

Seven Steps To Heaven

By FATHER HENRY ATWELL

VI — PRIESTHOOD

Our Lord Jesus Christ at the Last Supper "took bread, and blessed and broke it, and gave it to His disciples saying, 'Take, eat, this is My body.'"

At every Mass, the priest repeats this action of Christ.

Our Lord, we are told in Scripture, consoled sinners with the words, "Your sins are forgiven, go in peace."

In every sacramental, the priest repeats the action of Christ.

The Gospel tells us a deaf and dumb man was brought to the Saviour who touched the man's ears and tongue, "Ephphatha," He said, "Be thou opened."

At every baptismal rite, the priest repeats this action of Christ.

HOW CAN a man dare to do what God alone can do—change bread and wine into the Saviour's flesh and blood, touch a man's soul to cleanse it of sin, command the deaf to hear?

The Gospels give us the answer.

At the Last Supper, our Lord commanded His apostles, "Do this in memory of Me." On the night of the first Eucharist, He gave them power "whosoever you shall forgive they are forgiven them," and on Ascension Day, Jesus commanded the apostles to "make disciples of all nations" by preaching to them a doctrine too great for human ears to comprehend.

Catholic priests repeat the actions of Christ because He commanded them to do so.

At the end of the ordination ceremony, the bishop says to the new priest, "Study diligently from experience the rites of the Mass and all that regards the Sacraments, the breaking of the Bread and the Communion before you celebrate your Mass."

When the new priest then offers Mass, he repeats, "I do as I am commanded," he does so humbly as a priest who has long gone before him.

Others come day will learn from him and carry on what he began. He himself is but a link in a great chain. He is not to act according to his own whim; his duty is to repeat the actions of Christ.

That is the Catholic concept of the priesthood.

A priest perpetuates the redeeming work of Jesus Christ teaching the truths the

Lenten Feasts

This is the sixth in a series of articles on the seven sacraments, a special feature during Lent for readers of the Courier Journal.

Saviour revealed and confessing the sacraments He instituted.

As our Lord made a special appearance His followers to determine who were to be His first apostles, so He continues to give the "keys" to the priesthood as a special grace.

Theologians state that God gives this vocation to those far more souls than "light" thought. So few respond, the theologians say, that the Church is chronically suffering a "priest shortage" — a particularly pressing problem in many nations today.

These experts point out that good Christian homes are the best sources of priestly vocations.

Parents should be especially alert to encourage their sons to serve as altar boys, to read spiritual books and to practice virtue and devotion in their personal lives. Most vocations, recent studies reveal, develop when a boy is about 10 years of age so parents should be alert at this time to create an atmosphere favorable to this great grace.

No matter how many priests there are, they cannot do everything. There is, therefore, both opportunity and need for devoted lay people to assist their priests in many ways — teaching catechism, staffing parish libraries and children's recreational programs, upkeep of the church, work at the altar, visits to shut-ins and other works of mercy.

To prepare a priest for his task, seminary training begins as early as the first year of high school. Ordinary high school subjects are taught, with emphasis on Latin, the Church's official language.

In the major seminary, philosophy and theology courses aid the young student to think rightly and to know as well as man can know the truths God has revealed. At both seminary times for

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prayer, meditation, sacred ceremonies are all part of the day's schedule.

The first ritual step to the priesthood is the "tonsure" when the bishop cuts a few locks of hair from the head of the new cleric, a symbol of his renouncing the vanity and pleasure of the world.

In medieval times, the tonsure was given by shaving the head, as shown in pictures of such well-known saints as St. Francis of Assisi.

"Minor orders" include duties of a more manual nature — porter and lector, sacrist and acolyte. In earlier times, especially during persecution, the porter was the guard whose duty was to keep watch for a sudden arrival of soldiers, soldiers' "light" on a night. The lector's duty was to read the Scripture lessons and religious lessons to prospective converts.

The acolyte is given the power to banish devils and the acolyte is officially designated as a server at the altar — functions taken over by altar boys.

"Major orders" raise the cleric to subdeacon with the special obligation to celebrate Mass and the duty to wear the cope by the daily recitation of the Divine Office. A deacon may baptize, give Holy Communion, preside at burials and chant the Gospel at solemn Mass.

The climax to twelve years of prayer and study comes with ordination to the priesthood when the young man steps into the procession which started with the command of the Lord at the Last Supper, "Do this in memory of Me."

The ranks of the priesthood have included great saints, occasionally some unfortunate failures, thousands of now forgotten shepherds of souls — all of whom, regardless of their own personal strength of weakness, have brought God's truth and grace to men.

3 Billion For Butts

For Butts

Washington — (RNS) — Production of cigarettes in the United States reached nearly one-half billion in 1959, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported here.

Production reached a record of 463,000,000 cigarettes last year, the report said. Total value was \$1,187,000,000, before state and federal excise taxes.

More than one billion dollars in taxes were collected by cigarette manufacturers and the federal government, the total value of the 463 billion cigarettes consumed in the United States was about 1 billion dollars.

'Grace At Table'

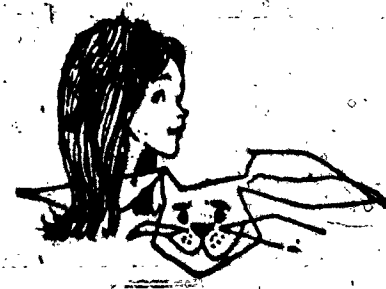
Vaduz — (RNS) — The principality of Lichtenstein will sell 200,000 of its regular issue of postage stamps which show customs of the inhabitants of the tiny Alpine land. Entitled "Grace at Table," the picture issue stamps showing such activities as woodcutting, apple harvesting, etc. The 15,000 inhabitants of the principality, located between Switzerland and Austria, are predominantly Roman Catholic.

