

Famed Italy Stigmatist Padre Pio Builds Hospital For Poor

The author of the following article is a member of the Rescue Bureau of the N.C.W.C. News Service. He has returned from a tour of southern Italy where he went to make a first-hand report on the area's developments and interview its outstanding Catholic personalities.

By FATHER JAMES I. TUCEK
(N.C.W.C. News Service)

San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy—Fidelity and clarity go hand in hand. The one glorifies, the other sanctifies. These words, which Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, the famed stigmatist Capuchin priest, once wrote to one of his spiritual children, have become the cornerstones of his hospital here, The House for the Relief of Suffering.

HEMILETY AND clarity are everywhere in the little world that clusters about the Capuchin monastery of Our Lady of Grace. They are written on the facade of the new 300-bed hospital. They are felt in the silence of the pious congregation attending the stigmatist's Mass at 4:30 in the morning.

They are apparent in the conduct of the spiritual and physical invalids who come here from every part of the world for relief. They are the predominant theme, the motive for every word and action performed on this desert mountain of Gargano.

It is true that the thousands who come to San Giovanni Rotondo come to attend Padre Pio's Mass and go to confession to him. But even there his personality escapes the faithful. When you attend this Mass, you forget about Padre Pio and are drawn to concentrate on the true meaning of the sacrifice.

ONE OF HIS regular penitents said to me:

"In the confessional Padre Pio loses his personality. He is a simple tool in God's hands. He is joyful with the joyful, suffers with the suffering, weeps with the sorrowful. Yet he refuses the least compromise. Where there is a matter of violating God's laws, he seems at times to be almost brutal, but only as the doctor's scalpel seems brutal cutting into rotten flesh."

If you spend only one or two days at San Giovanni Rotondo, you understand what one bishop wrote after his visit there: "There are no bodies at San Giovanni Rotondo; there are only souls."

Everyone is praying. There is a constant flow of faithful entering and leaving the small monastery church. Everything focuses on the altar and the confessional. There are usually the focal points: Padre Pio is the magnet that draws them there. Here humility is most in evidence. In the hospital, charity is most in evidence.

In 1940 a handful of men gathered in Padre Pio's cell and joined him in making the first plans for the hospital. It was then that he himself gave it the name which was to be a simple description of its function: The House for the Relief of Suffering.

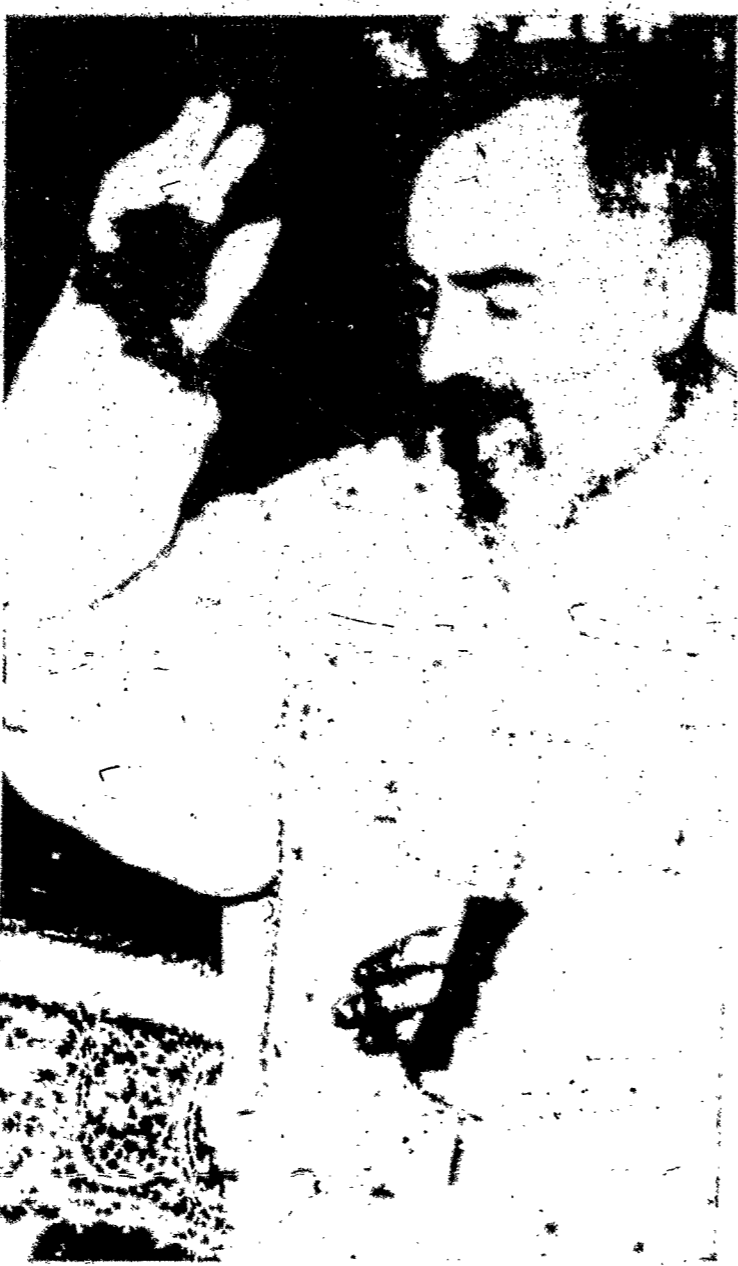
TEN YEARS ago, on April 16, 1947, the picket first struck at the rock of Mount Gargano to prepare the foundation. The hospital was finally dedicated in late 1953 in the presence of Cardinal Lecaro, Archbishop of Bologna, and with the blessing of Pope Plus XII.

