission clinic be wasted.

"It was the hour of the clinic at the mission here," explains Father Joseph R. Rickert, Maryknoll Missioner from Brooklyn. "An Indian couple came in with their young

**Liberties Unit Scores Good Friday Flag Plan**

San Francisco — (RNS) — A resolution of the city board of supervisors calling for the lowering to half staff of flags on Good Friday was criticized by the American Civil Liberties Union.

The ACLU asked the board to rescind the resolution as a violation of the "establishment of religion" clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution. It also contended the board's action violates the state constitution.

Ernest Besig, ACLU director in San Francisco, said the lowering of flags to half staff on Good Friday "aids one religion and, inferentially, prefers one religion over another. It was expected the board would turn the question over to its legal advisor for study.

**Group Formed To Train Laymen For Missions**

Patterson, N.J. — (NC) — Formation of AID, The Association for International Development, with headquarters here for training laymen for service in foreign mission fields, has been announced.

The organization has been approved by Bishop James A. McNulty of Patterson. It will be confined to laymen who are specialists in some trade, technical or professional skill and will sponsor them for social work in underdeveloped areas either with a mission or with a public or private social agency within a mission area.

A HEADQUARTERS for the organization has been acquired here. It will have an initial capacity for 15 to 20 trainees. The training program will consist of with instructions three evenings a week and practical work on a 10-month, part-time course, weekends.

The trainees will be obliged to live at the AID center and to pay a nominal fee for their living expenses. They will be able to work at outside jobs in the daytime during the training period.

**TO ASSIST AID** in its operation an advisory committee of three priests experienced in mission work has been established. Its members are: Fathers Frederick A. McGuire, C.M., of the Mission Secretariat, Edward L. Murphy, S.J. of Jesuit Missions, John J. Conidine, M.M., of the Maryknoll missionaries.

AID will arrange for the placing of its members in the type of service desired overseas.



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