

BOOK SHELF

New Book On Prayer

By SISTER MARGARET TERESA
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Approach To Prayer, by Dom Hubert Van Zeller. Sheed '53. 120 pp. \$2.50.

This is "everybody's" book, written in the clear, golden strength and simplicity that has come to be Dom Van Zeller's hallmark. The content is one small proof that eternity will be forever new—for when Dom Van Zeller examines this endlessly discussed subject, the relation of God to us in prayer, the old truths are radically surprising, newly realized.

That gnawing worry we have about the meaningfulness of our daily prayer is boldly answered.

"The truth is that God, almighty God, waits upon us, and that the instant He has our attention, we are praying—and this is nothing to our credit, no outcome of our systematic endeavor, but a grace. Prayer is supernatural, grace is supernatural—it is God Who will see to it what we have to do is what He wants."

"Even if a soul prays chiefly for personal advantage, there is still the idea of God bestowing that advantage. The prayer may not be a very good prayer, but it cannot be a bad one. The idea of God bestowing advantages could not have been arrived at without the assistance of grace."

"Man does not create his prayers to God; he makes them up out of existing grace—out of the prayer of God. Man may think that his prayers come out of his head, but in fact they come out of the presence of God praying in his soul."

IF WE SO much as go to our place of prayer with intent to speak to God, it is already happening. The simple example used is that of the difference between a child's thinking of his absent mother and the mother's thinking of God. If he longs for his mother, visualizes her, he still has not her presence; but if he thinks of God, would speak with God—there He is! and when He is present to the desiring heart, grace, the very breath of divine life, is our life.

Laziness was perhaps the greatest obstacle in the past; we drifted away on the currents of lazy thought in the very presence of the Blessed Sacrament—like going to meet someone at the train and then leaving him in the waiting-room."

But Dom Van Zeller doesn't believe in bothering with the past of our prayer-life. Now we can pray—all we need do is be awake to Him, or truer, want to be with Him; if, as you sit with your mother, your thoughts trailed off, or you even shut an eye, not wanting to see—would not love you less nor refuse to speak to you when you wake. She might even wake you, finally!

Nobody says it is easy to sustain prayer. Yet after thinking of it over, you can't offhand think of anything easier to sustain!

rub is in the "sustain," our one task is to be willing, to turn the slippery mind gently back to the Heart of our heart, to do so again and again without fuss, for the whole time of prayer, for the whole duration of life, perhaps. An easy fate—to confront Love, and trust Him to bring us on to Him.

With the same sureness Dom Van Zeller analyzes that interior penance or control of the ego that keeps us ready for prayer: charity, and abandonment of all idols. Discouragement is an idol, fear is one, "see-plains" of ourselves that somebody persists in puncturing is one.

An ambition, a mania, some stopgap we have set up for our poor feelings when people have failed us—these are idols. We can cut these away, by simple resolute concentration on ourselves with God (Who has not taken away any of His love) and with His Will this minute and this day.

"We're always talking," he said, "about how much the Church assists in scout work, but it is an undeniable fact that scouting aids the Church beyond measure in its work to create tomorrow's citizens."

"Catholics must remember that our youth are being trained for two worlds—the world here and the world hereafter. The character building and citizenship program of the scouts, along with the teachings

of the Church will achieve this. He said scout chaplains have a duty of encouraging Catholic boys to join the Scout movement.

Msgr. George M. Dowd of Franklin, Mass., national director of the Catholic committee on Scouting, called on Catholic laymen to volunteer as leaders in scout activities.

"It is not enough," he said, "to encourage boys to become scouts. Once they join we must have Catholic laymen who will offer their time and energy to train these boys and who will show to the boys that they realize the importance of scouting."

Al A. Kirk of Chicago, national director of Catholic service for scouts, introduced a new Catholic program to encourage high school boys to take part in scout activities. Under this program special medals will be awarded to outstanding scouts in the Explorer division.

Msgr. Armand M. Kerlec, pastor of Annunciation church in the Archdiocese of New Orleans, was host to the meeting of scouting officials from the Lafayette, Alexandria, Metairie-Birmingham, Natchez-Jackson and Little Rock dioceses.