From the beginning there was no thought that Padre Pio would have any part in the hospital other than in its conception and in encouraging its completion. However, last year Pope Plus XII himself acknowledged Padre Pio as the hospital's founder and designated him director for life.

At the same time the Pope assigned the hospital to the management of the Congregation of Third Order Franciscans of Our Lady of Grace under Padre Pio's leadership.

The House for the Relief of Suffering was built at a cost of approximately one and a half million dollars. Under the management of laymen, members of the Third Order Franciscan, it is staffed by the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

It is a complete and modern hospital in every detail, including among its facilities a helicopter airport on the rooftop for



Padre Pio's bleeding hands are visible as he gives blessing at Mass. He is marked with cruciform wounds of Christ.

low monks who know several seen and experienced on Mount Gargano: Things spiritual in the work with souls, and things material in the new constructions. The essence of it all was summed up by Cardinal Lecaro.

"Where God is, there is charity and love. Do you not notice it at San Giovanni Rotondo? Yes, The whole world has noticed it. God is here. Exultantly, charitably and love must also be here."

There are many things to be

French War Hero Visits Daughter In America

Oregon City—(NC)—France's most decorated World War II hero came here to visit his daughter, Mrs. Don McEachran, a member of St. John parish in Oregon City.

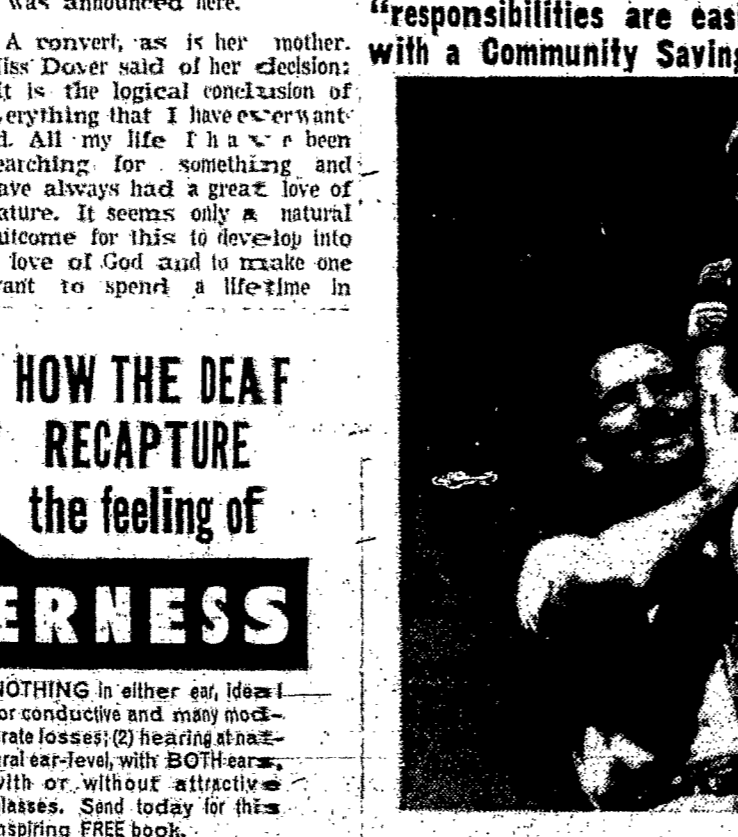
Albert Tjebelle hadn't seen his daughter, Ginette, since she married McEachran in France, shortly after VE day and left for Oregon 12 years ago.

