

BOOK SHELF

"Thunder In The Distance: The Life of Pere Lebbe," by Jacques Leclercq. Translated by George Lamb. Sheed, Mar. 1, '53. 322 pp. \$5.00.

Discovered: one hero. Known to several Popes, to the Society of Missionary Priests of St. Vincent de Paul, to the Church in China; unknown to the world. His work in China began in 1901, when he was twenty-four. "He was only a little Vincent Lebbe, a scraggy fellow in falling health. But he was also a priest of the Lord, and the day was to come when the Vicar of Christ would speak to him and the Church of China would be born from his brain."

This is the year of martyrdom for native Chinese, the year when men of Pere Lebbe's training fall as the seed of the Cross into the ground and die.

A harvest is to come. Pere Lebbe, the man joyfully and almost incredulously hailed by the native aspirant to the priesthood as "the Chinese father," corrected, singly and alone, and just in sacrificial time, an ancient European error. By character and family spirit formed to complete honesty of mind, he looked upon men of another race as men like himself — really like himself.

THIS REVOLUTIONARY little fact is the start of a career that leads the reader to a final great sigh of satisfied understanding, and to an urgent colloquy with the God Who so loved Vincent Lebbe. How ready he must have been for Heaven, he who had smiled with the Celestials for so long!

A hero, a biographer, and a translator — not always are they a harmonious trio. But Canon Leclercq was Vincent's close friend "way back when" and all through the years; and he seems to be a branch of the Vine leaning so trustingly on the wall of faith, expanding so genially in God's sun, that a special happiness and humor prevades his recital.

And the translator does not betray it, has found the idiom to convey that gentle, subtle Belgian humor and the strong pathos that is its reverse side.

A lamb of a translator for sure, this George Lamb, dole to his author's word and mood.

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China Mission

SEE PERE LEBBE in the war with the Japanese, living and dying with the wounded: "When there was an air raid on... Pere Lebbe did not move from the middle of the road, but stood there imperturbable through the hail of bullets. One bomb fell near him without going off. 'Oh, useless object,' he said in a loud voice, pointing to it, 'why did they make thee? Why exploded thou not? Made in Japan,' he added, smiling calmly. Within three days Pere Lebbe had become a legend: it was he, they said, who kept the stretcher-bearers free from harm — all he had to do was to make the sign of the cross for the enemy planes to turn tail, and he had again been seen to kick a bomb away."



Cardinal Supports Red Cross

New York — (NC) — Cardinal Spellman presents \$2,000 to New York City's Red Cross campaign to raise \$6-million. Presenting his check to Gen. Alfred M. Gruenther, national Red Cross president, the Cardinal said, "I am giving more this year because of the many disasters which have depleted Red Cross reserves."

Most 'Catholic' Convicts Never In Catholic School

Chicago — (NC) — Eighty per cent of the men admitted to the Illinois State Penitentiary who claim to be Catholic have never attended a parochial school.

Ninety-eight per cent of the convicts who describe themselves as Catholics have never attended any high school, or were educated in non-Catholic institutions.

THESE FACTS were revealed here by Warden Joseph E. Ragen of the State Penitentiary.

Warden Ragen also stated that less than five per cent of the convicts who claim Catholicism as their religion had made their Easter duty or attended church in the two years prior to their conviction.

Warden Ragen added that most convicts come from homes in which the father has failed to enforce proper discipline.

