

America's Jubilee

America, national weekly magazine published by the Jesuit Fathers, will mark its 50th anniversary this April.

Its first issue appeared April 17, 1909, with the blessing of Pope St. Pius X. The jubilee will be marked with the blessing of Pope John XXIII.

Two Cardinals will attend the anniversary Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, April 5. Cardinal Spellman will preside at the Mass and Cardinal Cushing will give the sermon.

This impressive array of popes and princes of the Church who have paused to bless the magazine indicates its importance in their eyes. America, nonetheless, has only 50,000 subscribers—less than the Courier-Journal—even though the magazine is geared to have a nationwide appeal.

The caliber of the men who write for America makes it deserving of a much wider audience than it has at present.

One of the few Catholic publications in this country that can be described, strictly speaking, as a journal of opinion, it has been many times hailed for its stellar role in interpreting political, social, cultural and moral problems in the light of Catholic teachings.

Jubilee greetings have been sent to America not only by Pope John XXIII, but by President Eisenhower, Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell, Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, former Spanish Foreign Minister Alberto Marín-Artajo, and scores of other notables, Catholic and Non-Catholic. The senders include prominent churchmen, statesmen, scholars, authors, editors and sociologists.

In his message, Pope John declared that "the task of editing a weekly Catholic review is, indeed, an arduous one that calls for conspicuous competence in philosophy and theology, as well as letters, apostolic courage counselled by prudence, and filial loyalty to the teachings of Holy Mother Church."

"There is every reason for rejoicing," he added, "when a review can look back, as America can, over 50 years of consistent service in a cause so noble as that of truth, religion and social service."

President Eisenhower declared that America "has won a fine reputation as a scholarly and responsible magazine." He said that "with a staff of dedicated writers, it has earned an honored place in the field of journalism and renders an important service to the national community."

America will mark its anniversary by publishing a special commemorative issue of some 160 pages on April 11. It will be the largest of the 2,600 issues which have been produced week by week without interruption by the 102 Jesuits from every section of the United States and Canada who have served the magazine in editorial or business management posts for periods ranging from one to 33 years.

Dean of America's staff is Father John LaFarge, who held the post of editor-in-chief from 1944 to 1948 and still serves as associate editor. Nationally famous as an exponent of the Church's social teachings, he is the founder of the Catholic Interracial Movement. Leaders of all faiths have praised his long and consistent efforts on behalf of the Negro here and elsewhere.

Father Davis is the eighth in the list of distinguished Jesuits who have filled the post of editor-in-chief.

The first was the magazine's founder, Father John J. Wynne, who also was the father of the Catholic Encyclopedia. The second was Father Thomas J. Campbell, scholarly historian, preacher and former Jesuit provincial. He was followed by Father Richard Tierney, who was known in his time as "the journalistic spokesman" of the Catholic Church in the U.S.

When Father Tierney retired in 1925, he was replaced by Father Wilfrid Parsons, brilliant political analyst. The fifth editor-in-chief was Father Francis X. Talbot, who is equally remembered as the founder of the Catholic Poetry Society of America and the inspiration of the Catholic Book Club.

Father LaFarge was the sixth editor-in-chief. He was followed by Father Robert C. Hartnett, a scholar and controversialist of impressive stature, and lastly by Father Davis, a gifted essayist and a recognized authority on Spain.

America goes directly to about 50,000 persons or libraries each week. Taking into account non-subscribers into whose hands it passes, its circulation becomes much more impressive. America's jubilee goal is 75,000 subscribers and 3,000 America Associates. These Associates are banded in regional groups dedicated to fostering support of America's apostolate. During 1959, they will sponsor fund-raising dinners in major cities throughout the country.

In an article to appear in the jubilee issue, Father Davis stressed America's influence both here and abroad. He said the magazine is "clipped for dossiers used at State Department briefings" and "even Moscow's Literaturnaya Gazeta is one of our subscribers." Moreover, he stated, its editorials are frequently reprinted not only in the Catholic press, but also in the U.S. and overseas secular press.

The current staff of America includes literary editor Father Harold C. Gardiner, who has been with the magazine for 18 years; Father Robert A. Graham, an authority on the Vatican and European affairs; Father Benjamin L. Masse, whose special field is Catholic social thought; and Father Vincent S. Kearney, expert on Asia and the Near East.

A practical conclusion for all of us would be to subscribe to America.



Twice-a-week the editorial staff of America, national Jesuit weekly, meets to coordinate the magazine's articles. In the center foreground is editor-in-chief Father Thurston N. Davis, a New Yorker, and the eighth to hold the post since the magazine began on April 17, 1909. Left to right are: Jesuit Fathers Lester A. Linz, L. C. McHugh, Harold C. Gardiner (liter-

ary editor), Donald R. Campson, Eugene K. Gilhane (managing editor), Walter M. Abbott, Neil G. McCluskey (education editor), Vincent S. Kearney, Benjamin L. Masse, Robert A. Graham, and John LaFarge, nationally-known founder of the Catholic Interracial Movement.

