

New Book Describes

'Jewishness' Of Our Lord

Father Joseph P. Brennan of St. Bernard's Seminary comments in the following article on the "Jewishness of Christ" as outlined in a just-published book "The Bridge, Volume 3," by Rev. John M. Oesterreicher. Next week, Father Brennan will review other aspects of the book.

With the coming of Advent, our thoughts begin to center on the appearance in our midst of the only-begotten Son of God.

He might have chosen to be born in Greece's Golden Age, or in Imperial Rome, or in highly cultivated China.

Jesus might have been born even in our own wonderfully technical age. And yet, mysteriously, He chose to be born a Jew, a descendant of Abraham and David, a son of a Jewish maiden, a citizen of a Jewish community. A Jew he was born, a Jew he died.

The first twelve men whom He chose to be the foundation of His Church were also Jews. Peter the Rock, and Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles, were Jews, and so too were all those thousands of fervent Christians who formed the nucleus of the infant Church.

There is a profound mystery in this Jewishness of Christ,

mystery that is too much neglected by us.

It pervades the New Testament—the liturgy is saturated with it. The failure to enter fully into this mystery blinds us to much of the splendor and brilliance of our own religion.

Why is it, for example, that during the Easter Vigil, as we gather in anticipation of the Lord's resurrection, we are directed to pray that "the whole world may become children of Abraham, and enter into the heritage of Israel?"

Why is it that during the marriage ceremony the priest calls down upon the bride and groom the blessing of "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob?"

And why, at our daily Mass, do we find the Church praying with the words of David, "Israel's poor king, and of Isaias, prophet of Jerusa? Why do we call to mind the sacrifice of Abel, or the great Melchisedek, or "our father Abraham?"

Perhaps it has never occurred to us to be puzzled by the intrusion of these Hebrew names into our Christian life. We may never have asked ourselves: Am I a child of Abraham? Do I belong to the Israel

of God? Does the blessing of Abraham's God mean anything to me?

The answer to these questions is, of course, an emphatic Yes! Otherwise the Church would not rely so heavily on the heritage of Israel in her public worship, and Pope Pius XI would not have said, "Abraham is called our father because spiritually we are Semites."

"Salvation is of the Jews," Christ told the Samaritan woman at the well.

That truth, with all the richness of history and doctrine that it implies, is earning in for an increased amount of study among Catholic scholars. Foremost among the specialists in this field is Father John M. Oesterreicher, who is himself a convert from Judaism. For many years now he has led a movement for a better understanding between Christians and Jews, an understanding based on accurate, sympathetic knowledge.

It was to foster this scholarly dialogue between the two groups that Father Oesterreicher founded the Institute of Judaic-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University in Newark, N.J.

THE RESULTS of Father Oesterreicher's labors have been

rich beyond expectations. In 1952 appeared his book called "Walls Are Crumbling," the story of seven Jewish philosophers who discovered Christ.

It was in this book that many Catholics, in this country at least, first discovered Edith Stein, the brilliant philosopher and Carmelite nun who was as much at home in the writings of Thomas Aquinas and John of the Cross, as she was in those of contemporary thinkers.

She died a victim of Hitler's anti-Semitism, but her life was offered for her people. Who can forget her interview with the Gestapo when, instead of the compulsory greeting: Hell Hitler! she boldly began: Praised be Jesus Christ!

Since 1952, Father Oesterreicher has been at work on an even more ambitious project, a year-book devoted to themes of interest to both Christians and Jews. In 1956 appeared Volume 1 of "The Bridge" and in 1957 Volume 2. These two works, acclaimed by Catholics and Jews alike, have now been joined by Volume 3.

NEXT WEEK — Jews and Christians learn about each other.

Monk In A Duck

London — (RNS) — A Norwegian Cistercian monk has completed a course at the British Army's School of Amphibious Warfare in North Devonshire.

He is Brother John, one of the Cistercians of the Strict Observance, or Trappists, whose monastery is on Caldey Island, two miles off the coast of South Wales.

Brother John was taught how to handle and maintain an army DUCK—an amphibious vehicle which the monks bought to solve the difficulty of getting cattle from their island farm to the market on the mainland.

