

Another World Is My Parish

By REV. E. CHARLES BAUER

(Father Bauer, author of the following article, was assigned this past June to be chaplain at Newark State School, Newark, N.Y.)

For the priest who has been accustomed to "ordinary" parish work for seventeen years, it is surely true to say that he finds himself in another world when he is assigned to the Chaplaincy of a place like Newark State School for the Mentally Retarded.

Like every priest, he finds himself offering up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass every day, hearing Confessions, distributing Holy Communion, baptizing, visiting the sick, preaching, teaching, counseling and comforting. Like every priest, he stands at the altar, sits in the Confessional, walks to and fro at a Communion railing; he finds himself in and out of the hospital and the schoolroom, behind a desk and the wheel of a car, at the telephone and the typewriter.

But when the newly appointed Chaplain packs his bag at the Rectory and aims the grille of his car out Route 31 towards the Rose Capitol of the world, he feels that he is anticipating the emotions that will take hold of the first man to find himself encased behind the neon-cases of a psychiatric reformatory.

And then he whirrs across the border and drops out his unsteady feet down upon the new terrain. He has arrived. He finds himself a Staff Officer in an institution where there are four thousand patients and a thousand employees. He is part of the Department of Mental Hygiene, and while by no means relinquishing his ties with the Diocese and the Chancery Office, he is employed by the State of New York.

So he finds himself being numbered, tabulated, indexed, finger-printed, inoculated, vaccinated, X-rayed, photographed and examined.

And now his residence is no longer a rectory, but the Chaplain's Office, not in a house, but in the Moss Apartment located in one of the sixty-five buildings in his new world. He no longer goes over to the church for Mass, but offers sacrifice in a lovely little Chapel that in his own quarters during the week; and on Sunday, for six hundred of his sixteen hundred "parishioners", in the Assembly Hall.

Neither does he hear Confessions in church on Saturday afternoons and evenings; but in his office adjoining the Chapel on Saturday mornings for his ambulatory charges, and in various hospitals and infirmaries on Wednesday afternoons for those unable to walk.

THE NEW INCUMBENT does not baptize at a font, but over the rail of one of a hundred cribs in the Children's Building. And he is not called by an anxious daughter to administer the Last Sacraments at a certain number on some street or other, but by a Ward Attendant at the South Dorm. Nor does he wonder how many Communions there will be next Sunday.

He knows that there will be exactly sixty-six, because his Group Five's turn for Confessions next Saturday.

In this new world, there are no late-comers for Mass. Everyone is in the same seat he was in last Sunday, silently waiting at ten minutes of eight for the Sanctuary bell to ring at eight o'clock. And there is no talking or "fooling" during Mass in this church (which might have been a movie hall last Friday night), although these "children" are not being supervised by devout nuns, but by very respectful Ward Attendants, many of them of other Faiths.

Of course, there is no mention, in the announcements, of



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AND HIS SHEEP!—what a different flock this is! So many of them, regardless of their age, in their Baptismal Innocence, definitely destined for heaven because they have so little on earth. So many of them helpless; so many of them endowed with so little, mentally and physically. But practically all of them with one wonderful endowment: cheerfulness.

And he is repeatedly making phone calls, too. Not to arrange for a meeting of the Rosary Society or a Holy Name Breakfast, but to tell the operator that he is going to the "G" Building, then to Girls' Infirmary I B, and then to the O.T. Shop in the West Dorm; or to ask the head carpenter when the man is coming to hang the recently acquired Stations in the Chapel.

The doorman at the Chaplain's Office rings, too—many more times than it did at the Rectory. The visitor, however, has not come from the other side of the city for a Mass card, or from somewhere in the parish to have a marriage difficulty ironed out. No, this caller may be from some distant city, coming to see if there is any hope that his son will ever be able to make his First Communion.

Or it may be a patient, about to be placed in "Employment Status", who has come for some words of advice. Again, it will be a Ward Supervisor, the Director of Education, the Protestant Chaplain, who is calling to arrange some schedule or coordinate some program.

Like his confreres in the parish house, the priest in the Chaplaincy has a lot of desk work, too. But now he uses a dictaphone, to enable him to get out the fifty or sixty letters he must write each month, to compile the endless check-lists needed to keep track of his charges, and to issue memos and bulletins to the employees. And like all his brothers in the priesthood, he fills in many forms and writes many a record.

