

Nun's Leprosy, God's Approval

Stonewille — (NC) — When Sister Mary Paulita left the United States nine years ago to work among leprosy victims in the Fiji Islands, she was ready for anything God might send her.

Today she realizes what that meant. She has contracted leprosy herself.

The Mariat nun from Ohio told her story in a long distance interview, conducted via an exchange of letters with the Stonewille Register, newspaper of the Stonewille diocese.

"I must confess I really am surprised at all the interest," she wrote. "I suppose, however, that to anyone not acquainted with the field of leprosy the disease would hold a fascination."

"It is an old disease. It is still in many ways mysterious and mysterious, and leaves the sufferer a social outcast. It is a disease which, in its advanced stages, is a real torment. We who work in the field, however, do not consider leprosy as the world's most heinous disease."

Sister Mary Paulita, the former Jaie Scheller, is stationed at the leper colony on the tiny island of Makogea, only two-and-a-half miles long. Native patients there total around 300.

Since the discovery of sulfadiazine, many of the traditional terrors associated with leprosy have disappeared. If discovered and treated in its early stages, it does not involve any disfiguring factors.

Sister Mary Paulita said: "There are not many hospitals in evidence around this hospital any more. And an untrained eye would never suspect our congregation of clean, neatly dressed men, women and children at Stonewille. Many of the leprosy patients, in other parts of the world perhaps, were

learning millions since it is difficult to find and treat leprosy patients, things in all probability would be different."

She described her own case of the disease as being "of low grade infectivity." She said she has no idea why she contracted the disease, while her fellow Sisters who had been equally exposed to it did not.

Sister Paulita suggested that her own attitude toward her affliction was passed up by a message she received from one of her sisters, who is also a nun.

On hearing the news of Sister Paulita's disease, her sister wrote: "I guess you know what a shock it must have been — not only at first, I can assure you, but it was the possibility of contracting leprosy was part of your sacrifice when you went to Makogea, and God has sent you an expression of His approval in the form of this cross."

Sister Paulita herself commented: "Leprosy still carries with it a stigma that makes the patient in many cases an outcast. Like other diseases, there is physical suffering involved, to a degree depending on the stage the disease has reached."

"But the moral suffering is what is most keenly felt — separation from one's home and family, isolation, segregation, loneliness."

"Nevertheless, though, there are many, many folk in this leprosy world, other than leprosy patients, who are in the same predicament. And that is why I feel a bit ashamed and humiliated when I hear from time to time the interest and concern of the world has aroused."

Prayerbook For Eskimos

Charterfield, Canada — (CNS) — The Rev. Eugene Faldut, O.M.I. (left) Bishop and translator of a new Roman Catholic prayer book for the Eskimo language, presents a copy of the book to the Rev. Richard G. Gagnier, O.M.I., director of the Mission of Notre Dame de la Paix here. The 25-year-old Gagnier, who has been a missionary to the Eskimos since 1928, now is working on an English-Eskimo dictionary. In the background is the door of the Mission church dedicated to Eskimo characters.

Thailand In Need Of Missionaries

Minneapolis — (CNS) — A plea for more religious and lay missionaries in Thailand was made here by Bishop Michael Klein, Vicar Apostolic of Thaur.

The bishop's visit here in 1959, he said, was to study the situation in Thailand. He found that the Catholic population there was very small, but that the need for missionaries was great.

Catholics in Thailand number about 100,000 — only one per cent of the total population, which is over 60 million.

Bishop Klein's 20-year-old Catholic companion was among the first converts to the faith in Thailand, only 12 years before his death in church robbery.

Thieves Rob Church Vessels

Winnipeg — (CNS) — Thieves broke into the Sacred Heart of St. Joseph's church here and stole most of the church's precious liturgical vessels.

Police said they suspect the thieves were members of the church's youth group.

Pope Asks More Lay Missionaries

Vatican City — (CNS) — Plans are being made by the Pontifical Commission for Latin America to form a corps of lay "volunteers" who will assist missionaries in that area.

It said this project will enable qualified layfolk to lead new groups of "popular activities" in the Third World, and will be the fruit of appeals by Pope Pius XII and Pope John XXIII.

The Pontifical Commission for Latin America was set up in 1960 to coordinate the work of lay workers who will be known as "The Pope's Volunteers," and will constitute "an auxiliary corps of experts which, under the orders of the bishops, will cooperate with directors of Catholic organizations."

The paper said the new initiative, which has already started in the United States, will have an international character and will be the fruit of appeals by Pope Pius XII and Pope John XXIII.

"These two Popes," Observatore said, "have shown an understanding of the importance of the evolution visible in Latin America, and the seriousness of the dangers threatening the patrimony of the Faith there, as well as of the religious culture which is the pride of the Hispanic American populations."

The Pontifical Commission for Latin America was set up

Family Group To Promote Lay Missions

Denver — (NC) — The national coordinating committee of the Christian Family Movement has endorsed a proposal to establish a foundation to promote lay mission work.

The CFM committee, meeting July 30 on the Regis College campus here, announced that the foundation will serve as a center for "the collection and dissemination of information for all phases of lay mission work and for hospitality for overseas students and visitors."

The CFM itself will not provide direct financial aid or personnel, but will support the independent body through the actions of its 50,000 member couples.

The CFM's foundation proposal followed a talk by Father John J. Condon, M.H., director of the Latin American Division of the National Council of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C.

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