

25 Years Ago

Children Spoke With Our Lady

By ROBERT SMETT

A thirty-nine year old Belgian widow will kneel tonight, as she does every night, with her two children to lead a chapel, filled with her neighbors and pilgrims in recitation of the Rosary.

She is obeying an order given to her twenty-five years ago to "pray always." The order was given by the Blessed Virgin Mary herself who said to Andree Degelmire, then a youngster of 14, "I am the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven. Pray always."

This heavenly command was given to the young Belgian girl in the last of a series of apparitions she and four other children witnessed between Nov. 29, 1932 and Jan. 3, 1933.

This week, in a telephone interview with Father Joseph De Bergh, O.M.I. of Lowell, Mass., we learned that the now grown-up children of Beauraing are still alive, are married and have children of their own "just like anybody else."

Father De Bergh thinks that the children of Beauraing were meant to be of particular significance to laymen. In the case of Lourdes and Fatima, the visionaries entered the religious life. Bernadette Soubirous became a Sister of Nazareth, Lucia dos Santos is a Carmelite nun - but the Belgian youngsters, have stayed in the world, leading quiet and seemingly uneventful lives.

The appearances of the Blessed Mother to five children in the town of Beauraing, Belgium, are not as familiar to most of us as the apparitions of Lourdes and Fatima. However, the events carry the same authorization of the Catholic Church as do those earlier appearances of Our Lady in France and Portugal.

"This is the story as reported by Father De Bergh.

THE VOISIN and Degelmire families lived in the simple and quiet village of Beauraing. They were not related but they were friends and their children played together.

These children were Andree Degelmire, in 1932 aged 14, her sister Gilberte, 9; Fernande Voisin, 15, her brother Albert, 11 and their 13 year old sister, also named Gilberte.

All these children were mentally and physically normal. They had average religious education and were generally involved in various pranks of children.

On the evening of November 29, 1932, the children were walking toward the railway viaduct. Suddenly one of them exclaimed "that there was a bright light moving at the viaduct. On closer inspection, they saw 'the figure of a lady, dressed in pure white' walking along the bridge.

FROM THAT TIME ON, the children saw the vision almost every night. Soon, great crowds of people, many of whom had at first been incredulous, came every evening to the spot to pray. The children look turns leading the rosary every night, and during that time all five saw the Lady.

When Albert asked the Lady if she were the Blessed Virgin, she smiled and nodded her head. He asked her why she had come, and she replied "Always be good."

Church and civil authorities did all they could to test the children, to be sure they were not up to mischief or the prey of illusion or deception. At one time, a group

of doctors came to the evening meetings to observe the children.

During one evening rosary it became obvious from their behavior that the children were seeing the Blessed Virgin. One of the doctors approached Gilberte Voisin. She was clearly not aware he was standing next to her.

THE DOCTOR pinched, slapped and shouted at her, but there was no response. He held a lighted match beneath one of her hands. Not only did she not flinch, but the skin did not even scorch.

On Dec. 47, Our Lady asked that a chapel be built on the site. Each time she spoke to the children, she told them to pray and to lead others to prayer and a good life.

The Blessed Mother, during one vision, spread wide her arms over others, and revealed a golden heart, surrounded by rays of light.

For this reason, Our Lady of Beauraing is often referred to as the "Blessed Virgin of the Golden Heart."

Our Lady appeared again to the children on Jan. 2, 1933. She told them that on the next day she would give each of them a special message, and then not appear to them again.

The following night, she appeared and spoke to each one of them.

"I am the Mother of God, the

Queen of Heaven. Pray always. Goodbye," she said to Andree. To Gilberte Voisin, she said, "I will convert sinners. Goodbye." To both Albert and Gilberte Degelmire, she simply said, "Goodbye."

During this final vision, Fernande neither saw nor heard Our Lady. As the people were preparing to leave, she saw a great ball of fire and, turning, saw the Blessed Mother who asked her, "Do you love my Son?"

"Yes," answered Fernande.

"Do you love me?"

"Yes."

"Then sacrifice yourself for me. Goodbye."

The story of the apparitions caused a great stir throughout Europe. Pilgrims came from all over, some of them believing, others incredulous. Gradually, after several cures and conversions were attributed to the intercession of Our Lady of Beauraing, the skepticism disappeared.