Boys Watch TV More Than Girls

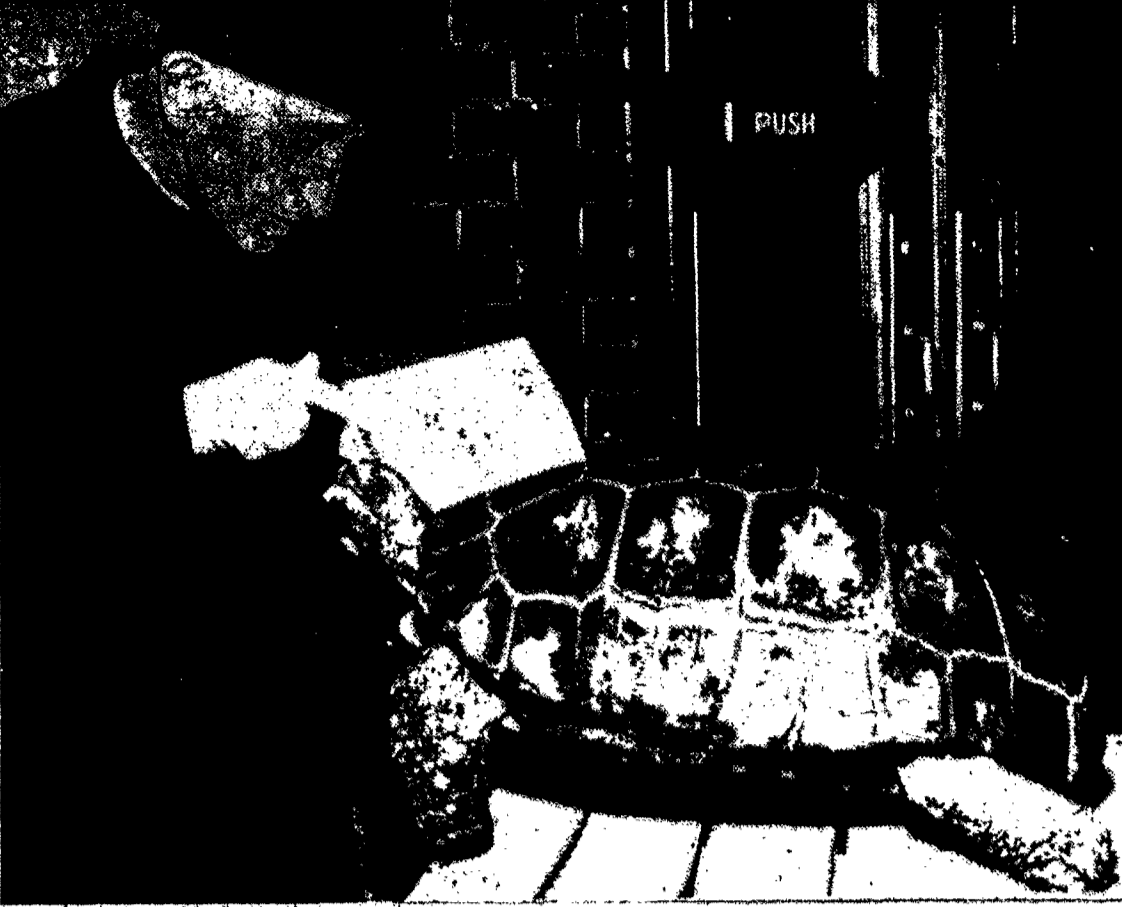
Louisville, Ky. — (NC) — Male freshmen watched television an average of 20.75 hours a week, and female freshmen watched it an average of 15.75 hours a week, according to a survey made at four Catholic high schools here.

The survey was conducted by The Record, weekly newspaper of the Louisville archdiocese. Interviewed were students of two boys' schools and two girls' schools. The names of the schools and their principals were not revealed.

The principal of one of the boys' schools felt the survey warranted the following conclusions:

The lower the intelligence rating, the higher the number of viewing hours per week.

Students with the highest number of viewing hours, regardless of intelligence rating, also have the lowest average marks.



'Small World' For These

New York — (NC) — Msgr. Joseph Caella, Director of St. Anthony's Welfare Center, New York, renews acquaintance with a 75-pound tortoise at the Bronx Zoo. 43 years ago, Msgr. Caella, then a young missionary in the jungles of the Amazon, Brazil, was present when Theodore Roosevelt, then ex-President of the U.S., captured the animal in 1913. Teddy, as the turtle was called, is about 200 years old. Msgr. Caella has written of his missionary experiences in a book titled, "Jungle Call."

Anticlerical Drive Continues In Italy

Vatican City — (NC) — Vatican Radio reported that there is no easing off of the anticlerical campaign in Italy which led Pope Pius XII to cancel the official ceremonies marking his 19th year as Pope.

Despite the protests of the Pope, laicist groups have continued to hammer at the anticlerical theme as part of their pre-election campaign. Vatican Radio stated. The commentator said the laicist parties are not content to leave the offensive against the Church as a communist monopoly.

