

Six Weeks In Europe

This is the fifth in a series of articles describing a six week tour of Europe recently completed by the Courier Journal assistant editor. This article describes visits to shrines at Venice and Milan.

By REV. HENRY ATWELL

My first reaction on arrival in Venice was, "What a silly place to build a city!"

The picturesque canals lined with leaning houses looking more like wedding cakes than homes just didn't seem practical to my American way of thinking.

But two quick days in the famous city of canals, city where St. Peter's was cardinal archbishop before being elevated pope, convinced me that Venice has a charm which deserves to be preserved.

THAT EVENING (July 11) a summer full moon glittered across the Grand Canal. Gondolas clustered around a decorated barge where a nonchestrated orchestra presented their program. Venetians leaned out their window shutters as the musical procession glided down its rippling path.

While the Courier Journal's sixteen pilgrims enjoyed their serene ride, I remained to read at the hotel's terrace overlooking the Venice waterways. The managing editor of the Halifax daily newspaper saw the real Europe's edition of the New York Herald Tribune. As a journalist he had to quip, "Why not read a good paper?"

He didn't have a copy of his Halifax Chronicle with him but we discussed the different problems of a secular and Catholic newspaper. The Halifax editor Frank Doyle (not a Catholic despite his Irish ancestry) was on a week's vacation after covering a portion of the London disarmament conference. Our topics ranged from the trade topics to theology, history, and scattered other subjects. We had to cut our conversation off at midnight because next day was scheduled for sight-seeing the city built on islands.

VENICE originally, we were told next morning by our guide, was nothing more than little islands in the Adriatic where

poor fishermen built their hovels.

During the troubled era of invasion and war which made Europe a continent where death lurked at every crossroads during the fifth century, fugitives from the mainland sought safety on one of the over 100 islands now named Venice.

A leader (doge, from Latin "dux") was elected in the year 697 to coordinate the growing population. Bridges were built to connect the islands and today there are more than 350 bridges, mostly they are built of stone, spanning the narrow canals.

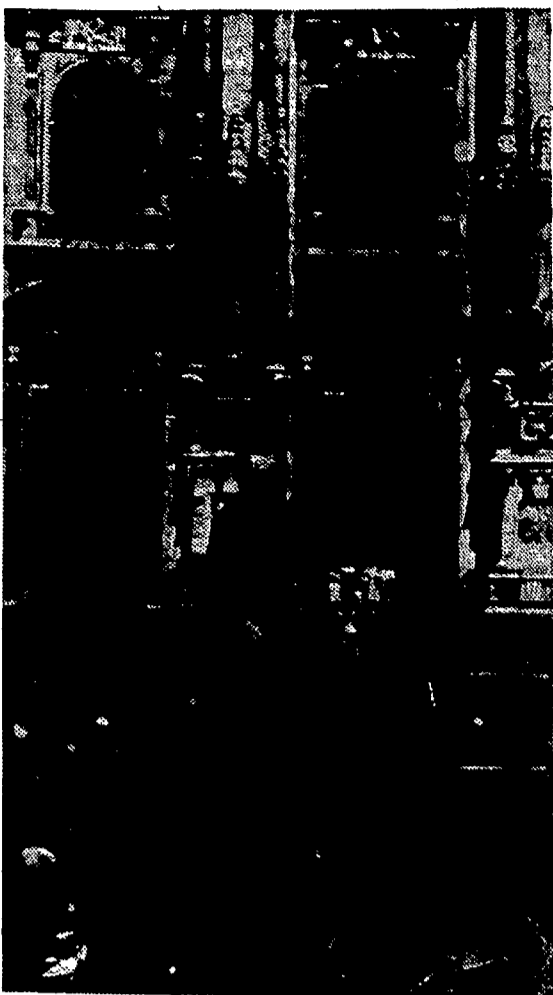
The Doge's Palace, next to the cathedral, is now a museum. Paintings by Tintoretto and Titian decorate the walls of the vast assembly hall where democracy struggled for birth in fifteenth century Venice.

SPANNING the adjacent canal is the Bridge of Sighs where prisoners caught their last view of sunshine as they headed for the prison with its labyrinthine corridors leading down to closet sized cells where victims groaned out their existence worse than any animals.