After a period of investigation and examination, the children were once again examined before a tribunal of 90 doctors, the ecclesiastical officials approved the pilgrimages to Beauraing and gave permission for public devotions to be held at the shrine.

A CHAPEL was consecrated in 1934 on the site of the apparitions. A retreat house is being constructed on the grounds and plans for the future include a

basilica dedicated to Our Lady of Beauraing.

All five of the children are now married and have families of their own. They share any notoriety or acclaim. The message of Our Lady of Beauraing is important, they say, not the people who received it.

The grown up children of Beauraing are "ordinary" people, according to Father De Bergh. One is married to an income tax clerk, another to a horticulturist, a third to a bank clerk.

Albert, the father of 2 children, is a teacher in the Belgian Congo. The widowed Andree returned to Beauraing in 1953 where nightly she leads the rosary on the very spot where the apparitions took place.

Was any special devotion encouraged in Our Lady's apparitions at Beauraing? Father De Bergh divulged a fact this week not usually known regarding the Beauraing events. From Dec. 6 to Jan. 3, the Blessed Virgin appeared to the children wearing a rosary. This would lead us to understand, Father De Bergh said, that again Our Lady was encouraging devotion to the rosary as she had done at Lourdes and Fatima.

Father De Bergh who last saw the visionaries of Beauraing in January 1955 said that "they are all leading exemplary Catholic lives. They have great devotion to the Blessed Virgin of the Golden Heart and have instilled it into their children."



Celebrations marking the 25th anniversary of the Apparitions of Our Lady at Beauraing, Belgium, to five children, will be observed Nov. 29 to Jan. 3. Children who saw and talked to Our Lady are shown above. From left, back row: Andree Degelmire, Fernande Voisin and Gilberte Voisin; front row: Gilberte Degelmire and Albert Voisin.

\$65,000 Fire Sweeps Church

Leroy, La. (NC) Fire of undetermined origin destroyed Our Lady of Perpetual Help church here.

Father Armand C. pastor said when the fire was noticed, the plywood interior of the church was already engulfed in flames. He was unable to save the Blessed Sacrament or any of the sacred vessels or furnishings, and lost his personal chalice as well.

The \$65,000 church of steel and concrete exterior had been completed only six years ago. It serves a small rural community 15 miles from Lafayette.

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Cincinnati Cathedral

Cincinnati (NC) Historic St. Peter in Chains Cathedral, originally consecrated by Bishop John B. Purcell in 1845, will be rededicated here on November 3 by Archbishop Karl J. Alter of Cincinnati.

Priests and laymen from all parts of the United States will attend the dedication ceremonies, which will open on November 1 and continue to November 10.

On the final day, Cardinal Mooney, Archbishop of Detroit, formerly Bishop of Rochester, will preside at a Pontifical Mass of thanksgiving and preach the sermon.