Plan Confraternity Meeting

Clergymen are shown above at a preliminary planning meeting for the Tenth Regional Congress of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine on Friday, Feb. 13. Congress will be held in Rochester at the Columbus Civic Center and the Sheraton Hotel on Sunday and Monday, Oct. 11 and 12. Standing, from left, are: Rev. George G. St. John, Albany; Rev. Edward J. Soares, New York; Rev. Patrick J. Woods, Buffalo;

Very Rev. Msgr. Charles M. Walsh, New York; Rev. James A. McCloskey, Syracuse; seated are: Rev. Albert H. Schnacky, Rochester; Rev. Peter and J. Guherich, Field Representative, National Center, C.C.D., Washington, D.C.; Rt. Rev. Msgr. John E. M'Naney, Chancellor of the Diocese of Rochester; and Rev. Michael J. Quinn, Brooklyn.

Korea

GI's Example Spurs Converts

Washington — (NC) — U.S. servicemen and their chaplains have played a major role in the current Korean convert boom, an Irish missionary from Seoul, Korea, said here.

"I have a firm conviction that the growth of the Church in Korea is due in large part to the example and the help given by both chaplains and Catholic servicemen," declared Father Brian Geraghty, S.S.C.

"The good performed, the charity offered, the sacrifices made by the GI in Korea, I don't think have been equaled anywhere in the world," he stated in an interview here.

Father Geraghty, a 50-year-old career missionary from Galway, Ireland, has spent half his life serving in Korea. Since 1949 he has been Superior of Columban Fathers in Korea, with headquarters in Seoul.

He credits the U.S. servicemen and their chaplains with playing a large part in the astounding growth of the Church in Korea—31,000 adult converts in 1952, almost 60,000 in 1953. With continued peace and enough priests, he adds, the country's current Catholic population of 350,000 could reach the million mark by 1965.

During the Korean conflict he opened the Columban house in Seoul to U.S. chaplains for days of recollection and relaxation. Some of the services he conducted himself, but his chief activity on these occasions, Father Geraghty says with a grin, was "in the kitchen department."

THE VETERAN missionary was one of the last people to leave Seoul when the Reds invaded the city early in the conflict. He was one of the first foreign civilians to return.

He headed a team of Columban Fathers who served as volunteer auxiliary chaplains on the Pusan front during the darkest days of fighting. In what little spare time he had left, he gave himself selflessly to caring for refugee priests and laymen from the north.

From firsthand observation, Father Geraghty describes himself as "a great supporter of the GI."

Pray The Rosary

EARN MORE CURRENT ANNUAL RETURN



Missionary

Boston — (RNS) — The Very Rev. James Schuck, O.F.M., recently named Titular Bishop of Avila and Prelate Nililus of Chikalandia in Brazil, will be consecrated at the Holy Cross cathedral here on Feb. 24 by Cardinal Cushing of Boston. The rite will be televised locally. Now working in the Franciscan mission in Brazil, Father Schuck was one of five priests and nine brothers who started Catholic mission work in the interior of Brazil in 1956. He is a former faculty member of St. Bonaventure (N.Y.) University.

Scouting Aids Church, Prelate Says

New Orleans — (NC) — The importance of the Boy Scout movement to the Church was emphasized by Bishop Richard O. Gerow of Natchez-Jackson, episcopal moderator of scouting in the United States, at the first province wide conference on Scouting here.

"We're always talking," he said, "about how much the Church assists in scout work, but it is an undeniable fact that scouting aids the Church beyond measure in its work to create tomorrow's citizens."

"Catholics must remember that our youth are being trained for two worlds—the world here and the world hereafter. The character building and citizenship program of the scouts, along with the teachings

Mass Opens Tri-Faith Chapel

Providence — (NC) — The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was the first service in the new tri-faith chapel just completed on the Brown University, May Arthur T. O'Connell, chaplain to the Catholic students at Brown University and Pembroke College, offered the Mass.

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