The ancient cathedral with its bulging domes is like a dream in marble with its mosaics, frescoes, decorations captured by the Venetian sailors when their navy ruled the Mediterranean Sea.

Typical of the adornments brought from every city where Venetians travelled are the four bronze horses. Once they stood on Trajan's arch in Rome, then were taken to Constantinople, and then in 1204 were brought to Venice. They stand now over the main arch of the cathedral and look down on pigeons and people who fill the square for an afternoon aperitif.

INSIDE the ancient sagging structure, you view the soaring vault of gold. The cathedral's arched ceiling is a tape-



'Strictly for the birds—a typical tourist picture. The writer feeds pigeons in Milan's Cathedral Square.

Milan Cathedral Church Of 6000 Statues

try of gold glass mosaic with pictures of bible history and church saints drawn in glass too.

The main altar is a shrine to St. Mark, the gospel writer and companion of St. Peter. A tiny side altar, also richly decorated with gold and silver and jewels enshrines a pearl studded picture of our Lady, the "Madonna of Victories" and patroness of Venice.

We also went to one of the glass factories, the industry which makes Venice commercially famous, but were struck by the primitive methods. Boys about 12 begin their apprenticeship as glass blowers and require 10 or more years to become experts.

In the display shop, I asked if the Venetian glass people had heard of Corning and its Stouven ware. "Oh, yes," was the admiring reply, "That's the best there is."

We took the two mile train ride across the bridge to the mainland and were on our way

to Milan, Italy's industrial capital.

American aid has enabled the twice wrecked city to rebuild its shattered factories. Milan was war time target for Nazi invaders and then later for the Allied liberating forces.

Milan's factory studded skyline makes you forget that it traces its origin back 300 years before our Lord was born. Remnants of its antiquity are seen in St. Ambrose Church, built by its patron saint in the year 386, and where Augustine was baptized the following year.

MOST STRIKING church edifice in Milan is the white mar-

ble cathedral, world's second largest church, with 98 slender steeples each with its statue at the top. In niches across the front of the cathedral are other statues, and the guide said inside and out there are 6000 saints' statues at the cathedral.

Priests in Milan celebrate Mass according to rites dating back to the days of St. Ambrose. Visiting priests are required to offer the Roman rite Mass in one small, but richly ornamented chapel below the cathedral's main altar. The chapel altar faces the silver casket of Milan's great prelate, St. Charles Borromeo.

Milan is also the home of the Scala, world famous theater with its tiers of balconies and said to be the most acoustically perfect structure in Europe.

A scene from a Scala performance was shown in a recent Cinerama movie production.

OUR PILGRIMAGE tour included a trip twenty miles into the country side to visit San Angelo Lodigiano, the tiny town where St. Francis Xavier Cabrini was born.

The streets there are so nar-

row we had to leave the bus and walk to her home, now tended by friends who knew the saint. The house has been kept quite the same as when Mother Cabrini lived there as a child. One room has been turned in to a chapel but otherwise the kitchen, dining room, parlor and bed rooms are just the same as 50 years ago.

Word spread that Americans were in town and the natives lined the streets to greet us as we walked back to the parish church. There Mother Cabrini had been baptized, made her First Communion, learned her catechism and grew strong in her vocation to be a missionary nun.

Father Nicola de Martino escorted us through the newly decorated church with its paintings showing the life of America's first citizen-saint. One picture shows Mother Cabrini on the sidewalks of New York. Another shows Cardinal Spellman at the time of Mother Cabrini's canonization.

Father Martino clinaxed our visit by presenting me with an exquisitely encased relic of the saint.

BOOK SHELF

Holy Mass And Life

By Sister Margaret Teresa, S.S.J., Nazareth College
HOLY MASS AND LIFE, by Aloysius Biscupak, S.V.D., Society of St. Paul '57. Foreword by Rev. Lelen. 100 pp. \$2.50. At Trant's.
YOSS: A NOVEL by Patrick White. Viking '57. Book of the Month for August 442 pp.

Many who do not know it are in debt to Father Biscupak, whose lifetime of devotion to souls flowered in books on the Mass that have been the inspiration of teachers. This little work, perfect in its way, comes two years after his death, which occurred at the end of his Mass on October 14, 1955.

As Father Lelen says, it is "redolent of and remindful of the imitation of Christ: same simplicity, same profundity."