But, in addition to the regular ones, he is now writing out numerous Requisitions and completing countless Admission Cards. And, instead of counting the sheep in his flock, he is counting their IQ's and M.A.'s—because these psychological factors are so important in determining which of his sheep are capable of the Sacraments and of Religious Instruction.

and the whole Rectory household was so helpful. But now there are a thousand of them being helpful. And that wonderful spirit of friendliness and cooperation goes on and on.

To be sure, this Levite in his new world: "parish" has his problems. And so do his "parishioners" and his co-workers. But everyone is more interested in the other fellow's problems. And that is another happy sight he sees. The kindness, the attention, the devotion which these workers lavish upon the patients cannot but spur him on to greater zeal in his important duties.

Their prime concern must be with the care of the patient's mind and body; his is with the care of the patient's soul. If they are so diligent in their work, what an incentive it is to the diligent performance of his ministrations!

And how anxious he finds them, not only to give the patients the benefit of their own attention, but to make sure that they are never denied the services of the priest. It is, indeed, an inspiration when an Attendant of another Faith will take the time to discuss the situation with a patient who has missed Mass and then consult with the Chaplain on the proper procedure, or when both a doctor and a nurse phone the priest if a momentary patient becomes critically ill.

In this different kind of world, mistakes are made and undesirable conditions exist just as they do in the world we are all used to. There are human failings here, just as well as there. But the mistakes are not planned, the conditions are not promoted and the failings are not condoned. The new Chaplain soon becomes aware of this.

That is why he finds himself so often in his little Chapel, begging the Good Shepherd to help him and all the members of his flock to avoid the mistakes, to improve the conditions, to overcome the failings that are inevitable in any fold, even where there is a shepherd; just as the Pastor finds himself so often in his great grand Cathedral saying the selfsame prayer.

Yes, this is where he makes contact. It is here before the Tabernacle that he realizes his new world is not so far out in space after all. This little "kingdom" has the same basic need as any kingdom; these sheep, like all sheep, need a shepherd.

That is why conditions are as good as they are at Newark State School, because there he is in the midst, the King of kings, enthroned on the altar in Saint Therese's Chapel, the Good Shepherd, Master of all His surveys.



St. Therese's Chapel at Father Bauer's residence

New 'Patriotic' Bishop Consecrated In China

Hong Kong — (RNS) — Kirin Daily News published in Changchun, China, reported the "consecration" of a Father Wang Wei-Min as "bishop" of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Kirin, a Chinese Province.

The Kirin paper also warned Catholics to remain vigilant against conspiracies and sabotage by the Vatican and against all elements opposing socialism. It also urged them "to continue your anti-imperialistic patriotic campaign, unceasingly and resolutely, against the reactionary and political intrigues of the Vatican and its agents."

UNDER THE sponsorship of the Chinese Communist government a schismatic "National Catholic Church" has been set up by the country's so-called Patriotic Catholic Associations.

(The 1959 official Vatican Yearbook lists the Kirin diocese as vacant.) The newspaper report said that among those present at Father Wang's "consecration" in Changchun were Archbishop Ignatius P'i Shu-shih of Shengyang (Mukden) and government officials.

Poland's Faith 'Superbly Strong'

Czestochowa — (RNS) — Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, Primate of Poland, declared here that the faith of Polish Catholics is "superbly strong" and any "attempts to undermine the Church" in this country would fail.

Addressing an estimated 100,000 faithful making their annual pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, the cardinal warned that "certain circles" in the country were entertaining the hope that the Polish nation "would grow indifferent toward the faith and that the people would gradually abandon their priests and churches."

"But although we have no fear of such a thing happening," he said, "all the same we must uphold and steadfastly support our Church."

The primate spoke before an altar on a balcony of the Jasna Gora monastery where the famous Marian shrine is located. Listening below were the thousands of men, women and children who had come on foot, and by wagon, train or motorcycle for their annual devotion to the shrine on the Feastday of the Blessed Lady of Jasna Gora.

For about three hours the worshippers stood patiently for the celebration of a special Mass, the singing of hymns and then the primate's sermon. Meanwhile the nearby stalls selling religious items and refreshments stood neglected.

JASNA GORA has been a religious and patriotic symbol of Polish Catholicism since 1656 when King Jan Kazimierz dedicated the country to Our Lady of Czestochowa, Queen of Poland.

In his sermon Cardinal Wyszynski dealt at length with the importance of the family and of Catholic adherence to the teachings of the Church.

"The Polish land is full of Godly people who know they are born of the spirit of God," he stated. "Throughout history Poland has been subjected to

numerous cross winds which have caused many trees to be uprooted, but despite everything the nation defends the faith and remains young and superbly strong."

"Governments come and go," the primate stressed, "but the family and the Church remain."

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