THE VATICAN Radio reported that these groups have loudly criticized the Pope's recent speech to 30,000 workers from Naples in which the Pope called for capital investment and industrialization of the south of Italy as a means of easing its unemployment and housing shortage problems.

The anticlerical groups have charged that the Pope's speech had a definite electoral slant and was contrary to the terms of the Holy See's concordat with Italy. The purpose of these charges, Vatican Radio continued, is to cause deterioration in Church-State relations.

The Vatican Radio commentator added that observers from other countries have contributed to the confusion of the situation. He cited a recent editorial in a British newspaper which was critical of Catholic reaction to the recent defamation trial of Bishop Pietro Fiodrelli of Prato.

Holy Father Honors Ogdensburg Pastors

Ogdensburg, N. Y. — (NC) — Bishop James J. Navagh of Ogdensburg, N. Y., has announced that Msgrs. A. D. Charbonneau and Albert J. Farrell have been named protonotaries apostolic by Pope Pius XII.

Latin America Seen West's Weak Spot

Cincinnati — (NC) — Latin America may prove to be the West's weak spot, one of the world's leading authorities on communism indicated in Cincinnati last week.

Douglas Hyde, convert to Catholicism and former news editor of the London Daily Worker, communist newspaper, declared that "communism is spreading in Latin America."

Red gains south of the border, he explained, may enable communism to "outflank" the West in what he described as "the worldwide battle for the minds and hearts and souls of men."

Refugees Aided

Geneva — (NC) — With financial aid from the United States Escape Program, Catholic Relief Services-National Catholic Welfare Conference has been able to assist about 8,488 escapees from Red-dominated countries since the creation of UNREP in 1952.

Minister Upholds Right Of Catholic To Be President

Cleveland — (RNS) — A Unitarian minister who is chairman of the American Civil Liberties Union in Pittsburgh, said a Catholic seeking the presidency has the right to expect the nation to listen to him "with an open-minded interest and with no slightest suspicion of bigotry."

In a sermon before the Unitarian Society of Cleveland, the Rev. Irving R. Murray said that a Catholic might make a better President than some recent Protestant Presidents.

MR. MURRAY said "it would be strange indeed if 34,500,000 Catholics were to go forever unrepresented in the list of Presidents."

HE SAID THE Catholic candidate must be unequivocally and irrevocably committed to the full implication of the U. S. Constitution's First Amendment which provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion..."

"May they soon be included, and that by a man of uncompromising devotion to the total separation of Church and State," he said.

However, Mr. Murray added, such a commitment would be a natural thing for a Catholic candidate because, he said, the principle of Church-State separation was introduced into the country by Catholics.

A 43-year-old graduate of the Harvard Divinity School, Mr. Murray is minister of the First Unitarian church of Pittsburgh.

His sermon was entitled "The Vatican and the White House." He said Catholic influence on a President in favor of integration, intelligent farm policies, economic justice and international peace would be beneficial.

It was in Maryland in the second quarter of the 17th century that freedom of conscience was first established in America," he said. "Protestants moving up from Virginia, indeed, subverted the Maryland law in 1702. But the honor of being the first Americans to insist on the separation of Church and State is only thereby enhanced, and that honor belongs to the Roman Catholics of Maryland."

"A Catholic President, he said, would be under far stronger pressure than we have yet brought to bear on the White House to use the full powers of the office to see to it that all men are accorded the decency and dignity of equality of opportunity. The Catholic record in this regard is, on the whole, better than anyone else's."

Thus, Mr. Murray commented, in asking a Catholic candidate to declare himself on the provision of the First Amendment, "we are asking the candidate only to reaffirm the teaching of the fathers of the first great Catholic colony in this land. If he is able to reassure us on this point, he has as much right as any other man to knock on the White House door. More accurately — for he has the right to knock in any case — he has the right to expect us to attend his campaign with open-minded interest and with no slightest suspicion of bigotry."

Moreover, Mr. Murray said, the best studies in rural sociology done anywhere in America have been undertaken in recent years under Catholic auspices. Therefore, he said, a Catholic President might be better advised as to farm policies than any recent White House occupant.

Mr. Murray lauded the efforts of Pope Pius XII in the postwar years to encourage disarmament. These efforts "have stirred the admiration and gratitude of all men of good will, regardless of religious affiliation," he said.

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