Faith Gains In Kenya In Wake Of Mau Mau

Sydney — (RNS) — Conversations to Catholicism in Kenya, British East Africa, have increased tenfold since the end of the Mau Mau disturbances, Norman Cardinal Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney reported here.

THE CARDINAL returned to Sydney from a three-months' visit to Rome, where he had a number of audiences with Pope John XXIII. He flew from Rome to Kenya to consecrate a new cathedral at Nyeri, 100 miles north of Nairobi, the capital. Cardinal Gilroy attributed the

increase in conversions to the fact that the Catholic missionaries had stayed on during the most troubled times and helped anyone in distress, including members of the Mau Mau. The missionaries, he said, "did not take sides, and this has made a tremendous impression among the Africans."



A DELIGHT FOR CHILDREN!
FORMAN'S EASTER WONDERLAND!
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FOURTH FLOOR AUDITORIUM

Italy Church-going Skids

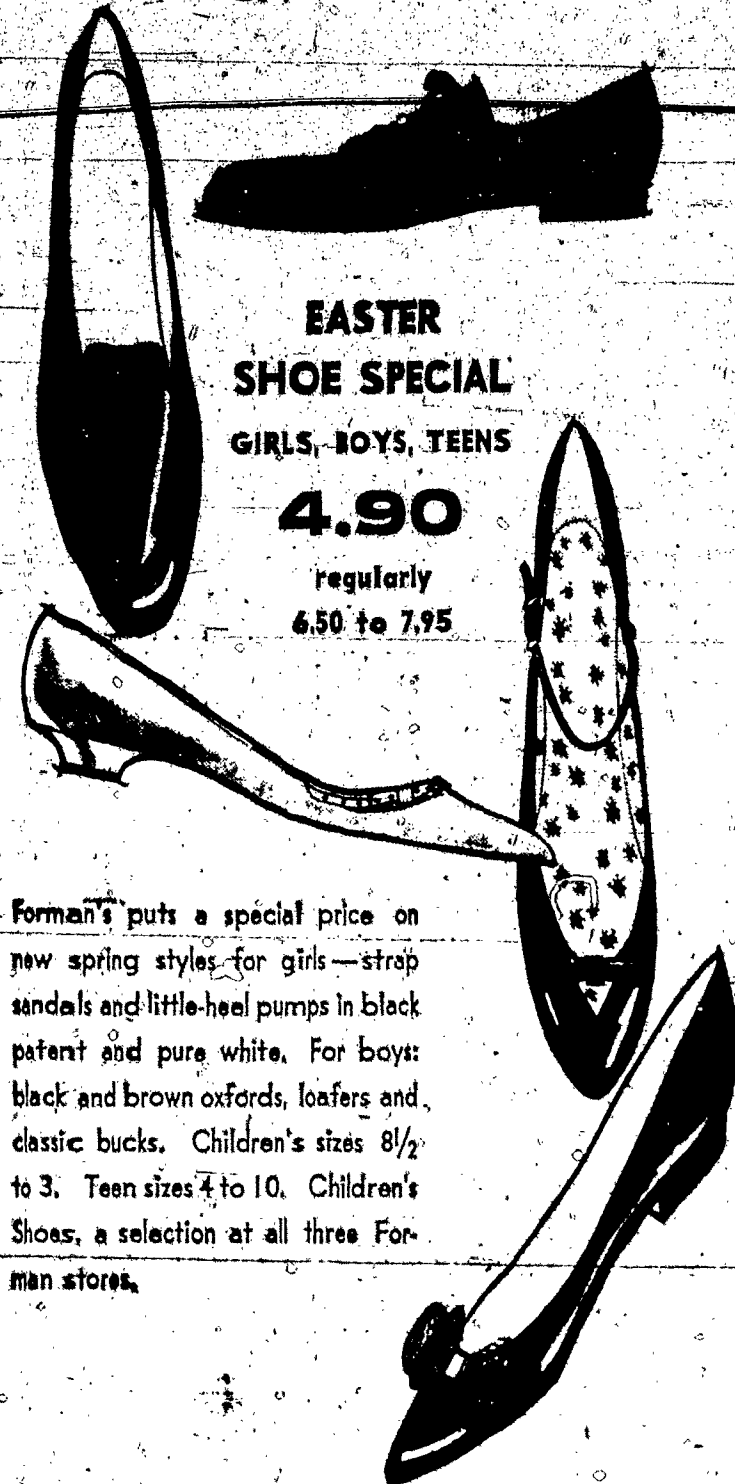
Italy, a nation dotted with surges indicated regular reverence towards religion and churches, and homeland for litigious practice in Piedmont was served their religious practice hundreds of saints, now counts is to 20 per cent; northern only due to the still prevailing church-going as a minority Lombardy, 60 per cent; south influence of their elders."

A recent survey revealed re-per cent. In Sicily, attendance was West Salem, Wis., has been named Bishop of LaCrosse and Auxiliary Bishop Richard Acker of San Diego has been transferred to be Bishop of the Catholic Aid to be Bishop of Covington, Kentucky, NCWC Italy's industrial workers. "are rapidly slipping News Service reported this According to provinces, the into a general mood of indifference week.

Bishops Named

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