

SERMONETTE

GOT A BOMB IN YOUR BASEMENT?
by the Rev. James D. Moriarty

A large mortar shell that had been on display in the state museum in Tokyo since the early 1920s has been removed by police to the Forbes Air Force Base after it was found to be "live." Some part-time helpers in the museum had tinkered and pounded on the shell out of curiosity. Air Force armament experts told museum director Stanley Solt that it would have blown off a corner of the building if it had discharged. Mr. Solt said the 10 inch weapon, possibly German or French from World War I, was placed in a storeroom a few years ago. He said he came across it while cleaning up and noticed the firing mechanism was still intact.

Of those thousands who had looked at, touched, and even hampered on this "harmless" shell none dreamed that it still had enough power to destroy them. Fortunately the proper mechanism was not triggered. No one was hurt.

We meet seemingly "harmless shells" every day of our life. As long as the firing mechanism is not triggered then no one gets hurt. But if we foolishly or deliberately trigger the bomb, then we take the chance of spiritual suicide.

For the alcoholic the "harmless shell" may be a bottle of bourbon or perhaps only a beer can be the trigger for a bomb that blows up his sacred existence. As long as he leaves the bottle alone and doesn't let it get inside him, it can cause no harm.

For another it may be a beautiful blonde who also happens to be married or that most charming man who incidentally also happens to have a wife and kids. Some find the desire of a mink or a "caddy" or just plain security attractive enough to let these things blast God right out of their life. Pride, envy, resentment, self-pity demolish man from the inside.

Like the mortar shell a number of apparently harmless objects of our daily life are loaded. Let's be sure we don't pull the trigger. Better let someone who knows his business handle the whole situation.

But if we need help, for the love of God, let's call for help.

Shelters Snag In Politics

Governor Rockefeller's proposed fallout shelter program hit the expected political snag in the New York State Legislature this week.

Democratic chairman Michael H. Prendergast said the Governor's plan was "ridiculous, impractical and morally wrong."

Rockefeller has stated he wants legislation to require property owners to build fallout shelters at their own expense.

Prendergast said he admitted the need for shelters but opposed the mandatory nature of the program. He prefers, he said, community built shelters.

Even Republican lawmakers are reluctant to follow the Governor in his program because 1960, an election year, is no time to add burdens to taxpayers' votes.

The issue, as we see it, is not simply an economic question of "who's going to pay the bill?" but an urgent need to convince the public that such shelters are the only hope of survival in the event of a nuclear attack.

Defense experts admit there is no practical protection for people within miles of an H-bomb's point of detonation. Scientists also point out, however, that the radio-active fallout — particles which settle slowly back to earth after a blast — spreads death far from the target city.

The Federal Civil Defense Administration released statistics which predicted during the first day of a nuclear war, 36,000,000 Americans would be atomized to death.

Within two months an added 36,000,000 would die as victims of fallout even though they were not even near enough to see the bright-as-the-sun blast over a major city. Only two days of war would be needed to eliminate all human life in the country.

The only known way to escape the deadly fallout is to seek the protective shield of the earth's crust — to find survival in underground shelters built with provisions for well over two weeks' living there until the good earth absorbs the fatal radiation.

Some people glibly say, "Who wants to live in a world that's wrecked?"

That, in our opinion, is a coward's way out. It certainly is neither a Christian nor an American outlook.

Catholics are aware of God's commandment to take reasonable care of one's life, to make provision to protect that life from the daily hazards it faces. Today's continuing and universal hazard is death from atomic war.

If such catastrophe occurs there will then be no time to build the needed shelters. Blunt statistics indicate two days of hostilities — with the first attack answered by massive retaliation — will leave the nations as vast graveyards.

Legislators at Albany on both sides of the political fence are in striking agreement that some kind of shelter program is needed. They are divided on the age-old question of cash.

When so many lives are obviously at stake, we cannot see why wise minds of both parties cannot find a mutually satisfactory solution to the stalemate.