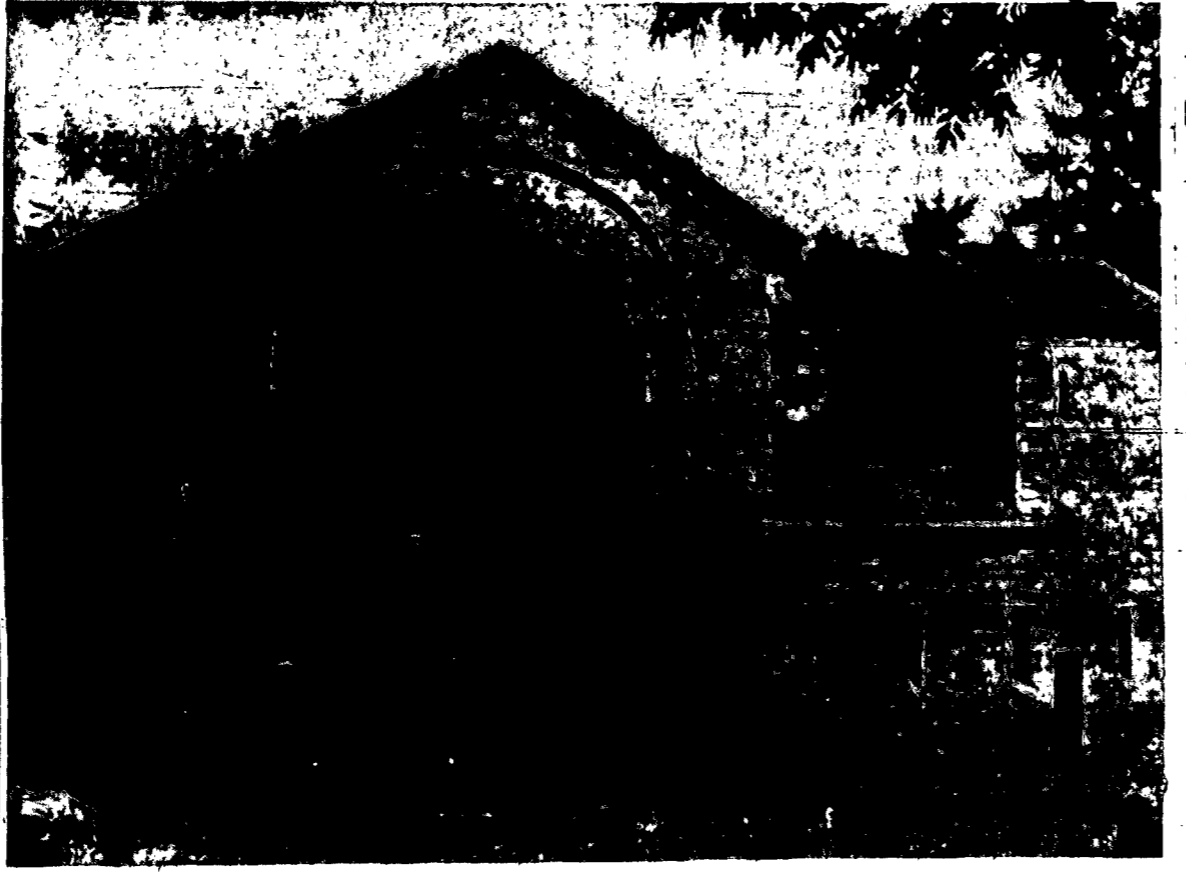
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Built at Our Lady's request, chapel was dedicated in August, 1934

Latin Requiem For Norway King

Oslo, Norway - Pictures of the late King Haakon VII of Norway on his deathbed showed a number of traditionally Catholic articles including crucifixes, holy pictures and even rosary beads and holy water fonts.

CATHOLICS IN Norway do not believe that King Haakon had taken any steps toward becoming a convert but it is well known that he had a sincere Christian belief which guided him in all his actions.

The requiem service for the King, who was a member of the state Lutheran Church, was sung entirely in Latin with the exception of the De Profundis, which was sung in Norwegian. The service was conducted according to a special liturgy. The Lutheran bishop who officiated recited in Norwegian the traditional prayer for the dead from the Catholic liturgy.

Priests To Carry 'Holy Oils' En Auto

Aachen, Germany (RNS) - Diocesan authorities here have instructed priests to take holy oils with them whenever they travel by car so as to be able to administer the last rites to road accident victims.

The Aachen Franciscan explained that the instructions to the priests have been made necessary because of the "great increase" in the number of deaths resulting from accidents on German roads.

It also advised Catholic motorists to carry in their cars a document requesting the assistance of a priest in the event of serious injury.

Our Lady of Beauraing

Yen For Yen Foiled By Bishop

Kyoto, Japan - Bishop Paul M. Furiya of this city is a man of action.

Returning from church one rainy evening recently the bishop took a short-cut to his house, passing the window of Father William F. Pheur, M.M., of Walpole, N.H., Superior of Maryknoll Missioners in Japan, he saw a man frantically - the miser's room.

Not one to merely yell, "stop thief!" the bishop slipped out of his shoes and stealthily approached the burglar from the rear and grabbed the culprit.

Carmelite Third Order

San Antonio (NC) - The 1958 Congress of the Discalced Carmelite Third Order will be held in San Antonio from October 3 to 10. It has been announced by Father John Ferrando, O.C.S., theme of the congress will be "Practical View of the History of Carmel in the Life of a Terceira."

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Bishop At Me

Our Lady the Sacred He Oct. 25. At the of the feast of will take place.

His Excellency will presid Anthony, Poble Our Lady of who is of the on Hearts of Jesus perform the e thronement. This ceremon thronement is n

Father At Sat

Rev. Walt Parish, will b Luncheon, No at 12:15 noon.

The luncheon votion to the Bl is open to all C the city who ha Communion on day. Rev. Albe moderator.

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