Seduced By Secularism

Are We No Longer Christian?

Reading, Pa. — (NC) — A Catholic's work in the lay apostolate "must not be confined to that of being solely an 'anti,'" a Catholic editor said here.

"On the question of racialism one finds a rather strange affinity between the professional anti-communists, the professional segregationists and the professional anti-Semites," declared Gerard E. Sherry, "yet the competent Catholic cannot belong to any of these groups."

Mr. Sherry, managing editor of the Catholic Review, Baltimore archdiocesan newspaper, made the statement in an address to the annual meeting of the Berkshire-Montgomery regional Holy Name Union.

"Discrimination and segregation have as their foundation a principle which is a direct denial of Catholic doctrine," Mr. Sherry said.

"Irrational and immoral treatment of men, based upon an accident of color or birth, is possible only if there is no real human race, but merely a congregation of races, some human and some less than human."

However, he pointed out, the human race is one because it has a common origin, a common Redeemer and a common destiny.

"The basic unity of the human race is such an absolute truth that the minute a Catholic consciously denies it he has committed the sin of heresy," he said. "If I will not accept a Negro or a Jew as my brother, I cannot claim Christ as my older brother, Mary as my mother, or God as my Father."

Those who call for a "gradual approach" to the problem of racial discrimination "should take a course in simple mathematics," Mr. Sherry continued.

"How gradual can we get?" he asked. "Ninety-nine years — 1865-1959 — is quite a time, and makes quite a gradual scale of progress."

The Catholic editor asserted that racial bigotry is not confined to the South, and he stated that "some of our fellow Catholics in the North are as guilty as other citizens."

"We see this prejudice in housing, in labor, in business and in very many other areas

of political and social life," he said. "Even some of our Catholic organizations practice such prejudice through the medium of the blackball. Such tactics can be legalized in parliamentary fashion. But they are not Catholic and are in our shame."

On the question of anti-communism, Mr. Sherry said, a "woolferous" Catholic minority has been "more noteworthy for the volume and pitch of their screams than for the effectiveness of their work."

Instead, he said, "if there is to be a Catholic contribution to this anti-communist fight, it must first of all be Catholic. . . . As Catholics our first concern must be with

communism as a heresy."

Communism is unique among heresies, Mr. Sherry pointed out, for being a "heresy of the will." Its power lies in "perverted wills, which have been handed over to hatred and cupidity," he said.

"If this is true," he continued, "an effective Catholic antidote will be found in increasing the power of love. . . . An effective Catholic anti-communism will be found in rekindling the fires of the Christian life in all of the millions of Catholics."

Mr. Sherry asserted that the Christian West today is plagued by a spirit of defeatism and lethargy in the face

of the communist challenge. "What has kicked us," he said, "is the fact that . . . we are no longer truly Christian. We have been seduced by secularism."

He called on Christians to "resolve to grow up" and "face up to complexity, to large areas of gray, to problems that have no solution, to matters that stubbornly refuse to be pigeonholed."

"Men who have seen death conquered can challenge the world," he declared. "Men who have recognized their Lord in the breaking of the bread will dare all in His Name. Men whose joy is exceeding great can do nothing less."

Gloria Tibi, Domine What's POAU Idea On This?

Twice at Mass a Gospel passage is read to the people.

Each time the reading begins with the greeting "Dominus vobiscum — Et cum spiritu tuo." Then the priest announces the Gospel's author, "Sequentia sancti evangelii secundum Mattheum — A continuation of the Gospel according to St. Matthew."

In the early days of the Church, the Gospels were read serially, a chapter today and the next chapter tomorrow and so on — a continuing story. When one Gospel was completed and a new one started, the announcement would be, "Initium sancti evangelii . . ." The beginning of the Gospel . . .

The Church considers the Gospel at Mass not just a chapter of ancient history, holy as its message is. For the Church, Christ is still present to teach us, to guide us by His truth.

That is why the Church bids us stand for the Gospel. We stand as soldiers of Christ, to hear the words of our King, and that is why we salute Him in reply to the priest's announcement of the Gospel, "Gloria tibi, Domine — Glory be to Thee, O Lord."

As we stand to listen to the Gospel we should think of the thousands who even now are in prison, exile or even death because they would not compromise the Gospel message, from Cardinal Mindszenty a prisoner in the city where he should be his bishop down to the least member of the Church who suffers rather than deny Christ.

SERMONETTE

Thou Shalt Not Have Strange Gods

By the REV. RICHARD MADDEN, O.C.D.

If you're superstitious, then you're also irrational, ignorant, cowardly and scrupulous. And don't get mad at me because it's not my indictment. It's Webster's. It came right out of the dictionary.

But far above and beyond the authority of Webster, however, there is the authority of the teaching Church which marks superstition as an offense against the First Commandment of God. In other words, you superstitious fellow, you're not allowed to be superstitious.