Both he and his daughter played a big part in France's defense. MR. TJEBELLE won the highest military award of his country—the Legion of Honor—for his bravery in World War II, and also the Military Medal, second highest award. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre four times and France's Escape Medal three times, in addition to eight lesser awards.

During World War II he was a key member of the French underground in the city of Tourville. Ginette, a member of the Red Cross, helped rescue Allied wounded along the German lines in the last stages of the war.

Mr. Tjebelle is seeing Ginette's four children for the first time during his visit to Oregon City.

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Oberammergau Prepares For 1960

By FATHER PLACID JORDAN, O.S.B.

Oberammergau — (NC) — To be chosen for a part in the world-famed Passion Play here, no matter how modest it may be, means so much to the girls in this Bavarian village that they are willing to have their weddings postponed, sometimes for years.

The reason lies in the fact that only unmarried girls and women, up to the age of 35, are eligible for participation in the play staged every 10 years.

THIS TRADITION has been followed ever since the play was first presented, some 300 years ago. It will once again be strictly enforced by the committee to be elected by the municipality of Oberammergau early next year to prepare the next presentation of the play, which will be held in 1960 to coincide with the International Eucharistic Congress that another tradition is observing of Munich.

The committee must see to it with equal strictness. Only native-born Oberammergau citizens or residents of more than 20 years standing can be members of the cast, with the exception of children to whom the rule does not apply.

As a matter of fact an American boy was allowed to take part in the play when it was last held in 1950. Some 300 children who will form the choir and orchestra of the next play are already being trained for their future roles.

In 1950 the cast included 600 women and 800 men. Next Spring about the same number will have to be chosen. Then the men who have been selected will start letting their hair and beards grow, and the women who contemplate marriage will know that they will have to wait until the autumn of 1960 for their wedding days.

Wood carver Hans Schwaighofer who gave a masterful performance as Judas by the 1950 play is likely to be appointed production director this time, succeeding Johann Georg Lang who served for three consecutive terms.

Schwaighofer is a teacher at the school which turns out craftsmen for the village's most important industry, wood carving. It traces its origins to the Benedictine monastery of Etal near here, and the men and women engaged in it often are called "The Lord's Own Wood Carvers."

Nearly half of the village's 5,000 people are engaged in wood

K. C. Chaplain
Sacramento — (NC) — Bishop Joseph T. McGucken, of Sacramento is the new state chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, succeeding Auxiliary Bishop Alden Bell of Los Angeles.

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First Friday
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Today and tomorrow are days of special devotion for Catholics.
Today, Friday, is the First Friday of the month of August, a day dedicated in honor of our Lord's Sacred Heart.
Tomorrow, First Saturday, honors the Blessed Virgin Mary's Immaculate Heart.
Mass and Holy Communion are recommended for both days. Many parishes list First Friday late afternoon or evening Mass. Consult parish bulletins for Mass schedule.

Science Courses To Be Started
St. Louis — (RNS) — A formal science course will be introduced for the first time this September in all St. Louis archdiocesan elementary schools.
The program, based on Catholic themes receives wide reception throughout the area, and through it, the kindergarten has gained such prestige that Father Burns will expand to accommodate applicants next year.

Have Diapers, Will Travel
Aodan, Japan — The little singers from the Maryknoll kindergarten and nursery school here are so good a sponsor came looking for them to put them on radio.
A well-known milk company from Kyoto asked to sponsor the singing kindergarten class from the mission of Father Constantine F. Burns, M.M., of Toledo, Ohio, over a local radio station.

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Keep Order's Rules, Pope Tells Nuns

Castellano — (RNS) — Pope Plus XII, in the second of a series of three talks he is broadcasting to cloistered nuns throughout the world, told them they should wholeheartedly accept the rules of their orders without any "legalistic" spirit of resistance.

He stressed that cheerfulness, work, prayer and self-sacrifice constituted their way of life as virgins consecrated to God.

The Pontiff's message was broadcast in French from his summer home here, where he is expected to remain in residence until November. In his first talk, a week before, he told the cloistered nuns in 3203 convents around the world that each of them must seek God in different ways, according to her own background, culture and capacity.

Noting that some nuns have suffered breakdowns from struggling continuously with obligations supported only painfully, Pope Plus said that "no sentence order" will exempt candidates who agree to obey some rules and refuse to abide by others.

THE POPE SAID that "what one expects first of all from nuns is simplicity and humility."
This means, he explained, "that all desire to become noticed should be put aside, as well as all desire to be admired by others, which was what the Pharisees wanted, but which Our Lord severely reprimanded in the Sermon on the Mount."

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