

# Six Weeks in Europe



Einsiedeln monastery church is Lourdes of Switzerland. Marble-cased wood hut of St. Meinrad contains centuries old Madonna. Hut is just inside church's main entrance.

This is the sixth 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 in Switzerland and Germany.

By REV. HENRY ATWELL

A snow storm in the middle of July was our welcome to Switzerland. Our train climbed around Alpine mountains and we looked down into valleys seemingly a mile below the railroad trestle.

LUCERNE, famed for its watches and wood carvings, was our destination on July 14. Our hotel looked out toward the city's sixteenth century cathedral and up to the snow-capped peaks of the Swiss Alps.

The city is tucked contentedly into the heart of the William Tell country where Swiss independence defied the Hapsburgs, Europe's family of monarchs and despots.

Quaint wooden bridges and winding streets make a charming picture even for the most amateur photographer. Deep blue Lake Lucerne stretches out from Lucerne's Main Street, the Schweizerhof, toward green hills and purple mountain tops in the distance.

One of the narrow bridges spanning the river which cuts through the city is famous for its rather paintings of the "Dance Macabre" showing the ravages of Bubonic Plague as it struck Lucerne in the Middle Ages.

We visited the Lourdes of Switzerland, the famous shrine of Einsiedeln about twenty miles from Lucerne. On our way we passed the memorial chapel where the Belgian Queen, Astrid was killed in an auto accident.

THE EINSIEDELN shrine is rooted in the story of St. Meinrad, a monk who lived in the early ninth century. He lived in a tiny wood hut and there he erected a shrine to our Lady.

The ancient Madonna has long since turned black from hundreds of years and from the smoke of thousands of candles.

The old wood hut is now cased in marble and around it has been built a soaring, richly ornate basilica. The marble-cased hut of St. Meinrad is just inside the main entrance and pilgrims crowded the little chapel to venerate the black Madonna.

Benedictine monks who staff

date, the shipment has not arrived.

Another train ride brought us into Germany where we noticed the first heavy traffic since we arrived in Europe. The German auto-bans were alive with Volkswagens scooting along with trucks lumbering with heavy loads. Factories dotted the skyline, the first major industrial life we had seen.

MAINTZ still bears the scars of war. Shells of buildings stand gaunt with hollow eyed windows. We just went through there to get to Wiesbaden, also heavily hit by Allied bombs.

THREE BROTHERS of Mercy greeted us as we registered at the Wiesbaden hotel. One, Brother Marcellus, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Coffey of 2569 Ridge Rd. West, Rochester. With him were the order's vicar-general Brother Vitus and the Wiesbaden superior Brother Liborius.

The Brothers of Mercy staff hospitals, homes for the aged, sanitariums, and visit the aged and sick in private homes. Numbering over 400 members in Germany in 1933 (when Hitler came to power), the order at the war's end counted only 80 survivors. Decimated by the draft, by death, by Hitler's ban on accepting new recruits, its buildings in ruins, the order was faced with pleas to take care of added sick, wounded, and aged.

The German province appealed for aid from other sections of the order. America sent Brother Marcellus and he was glad to meet "somebody from home." His two older companions were, without doubt, the perfect personification of Christian kindness and humility.

Guide books talk about German "Gemuetlichkeit" — comradship but there is no word to describe the brothers of Mercy I met at Wiesbaden. There is no rancor in their hearts for the destruction wrought by American bombs. Their obviously one concern is that the poor and the sick and the aged are in need of care and the Brothers will give up even their own quarters to provide for the needy.

Our trip north from Wiesbaden was made by Rhine steamer, the side-wheelers which ply Germany's main transport highway. Barges, freighters, passenger boats almost jostled each other for space on the crowded Rhine.

Tourists alternately took pictures of the famed medieval castles dotting the hills rising from the Rhine River, or



Gemuetlichkeit on the Rhine—Brother Vitus (left) and Rochesterian Brother Marcellus Coffey.

bought souvenirs at the ship's top deck store. At most every bend in the river, some well-informed traveler-announced the Lorelei was in sight, a huge rock jutting up from the river and made famous by "the Lorelei Song."

After several bends in the river we did actually spot the rock formation. Intermittently that day (July 18) we had sun shine, rain and hail, but Gemuetlichkeit was good all the way.

MORE WAR RUINS at Koblenz and we were on our way to Maria Laach, Benedictine abbey near Cologne, famous for the "liturgical apostolate" which radiated from there under the late Abbot Hildebrunn Herwegen and spread throughout Europe and has tinged even Ameri-

can Catholic life. A Benedictine monk at the abbey told us, "The liturgical movement simply attempts to help the people understand the Mass and sacred rites of the Church, and take an active part in them. That is just exactly what Pope St. Pius X ordered in 1903," he said.