Take black cats, for instance. Back in the Middle Ages, people believed that the black cat was a "chum of Satan, sort of a devil's apprentice. Such stupidity, though lessened, still exists in the guy who goes into an atom spin whenever one of them crosses his path. Get it straight. The only danger in a black cat's crossing your path is that you might trip over the blasted thing.

Then there are ladders. Years ago criminals were hanged from ladders. That makes it un lucky to walk under one of them! Again, the only danger present in walking under a ladder is that some painter might fall on your head. And that's painter, not paint. Paint isn't clumsy.

Today, if we spend too much time worrying about your feet, clovers, horseshoes, split peas and other such gimmicks, we won't have any time left to say our prayers. A mustard seed or a pair of dice does not carve our destinies. God does that. And when He makes your life sweet and beautiful by the richness of His grace, don't call that "good luck." Or when He puts a cross on your shoulders and asks you to share His work of redeeming the world don't call that bad luck.

His Divine Providence guards and protects us every minute of our lives. So the next time you knock on wood for good luck, I hope you get splinters.

TB Gateway To Faith

Kyoto, Japan — A dynamic religious correspondence course directed by the Good Shepherd Movement here is having far-reaching effects as evidenced by a letter from a patient in a tuberculosis sanatorium.

Addressed to Father James E. Hyatt, Maryknoll Missioner of Seattle, Washington and director of the movement, the letter was written by a young man critically ill with tuberculosis. Translated from the Japanese, a portion of the letter reads:

"I am a patient in a tuberculosis sanatorium. When I came here four months ago, I was very bitter. I thought that God was very unjust to let me suffer like this, when all my friends were healthy. However, after I had been here for a short while, I met a Catholic patient who told me about your correspondence course. I sent for it.

"And now I want to thank God with all my heart for allowing me to get sick. If I had not become ill, I might have spent my whole life without believing in Christ. I realize now what a fearful thing that would be. My only desire now is to complete my study of Catholic doctrine and become a child of God as soon as possible."

Founded by Father Hyatt, the Good Shepherd Movement is attempting to penetrate Japanese culture with Christian principles through mass communication media.

Taking advantage of the high literacy rate in Japan, Father Hyatt has established a printing plant to publish reams of Catholic material in the Japanese language.

Confession At St. Peter's Ancient Rome Rite Liberates Sinners

By JAMES C. O'NEILL
(N. C. W. C. News Service)

Vatican City — A long, thin staff of wood is the unusual symbol of the special confessors who are to be found in Rome's four major basilicas.

These wooden wands, almost five feet long, mark the confessors of the minor penitentiaries. The name often confuses visitors. But it comes from the word penance and is linked with the power to forgive certain sins reserved to these priests.

The confessors in the Basilicas of St. Peter, St. Mary Major, St. Paul Outside the Walls, and St. John Lateran have very broad powers. They can lift excommunications normally reserved to a bishop and, with the exception of five special categories, they can confess anyone of any sin who comes to them with the proper dispositions.

Among the sins which not even the penitentiaries can absolve are those involving profanation of the Blessed Sacrament, bodily harm to the pope and those excommunications reserved "in a very special manner" to the pope.

In these cases only the Grand Penitentiary, the personal delegate of the pope, can grant absolution. He is always a Cardinal. The office is presently held by His Eminence Nicola Cardinal Canali.

So important is the authority and need for the Grand Penitentiary that he keeps his office even when the pope dies in case there should be a problem of absolution.

During Holy Week Cardinal Canali visits each of the four major basilicas. Seated on a throne he touches the shoulder of hundreds of faithful with his staff. The action symbolizes his office and authority and the ceremony carries with it an indulgence of seven years. Minor penitentiaries perform the same ceremonial act with an indulgence of 300 days attached.

The staff in the hands of the penitentiary reaches out not only to the shoulder of the faithful but back into pre-Christian times. In ancient Rome, rich men often freed their slaves in a ceremony in which they touched the shoulder of the slave with a wooden wand.

"Thus in the Church," explained Father Marcello Muller, rector of the penitentiaries of St. Peter's, "there is preserved the symbolism of the passing from the slavery of sin to the liberty of grace."

Father Muller, a native of Switzerland, is one of the 12 Conventual Franciscans who hear confessions daily in St. Peter's. At St. Mary Major's there are 13 Dominican penitentiaries; at St. John Lateran's, six Franciscans, and at St. Paul's Outside the Walls, seven Benedictines.

Of the 12 penitentiaries at St. Peter's two hear confessions in French, two in Italian, two in English and two in German, with one confessor each in Hungarian, Polish, Spanish and Portuguese.

The newest English speaking confessor is Father Isidore Kowalski, a native of Buffalo, who taught at Buffalo's Bishop Ryan High School for 11 years before coming to Rome. He received his official commission as a penitentiary on March 3 of this year.

The other English speaking confessor is also American, Father Giles Kaczmarek, of Shamokin, Pa., who formerly was rector of the group but who now has been incapacitated by illness.

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