

Holland Church Catholic Again

Didam—(NC)—Flags were flying from all houses in this small village as Bernard Cardinal Alfrink, Archbishop of Utrecht, arrived to consecrate—or perhaps reconsecrate—a medieval Catholic church that had been in Protestant hands for over 350 years.

The 15th-century late Gothic church was voluntarily returned to the Catholics by the Protestants, and every one is now quite happy. But it wasn't always so.

The large Church of Our Lady was built in the 15th century replacing the town's only Catholic church which had been built in 824, when this little place was called Theodem.

In 1596 the Countess of Bergh, Mary of Nassau, who owned everything in the town, gave the building to the Protestants. She was the sister of the Protestant Prince William of Orange who more than a decade earlier had led the Dutch Protestants who rebelled against King Philip II of Spain, who then owned the Low Countries, and won the independence of what is now the Netherlands.

For almost 100 years afterward the Catholics of Didam, who were the majority of its population, went to church in the nearby towns of Wehl, Zevenaar and Elten.

In 1672, when the French occupied the village during Louis XIV's Dutch War, the church was returned to the Catholics. The Church of Our Lady served the Catholics for only two years, for in 1674, when the French left, the building again became the Dutch Reformed church of Didam.

In 1716 the town's Catholics built a small wooden church which served them for 121

years. Then St. Martin's church was built in 1837 and has remained in use for 123 years. At the end of World War II the building was no longer large enough, and plans were made to build the village's second Catholic church.

FIVE YEARS after the end of the war, in 1950, the Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church offered the medieval building to Jon Cardinal de Jong, then Archbishop of Utrecht. The building, which was in need of drastic repairs, was too large for Didam's small Protestant community.

In 1954 the parish of St. Martin bought the old church for approximately \$80,000, with which the Protestants built a small new church and a youth center.

But the Catholics' troubles with the old building had just begun. The roof leaked and bricks often fell from the walls, both in and outside of the building. Father A.F.A. Jansen, pastor of St. Martin, found that it would cost about \$375,000 to restore the building to its 15th-century excellence.

Since the building was considered an historical monument, help came in various forms. The Dutch government paid for 55 per cent of the restoration costs. Gelderland province donated 10 per cent, and the town council gave 15 per cent.

The Church of Our Lady has now been completely restored and is considered one of the most beautiful buildings in this part of the country.

French Priest Builds Homes For Refugees

Nazareth — (RNS) — Khaki trousers and a black turtle-neck jersey, rather than the traditional garb of a Roman Catholic priest, are the hallmarks of 46-year-old Pere Paul Gauthier who has been aiding Arab refugees on the outskirts of Nazareth since 1955.

After his arrival here, the French priest became appalled at the living conditions of displaced Palestine Arabs, 20,000