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Missions To Negroes, Indians Report Slow Progress

Washington (NO) — The number of U.S. Negro Catholics has risen 35 per cent in the last decade and the number of Indian Catholics 25 per cent.

Negro Catholics now total 615,954, an increase of 217,535 over the 398,419 figure of 1949. Indian Catholics total 124,154, compared with 99,200 in 1949, an increase of 24,954.

These figures are contained in the annual report of the Commission for Catholic Missions among the Colored People and the Indians, which has headquarters here. Father J. B. Tenny, S.S., is secretary of the commission.

(Catholics throughout the Rochester Diocese contributed last Sunday to support mis-

sions to U.S. Negroes and Indians).

In the last decade, Negro converts totaled 100,000, the report stated. Converts during the past year numbered 12,088. One of every 12 U.S. converts to Catholicism is a Negro, according to the report.

NEGRO CATHOLICS in the South increased by 85,000 and in the 45 dioceses outside the South by 218,000. The disparity in the size of the increase is largely due to immigration of southern Negroes. Other parts of the country, the report said.

According to the report, there are seven U.S. States with Negro Catholic popula-

tions of more than 50,000. They are: Louisiana, 70,787; Mississippi, 70,737; Alabama, 58,003; New York, 48,073; Chicago, 42,000; Philadelphia, 40,064; and Galveston, Texas, 36,734.

The number of priests doing mission work among U.S. Negroes is 728, an increase of about 100 over the figures of 10 years ago. During the last decade, Negro converts averaged between 14 and 15 per cent.

There are 404 churches maintained for Negro Catholics, and 348 schools for Negro children. The schools enroll 41,978, an increase of 30 per cent in the last 10 years.

The number of nuns teaching in schools for Negro Catholics in the South is 1,144, an increase of 263 during the decade. Lay teachers number 428, approximately double the number for 10 years ago.

INDIAN CONVERTS to Catholicism during the last decade numbered about 7,500, the report said. The figure for the past year was 811.

The report pointed out, however, that the figures for Indian Catholics "do not cover those who have moved off their reservations. In some cases, the report said, as many as half of the population of a reservation has moved away in recent years.

The report declared that "the making of real Catholics among the Indians has been and is generally a difficult matter." This is because many Indians "cling to their old beliefs and practices," it said.

At present, 416 Catholic churches and chapels are maintained for Indians, of which 34 were built in the last decade. The number of priests serving the Indians is 236, an increase of 16 in 10 years.

Most of the priests working among the Indians are members of religious communities, with the Franciscans, Redemptorists, and Benedictines in that order — supplying the largest number.

There are 38 mission schools with an enrollment of 8,750 students, the highest enrollment figure on record, according to the report.

Six U.S. dioceses have Indian Catholic populations of more than 7,000. They are Gallup, N.M., 18,000; Rapid City, S.D., 14,000; Tucson, Ariz., 10,000; Santa Fe, N.M., 10,000; Fargo, N.D., 4,439; and Helena, Mont., 7,000.

The Commission for Catholic Missions among the Colored People and the Indians was established by the U.S. bishops in 1934. Since then it has assisted practically every Indian and Negro mission in the U.S. with funds from a collection taken up in parishes on the first Sunday in Lent.

Germany, Land Of Lay Apostles

Seattle (NO) — "Germany today is a wide open field for the lay apostolate," according to a German woman who has dedicated her life to apostolic work.

"The days of the false paradise of Hitler are gone and the spiritual vacuum destroyed," said Baroness Elizabeth von Gutenberg, now on a lecture tour of the United States.

"Approximately 49 per cent of West Germany is Catholic," she stated, "but in some parts there are 20,000 to 30,000 Catholics. The priests are overworked and in need of assistance from an active lay apostolate."

She explained that today, as in the days of Hitler, there is still a battle being waged — a spiritual battle. But she expressed hope in Germany's spiritual strength. "The Christian spirit is going strong with only three per cent of the people outside our two major religions — Lutheranism and Catholicism."