Many nationalities are represented in the thriving Cistercian community on Caldey. The best-known enterprise is the manufacture of high grade perfume which has already been introduced into the Irish, English and American markets.



Casey Jones Widow Dies

Jackson, Tenn. — (NC) — The low, mournful wail of the "Cannon Ball Express" once thrilled citizens of the Mississippi-Tennessee region of the South, only to be abruptly silenced by its tragic wreck and the sudden death of one of America's legendary heroes, Casey Jones, on April 30, 1900.

In a less dramatic manner, America lost close personal contact with one of her heroines with the passing of Casey's widow, the former Miss Jane Brady, 82, who died Nov. 22, at a nursing home here.

In an era when radio, television and the movies were looking for a "story," Casey's widow became something of a legend herself with her many recountings of the hero of the "Cannonball Express," who instructed his fireman to jump while he stayed at the throttle of the engine.

Requiem Mass was said in St. Mary's Catholic Church here by the pastor, Father Vincent Hines, Casey's widow, who first met him while serving tables at her mother's boarding house, was laid to rest beside her husband at Calvary Cemetery.

Pope To Receive Fatima Skull Cap

Fatima — (NC) — A few white skull caps is on its way to Pope John XXIII. It is a gift from the congregation of Our Lady of Fatima and had been sent through the Apostolic Nunciature in Lisbon.