HOUSEWARMING — FOR A CHURCH

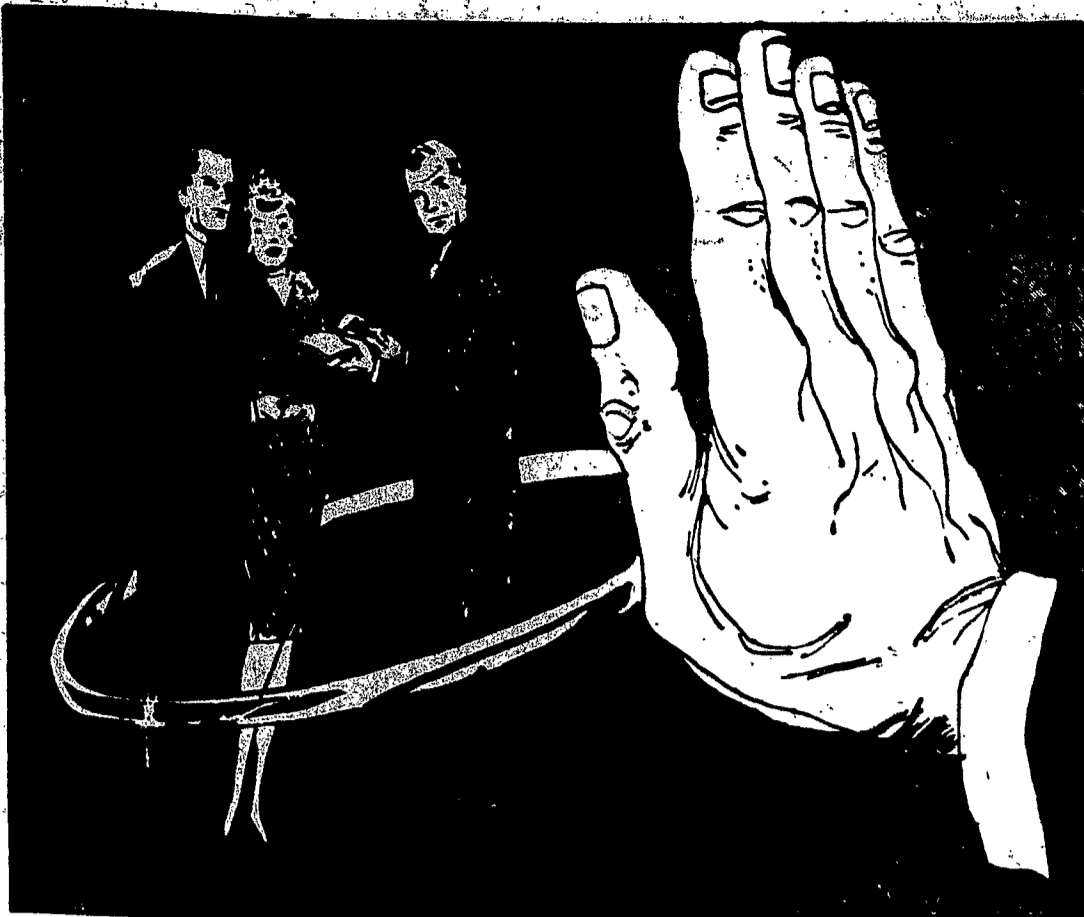
You'd be surprised at the number of letters in the mail each morning from Priests, Brothers and Sisters in the missions. They need almost everything you can think of—quite frequently, statues, vestments, etc. . . . the furnishings for a church. Whenever a new church is built, of course, it must have the sacred articles used for Mass. And as churches get old, these sacred articles must be replaced. We can tell you, from the mail we receive, where the articles are needed—and we'll see to it that the sacred article is sent. You may want the article designated in honor of your father, mother, or loved one. You may want us to send one of our GIFT CARDS, in your name, to the person whom you designate. Just tell us. These are the sacred articles our missionaries need: VESTMENTS (\$50), a MONSTRANCE (\$40), CHALICE (\$40), CIBORIUM (\$40), TABERNACLE (\$25), CRUCIFIX (\$25), STATIONS OF THE CROSS (\$25), CENSER (\$20), SANCTUARY LAMP (\$15), ALTAR LINENS (\$15), SANCTUARY BELL (\$5). Some poor missionary will welcome your gift . . . and thank God for a mission-minded Catholic like you.

Dear Monsignor:
Mother read to me about the Sisters in Lebanon who need new shoes. I want them to have my money. I am 7.
Helen Davis

IS DANNY THOMAS A CATHOLIC?
We were asked this question not long ago. "Yes," we answered, "the television comedian is a Catholic, a Catholic who belongs to one of the Eastern Rites." Did you know there are about 5-million Eastern Rite Catholics in the world? That in the United States Mass is offered 600 times each day in languages other than Latin? If you'd like to know more about our fellow Catholics of the Eastern Rites, tell us when you send in your donation for this work. We'll send you, at our expense, an interesting, informative booklet.

WHAT'S A SISTER WORTH?
"If she were working for money, a Sister's services—at \$10 a day—would bring \$2,050 a year. At \$20 a day, her income would be \$7,300. And who would say a Sister isn't worth it? . . . But Sisters don't work for money. Their services, for a lifetime, are free . . . The worth of a Sister, especially, in pagan countries, is incalculable. Yet, to a Sister, costs only \$150 a year, \$300 for the entire two-year course . . . Here are some Sisters who need financial help in order to complete their training: SISTER ANSELME and SISTER MARIE-LAURENT, of the ANTONIAN SISTERS, ST. DOUMITH, LEBANON; SISTER CONSTANCE and SISTER ROSE GABRIEL of the SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY, BEIRUT, LEBANON; and SISTER MARY PHILOMENE and SISTER FRANCIS BORGIA of the CLARIST SISTERS, CHANGANACHERRY, INDIA. We mention these Sisters by name because we think you ought to know they need your help. Can you afford \$3.00 a week? That's all it costs, week by week, to train a Sister. You'll want to help, we know. Drop us a line, and we'll assign you a Sister. What better investment—for this world and the next—can you find for your money?"