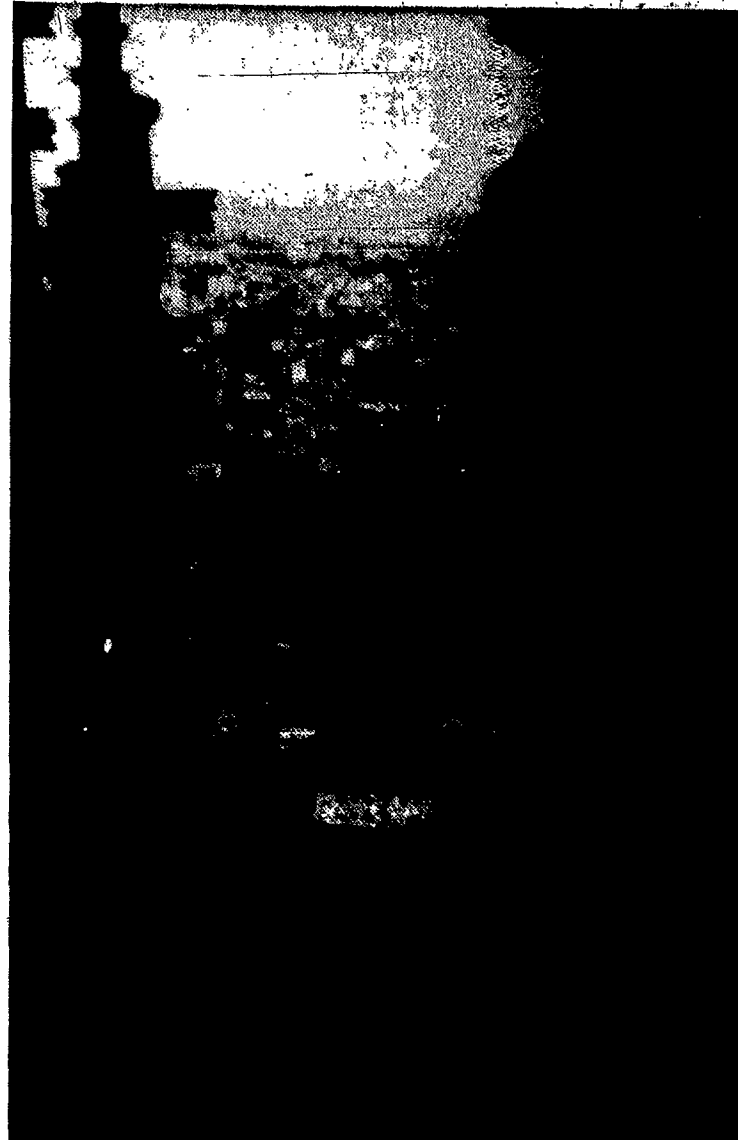
IN BONN we saw west Germany's new government buildings and the home of Konrad Adenauer who is up for reelection this Sunday, Sept. 15.

Cologne, and we were aghast. Our hearts slumped, our mouths must have dropped in amazement as we looked at what had been a city. A taxi driver later aptly described it as "a desert of stone." Once Germany's leading industrial and cultural city, Cologne was a target for tons of Allied bombs which obliterated every bridge and wrecked every building—except the mammoth cathedral which was spared. Even the cathedral was hit by 14 stray bombs and rocked by bombs striking nearby structures.

A hodge-podge reconstruction makes the city look like an overgrown village but coordinated planning will develop future building into a modern, efficient city.

Perhaps serving as a symbol of the naked terror and stark realism of Cologne's survivors is the ultra-modern suburban church dedicated to St. Joseph. Only one statue stands in the sanctuary. Our Lady holding the Christ Child, carved in stone still rough hewn. The blue-black marble altar with a squat tabernacle and slender crucifix has no other adornments.

Just the bare essentials in the



Ruins and reconstruction in Cologne as seen from spire of famous cathedral.

church aptly illustrates a city that struggles to survive on the barest of essentials "in a desert of stone."

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## Santa Claus Seeks Souls On Rhine


Bonn, Germany (AP) — Santa Claus is around every day of the year for children of Rhine river boatmen—at least in name.

Father Josef Weimann of Mannheim has named his new launch "Helliger Nikolaus," which means St. Nicholas. He uses the boat to keep contact with his "swimming parish," the families of boat skippers who earn their living by plying Germany's major river.

Father Weimann looks after a rather large community on the 522 miles of river between the Swiss border and the River's estuary in the Netherlands.

The missionary simply ties up his small craft to the larger water transports and climbs aboard to speak with the skippers and help them with their problems.

"We can always depend on our pastor," said one of the Rhine Boatmen. "No matter whether we have family problems, trouble with the crew, or financial headaches, the good priest always finds a way to help us."



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