There is no other way to say it; it is one of those works in which perfection replaces style, in which the material is not mere fact but Science, in Cardinal Newman's holy sense of the term: the facts of God in the words of God.

WELL ILLUSTRATED, clear, pausing for a thoughtful page or two on every great noun and verb of Holy Mass ("The Chalice of Salvation," "Angel and Altar," "Retirement," "Light, Peace") it is a fine instrument, whether for the lone reader or for two or thirty-two gathered together.

It is quotable, for it enfolds the words of salvation in familiar, enduring images: "The Agnus Dei suggests a very important and inspiring lesson. Life is a pilgrimage... let us not attach our hearts... let us not expect the peace and comfort of home..."

It closes with seven memorable rules for living. A child can read it, a family can listen to it.

VOSS is a novel about Australia by an Australian—the story of five men who try to cross a nonexplored continent, knowing as they do about the land, dogged as closely by the shadows of their own characters as by the dark Nemesis of the natives slipping through the bush on either side, waiting for their exhaustion.

THERE IS a fine love-story between Voss the hero, the German with a vision and a soul in danger, and Laura Trevelyan of Sydney who saves his soul for him by punctuating his conceit, understanding and loving his vision, and teaching him who God is.

They have spoken together but twice, and are immediately separated by the departure of the expedition—but by a single exchange of letters their wills are linked.

The story convinces by its rather remarkable style. Mr. White is seeking a newer, fresher language, but not by any

Children 'Shocked' By Parents Divorce

Washington — (NC) — Children of divorced parents sense no great unhappiness in the family before the separation and consequently suffer a severe emotional shock when informed of their parents' decision.

Some results of the divorce for such children are a feeling of being handicapped in their social life, use of "ice-cream" devils, such as lies, to cover up the divorce and a feeling of insecurity.

This information was presented before the American Sociological Convention here by Judson T. Lanika, a University of California sociologist, who made a study of 100-100 college students who came from divorced homes.

He noted in his paper that about 80 per cent of the 200 students who remembered their home situation before divorce rated it as "happy" or "very happy."

"It is often assumed," said Mr. Lanika, "that divorce is almost always preceded by great unhappiness and open conflict, and yet the findings bring out rather clearly that from the point of view of the child the home may be quite satisfactory."

He added that "15 per cent of all the children reported that they hated their father or mother when they heard of the divorce."

Mexican Team Captures Little League Crown

Washington — (NC) — The world champion little leaguers, who also are tops as Catholics, got the thrill of their young lives here when they were received at the White House by President Eisenhower.

The Chief Executive presented each of the boys, who hail from Monterrey, Mexico, with a pencil inscribed: "Stolen from Dwight D. Eisenhower." One of the boys was wary of the gift and inquired whether they all might be jailed for theft. The President assured him that the pencils were personal gifts.

AT WILLIAMSPORT, Pa., where the Mexican boys won their championship, Bill Morgan and A. F. Dolan, Williamsport businessmen and members of the Knights of Columbus, served as hosts.

"These boys were something special," said Mr. Morgan. "When we brought them in to town they wouldn't pass a Catholic church without a display of devotion. Before the Church of the Annunciation they made us stop the bus and all of them piled out and knelt down on the sidewalk to pray."

"That's right," said Mr. Dolan. "They stayed there until Bill went and got Father John J. O'Brien out of the rectory to give them his blessing."

At the White House, President Eisenhower particularly was impressed by Angel Macias, a 5-foot-two, 94 pounder who pitched

a perfect game—no hits, no runs, no one to reach first base—against the La Mesa, Calif., team to win the series.

A crowd of 9,000 saw the Mexican lad pitch to 18 batters in a six-inning game, striking out 11. His team came through with a 4-0 victory. Before the final game, the Mexicans knelt on the field while Father Carl G. Ulrich of St. Boniface church gave them his blessing.

Guatemala Postpones Eucharist Congress

San Salvador — (NC) — The hierarchies of Central America have postponed the first central American Eucharist Congress which was planned for October 21 and 22 in Guatemala.

The change in plan was explained as having been brought on by the uncertain political situation which has existed in Guatemala since the assassination of President Carlos Castillo Armas in July.



Soaring campanile (bell tower) dwarfs the domes of Venice cathedral. The ancient church contains relics of St. Mark, gospel writer.

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