Dear Monsignor:
I gave up smoking yesterday. Therefore, I now have \$2.25 a week to spare.
Mrs. J. E. New Haven, Conn.
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Mgr. Joseph T. Ryan, M.S.C.
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'Outside Marriages' Involve Questions Of Church Law

By FATHER JOHN L. THOMAS, S. J.
Sociology Professor St. Louis University

I'm concerned about my younger sister, a widow who recently married a Catholic man before a justice of the peace. This man had been married to a divorcee, but she is now dead. The couple want their marriage blessed by the Church, only they tell us this has been refused because he was previously married to a divorcee. Are they living in sin? Must they live all their lives this way? They both attend church regularly.

You have reason to be concerned, Ralph, since the couple are either not telling the truth or somebody gave them some false information. Yes, they are "living in sin," as you put it; they're clearly not married, so I don't know what else one could call their present status.

Of course they are probably now rationalizing their current situation by saying that they tried to get their marriage blessed but were refused.

Just for the sake of the record, they should be reminded that they thought about getting their marriage blessed after they had attempted marriage before a justice of the peace. At their age, one can hardly regard this attempt as the result of an adolescent romantic infatuation from which they later recovered. Their action appears deliberate.

They intend to live together — if the Church will bless it, fine; if she refuses, well, they'll just take their chances on a deathbed conversion — God will understand.

I have not analyzed their present state of mind with any desire to pass harsh judgment upon them, for I do not know how well instructed they may be or how well they understand what they

have done. One point is clear, however, they do not take the Church's marriage laws very seriously, and since the Church is founded by Christ to teach, rule, and dispense the sacraments, they indicate that they either don't know very much about their faith, or reject it.

In any case, they need a good deal of instruction if they are to become sincere Catholics, and that is the main point I have desired to make. The man's record in particular shows that he is either ignorant in religious matters or indifferent. Merely going through the marriage ceremony won't remedy such dispositions.

Now let us turn to the marriage problem itself. The couple's story simply does not add up correctly. Either they are seeking to excuse their present status before friends and relatives by saying they tried to have a valid marriage ceremony performed and were refused, or they are relying on false information, or they misunderstood or were unwilling to fulfill the conditions required to obtain permission for marriage under the circumstances.

WHAT SHOULD THEY DO? Well, Ralph, the first thing to do is to find out if they are telling the truth, and from whom they obtained their information. They should then go to their pastor about the case. However, if he was the one who gave the refusal, they should have recourse directly to the marriage court of their local chancery office. There they will find competent canon lawyers to handle their case and tell them what they must do.

I am presupposing of course that the man in question does not have another marriage or

two on his record. Anyone who deals with marriage cases in this country soon learns withhold judgment until all such possibilities have been explored. However, there is also the possibility that a case has been poorly presented to a confessor or counselor and the wrong answer given. Catholics always have the right to have direct recourse to the chancery office, though the normal channel is through their pastor.

Is there anything further you can do? Experience shows that many couples under such circumstances tend to postpone doing something about their marriage, either because they are rather indifferent about it or fear the reception they may receive from the clergy. You can be of great help in urging them to proceed at once, perhaps even introducing them to your pastor or some priest who might assist them.

Moreover, as I mentioned in the beginning, this couple need a good deal of instruction concerning the faith. If there are discussion or family life groups available, try to get them to join. Give them some Catholic literature to read. Maybe you could get them to make a retreat by pointing out that they need to make a new start after messing up their lives as they have.

Obviously, if you can get them back to the sacraments, you will have performed a great act of charity, but in the long run, their understanding and appreciation of the faith must be deepened if they are to lead truly Christian lives. Without harping on the subject, perhaps you can help them to see that there is more than a mere legal technicality involved in what they have done.

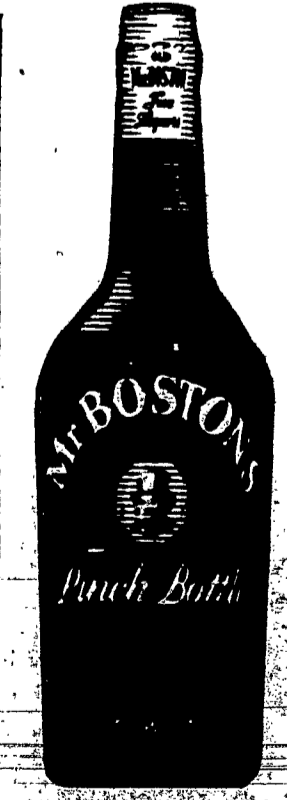


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