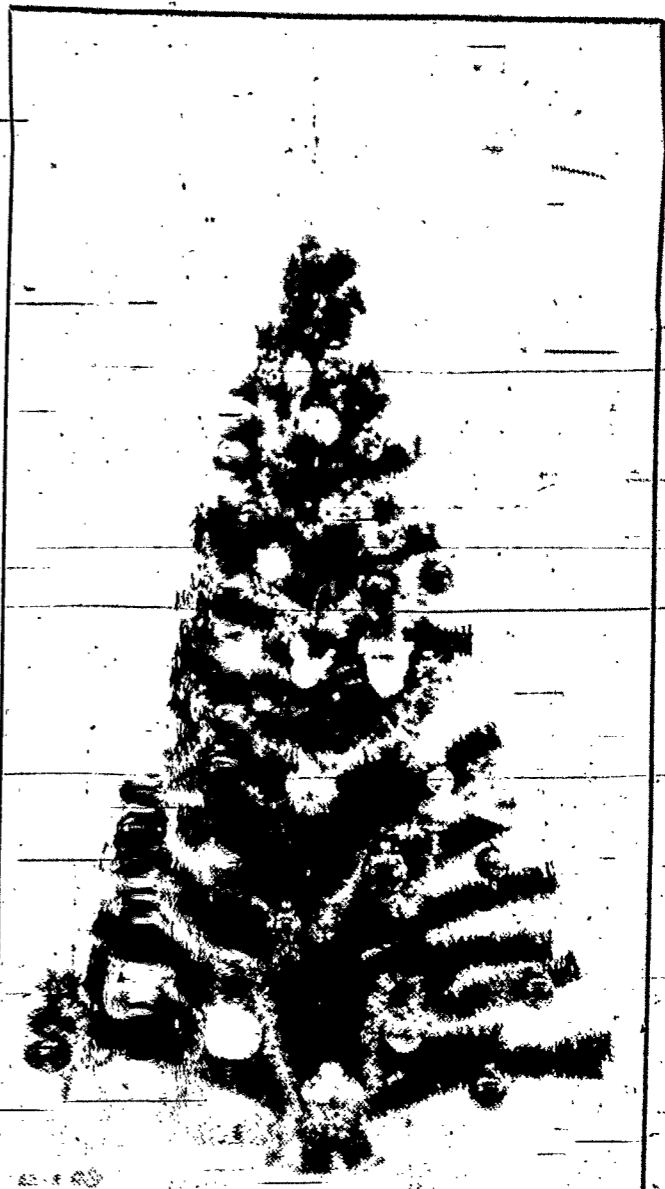
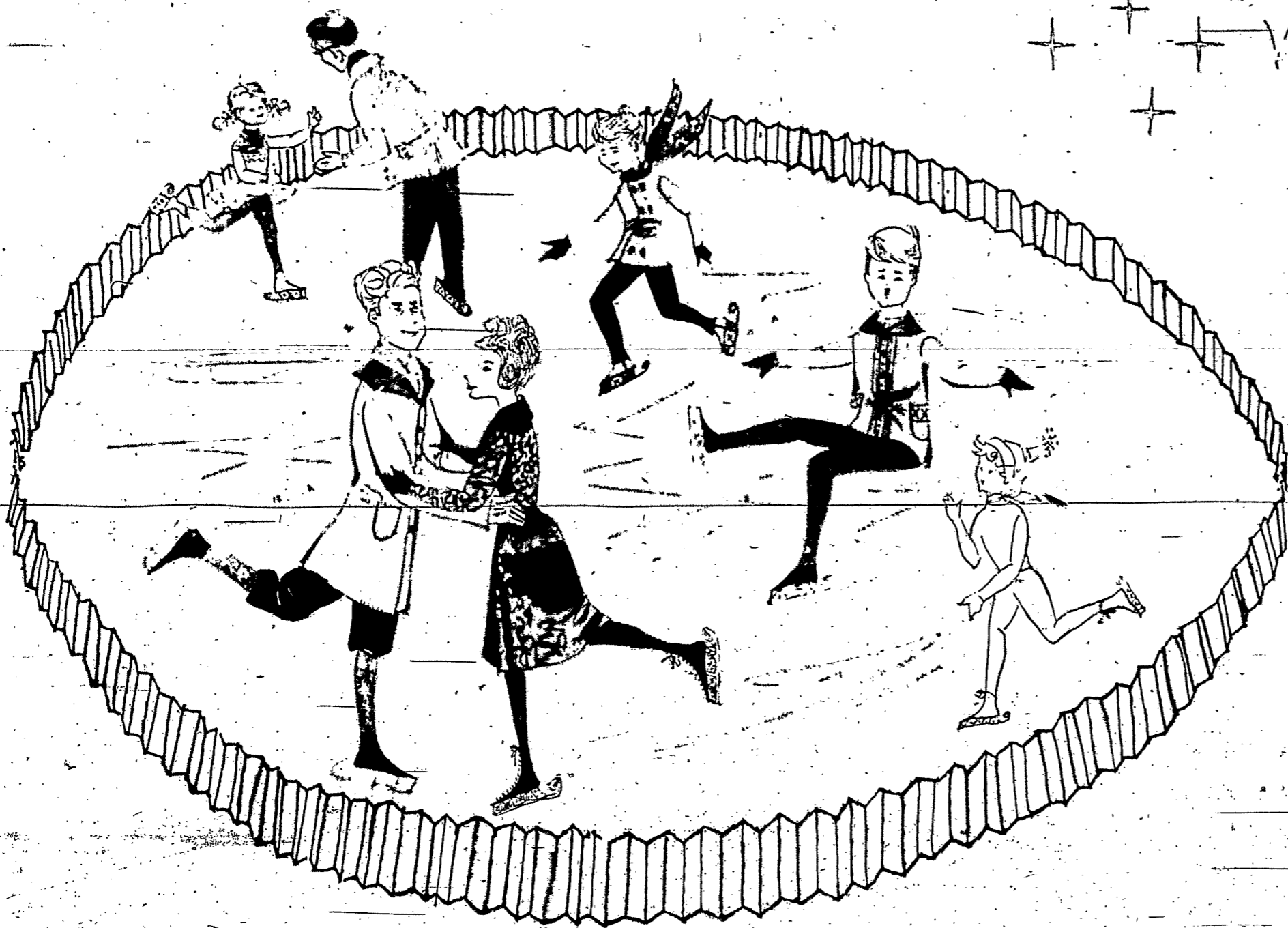
Jungle Priest With Friend's Head

Brooklyn — (RNS) — "I may have lost my head," comments Joseph (Cecilia) director of St. Anthony's Welfare Center in the Bronx and author of the book, "Jungle Priest," a former missionary among the Indians of the upper Amazon River, inspected this trophy at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, known widely as "The Jungle Priest," Mgr. Cecilia said of his calling: "I traveled in my mighty hammock without my fins, my eyes clatching my rifle in one hand and my rosary beads in the other."

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