According to the Baroness, little national animosity remains in Germany today. "If Hitler would come back now he would have no following," she said. "Had Christianity been as strong in the years between world wars as it is now, a man like Hitler never would have come to power."

The Baroness warned that in a world managed by communism there is no room for "spiritual mediocrity."

Nazism and communism represent "the same type of attack against human dignity," she said. "The great majority of Germans looked upon the recent anti-Semitic incidents with 'disgust and horror,' she added.

The Baroness, whose husband and elder son were among the victims of the Nazi regime, organized a school in Munich after the war to train girls.

When Christianity filled



The Heritage of Ireland

By BRENDAN HOULIHAN

The author of this tribute to his native land is now a teacher in a Dublin high school. He formerly taught at McQuaid Jesuit high school in Rochester while his daughter received special treatment at the St. Vincent's Hospital of the University of Rochester.

In Ireland, rockbarriered fortress nestled in the north Atlantic, we find the only West European nation, never to taste Roman aggression.

On the contrary, we find Irish raids into the Roman bastions of Wales and England serious threats to the all powerful might of the Roman legions.

When Christianity filled

through to Irish shores in pre-Patrick times, it was received with joy culminating in the now well known and sacred history of St. Patrick's official Papal legate of 431 A.D. and himself the son of Roman parents.

WELL KNOWN to us all, what the Catholicism and churches of wars can bring — Ireland alone was left untouched and chosen by God to Christianize the barbaric hordes that shadowed Europe.

Today, Ireland is a land of peace and harmony. It is a land of peace and harmony. It is a land of peace and harmony.

Ireland's love for the missionary fields has never abated — Irish missionary societies today are spread in all corners of the globe. Ireland's exports may not be much in the materialistic world of today yet her spiritual exports must surely reach in or near the top of the world scale.

Love for the freedom of man is part of every Irishman's heritage. Since the Norse invasions of the 9th century followed by the Norman invasions of the 12th, no other nation in the world has endured such intolerable and indescribable sufferings and torment. The Irish race proudly resisted. Their bodies were humiliated yet the spirit survived, a spirit of indomitable courage cast in the moulds of Faith in God and His Blessed Mother.

THE IRISH WIT and humor is accepted as theirs only because the Irish race are, and have been a literary and poetical race. Learned philologists have come to the end of the world, but in this world, belonging as it does,

to the Indo-European family — the Celtic group it is connected with ancient Gaulish which is spoken today in the Breton (France) and Welsh dialects.

No reference to Ireland's standing among the Western nations would be incomplete without reference to the finest school of acting of the Western world, Dublin's "Abbey Theatre."

The pentatonic scales of Irish music help to endear it among music lovers. The lament of its love songs changing rapidly from gladness to pathos render Irish music one of the most varied on this earth.

Despite the rapid changes in the natural order of today, it is a proud boast to make that Christian values and ideals which make the world a better place are still in the hands of Irish people. Irish emigrants to other nations especially should feel proud of their heritage and should by word and example seek in every way to maintain on the pedestal of Irishness Ireland's contribution to the Western World.

Two Trumpets

And A Trombone

London (NO) — Two trumpets and a trombone pealed in accompaniment to the final song in a recital of the Irish in Westminster cathedral.

The recital was recited in the rhythmic style of Father Joseph Gelineau, French Jesuit musician. A massed choir of about 170 boys, men and women sang the Psalms. The recital (Feb. 28) was organized for the benefit of World Refugee Year by the Gaelic secular institute for women.

When she finally gave in to Margaret's wish to enter religion, she and the rest of the family wanted to decide which convent it would be. Margaret Mary was patient with them but she had decided on the Visitation Convent of Mary de Montal, and that was that. She finally entered in June 1871.

Even her life in the convent was far from dull. Some people seem to be born

Sacred Heart Year

St. Margaret

By REV. LOUIS J. HOHMAN

To write at length of devotion to the Sacred Heart and not give prominence to St. Margaret Mary would be like leaving the stars out of the American flag.

Still it is not particularly easy to write of St. Margaret Mary. The personalities of saints vary in appeal just as those of more mediocre mortals. In the case of Margaret Mary we have a shy, secluded, sometimes sickly person whose external life was far from colorful.

To some, therefore, she will seem remote and perhaps a little unreal. But her importance in God's scheme for bringing His love to the attention of the modern world cannot be overemphasized.

THE FIFTH CHILD of Claude Acoque, Margaret Mary was born July 22, 1847. Her father died when she was very young. He had been a notary for the French king. Her mother tried to keep the family together by collecting from some of her husband's many debtors. She was only moderately successful.

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Reapings At Random

The Hierarchy of Canada has succeeded in jolting many Catholics by announcing that it has dropped the fast from Lenten fast and abstinence.

Here and there a head shakes in sorrow at how the world changes. Who could imagine that Catholic Bishops would adopt such an attitude?

Mankind is beset by the desire to keep familiar things unchanged. What does it matter if the familiar no longer fits?

Yet there seems justification for the change. Christians of earlier times suffered truly sacrificial Lenten abstinence. Even the table of the nobility was meagre and the very picture of self-denial. Imagine, then, the diet of the poor.

Have you noticed how much better we fast? Our wives are assured in the warmest pages of the daily papers that there is nothing in Lenten regulations that requires them to merely cook fish and be done with it. No, they are admonished that this is the time to really serve your family, use your imagination

and prepare interesting gourmet meals. Crab Imperial and Lobster Thermidor are two fine Lenten meals, excellent substitutes for meat. What princeling of the middle ages could have eaten his way through such a Lent?

It seems there is a growing recognition that while the letter of the law has been scrupulously fulfilled, the observance has been emptied of much meaning.

From 1925 to 1940 we made enormous strides in recovering our lost sense of the Mystical Body of Christ. The nearly 20 years that have since passed have not really fulfilled the promise of involved, active participation in the Liturgy.

True, Missals are now commonplace and the youth of 20 imagines this was always so. Evening Mass and the three hour Communion are a new sense of active belonging. It is also true that one reads in Catholic publications of the search for more aids to sanctity, of morals and ethics in business, of sanctity in work, of living a family life in Christ.

In much of this, there seems to be an attempt to give definite formulas, to provide a sure-fire way of attaining sanctity, a prescription from an expert. Perhaps we lay people need a well-spoken reminder that ours is not a vocation which can be stated neatly in well-drawn "Constitutions" — there is no dispensation that will permit us to avoid thinking.

Think: Is it Christian penance to forego chopt for carotid thrust? Is it really acceptable to fast on a yearly time of austerity when it is not, are we becoming shallow and superficial in our approach to God?

The substance of penance is the denial of self. The necessity of mortification is in Christ's own words: "The branch that yields no fruit in me, he cuts away; the branch that does yield fruit he trims clean so that it may yield more fruit." (John 15:2-3)

In Canada remind us that it can take us only a little way along the path we claim to seek. For all of us the opportunities vary but we must remind ourselves that penance is not for the few — it is for all mankind.

Today there is a search for a way of holiness for the layman and the action of the Hierarchy of Canada might lead us along the way. Penance and sacrifice are necessary to lay spirituality but let us cease to pretend that most of our Lenten observance are actually a denial.

The negative approach, symbolized by all this, tied in well with the notion that the layman was to receive and to obey and to keep out of the way.

Virgil Michel, in his "Scope of the Liturgical Movement" (1936), said that there has been only a gradually unfolding awareness that the faithful could participate more fully in the liturgical spirit, to realize forth from the altar of Christ into every aspect of the daily life of the Christian. — GEORGE A. HENRY.

Eat, Drink, It's Lent In Canada

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