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# Saintly Priest N.Y. Missioner

BY REV. JAMES J. GALVIN, C.S.S.R.

This is the fifth article on Venerable John Nepomucene Neumann, saintly pioneer priest of the 1800's, who preached his first sermon, heard Confessions and baptized for the first time in Rochester. His suggestion that German speaking Catholics needed a parish of their own led to the founding of St. Joseph's Church, this year marking its 125th anniversary.

It was the last day of 1859. A light burned in an upper window of the Bishop's residence on Logan Square in Philadelphia that night of December 31. Bishop Neumann sat at his desk among a sheaf of curling papers setting his chancery in order on the last night of the year.

His desk was his chancery! Here he signed dispensations, tallied bills for the Cathedral next door, bills still unpaid. Here he jotted down his appointments for the coming months, kept accurate record of confirmation tours and the date of future ordinations.

Up at St. Peter's on Fifth St. the church bell was ringing for "Sylvester Abend," St. Sylvester Devotions. There, the Bishop mused, his Redeptionist confreres would be holding the Old World service for years end. Candles, hymns, procession around the church, and the sermon — a look at the past, a glance at the future. He would like to be there. But now he was a Bishop. He could be a Redeptionist only at heart.

### Uneasy in Pontificals

It was eight years since he had traded religious black for episcopal purple; eight years since that last day of March in 1852 when he first came to Philadelphia. "I should have delayed a night," he often

told himself, "and arrived on April first. It would have been more symbolic — All Fool's Day!"

He could never quite get used to the ring and the purple. He felt like some reluctant school boy forced to be king in a school play. In all his pontificals — with mitre, ring, crozier — he felt like one of the "Sternsaenger" back home in Prachatitz, like a small boy in a paper mitre who sings in the streets at Christmastide. Neumann abhorred pomp and formality.

And for no reason at all he suffered it with patience as one endures a touch of the gout. Philadelphia had done its best to change him, to make him over to its own image of what a bishop ought to be. They showed him under with invitations to social teas and banquets. Politely he turned them down. They sent him new shoes, silk lined hats, black suits cut in the latest clerical mode. He wore them a few times perhaps, but they were given away to the first poor man asking for a coat.

Glad to Have Coadjutor  
 Behind his desk in a corner of the room stood a coat-rack draped with an old coat, a purple cassock and a hat of green-

black. Everything else he had disposed of. The coat-rack was his wardrobe. When Bishop Wood came to live with him as Coadjutor-Bishop, Neumann pushed his wooden wardrobe across the hall into the guest room.

He was pleased with Bishop Wood. Now he had someone to take the glory, someone to officiate on big occasions, like the day three months ago, when the new cathedral was blessed. The thrifer on that occasion had more pomp and aplomb than John Neumann who had built St. Peter and Paul Cathedral. Bishop Wood was his shield, his front-man — and capable one, too.

### Asked for Smaller Diocese

Looking back, this last night of the year, many things came to mind: the petition he had vainly sent to the Holy See, begging that the diocese be divided, and he be given a small wedge of territory up in the coal regions, possibly in the Pottsville area. The smaller and poorer the diocese, so much the better.

With none but poor hard-working immigrants around him, Neumann would feel at ease. No worry if his coat were brushed, or if the lace of his shoe were frayed. As for Philadelphia, there were a dozen excellent priests he could nominate for that post. He had tried; but Rome had refused to dismember the diocese. Instead, they had given him Bishop Wood as Coadjutor-Bishop.

On Neumann's desk lay the schedule of the Forty Hours for 1860. Tomorrow it would go into effect, the seventh cycle of weekly adoration of the Eucharistic Christ in church after church of the diocese. He remembered well how it all started. Here in this very room. The charred desk was reminder enough.

### Forty Hours Devotion

Seven years ago when he toyed with the idea of the Forty Hours, he was hesitant to begin for fear of desecration in the name of Know Nothing bigotry. He left the room one evening, and in his absence the candle on his desk had overturned. His whole "chancery" might have been demolished, but instead the candleflame only charred a sheaf of documents and left a black scar on the desk.

But there was something else. Distinctly he heard an inner voice tell him: "As this flame left intact the papers on your desk, so shall My Divine Majesty remain unscathed in the Sacrament of the Altar, and I will pour forth My Grace to the ends of your diocese." And so he launched the first diocesan cycle of the Forty Hours in America in the year 1853.

A bell boomed somewhere to the southeast, the soft bong of the clock on Independence Hall. Others took up the sound, and then all the bellfries and steeples of Philadelphia were rumbling and pealing with bells. Pistol shots crackled down along the Schuylkill. Singing rose up from Logan Square. "Happy New Year," passersby shouted across the avenue, "Happy 1860!"

### Signs of Illness

"Passion Christi conforta me" — "Passion of Christ, strengthen me" — murmured the Bishop as the whole room began swaying to one side and the other like a ship's cabin in high seas. John Neumann felt for a moment as though all the bell-tongues of the world were clanking inside his skull. A sharp hot wire drew tight about his chest and then gently relaxed. He clutched for the rosary in his pocket. The spell lasted for only a minute or two; but while it lasted he felt sick unto death.

Then Bishop Neumann remembered something that had happened a good 23 years ago when he was leaving home for the first time. An old character in Prachatitz cornered him one day, fingered two gold Kreuzers from his purse and put them in Neumann's palm with a bit of advice for his voyage overseas. "I never saw the At-



### Parishioners in Prison

**Santa Fe — (RNS)** — This photograph shows Father Beck at the left, playing checkers with a convict against the background of a state penitentiary here not an institution but his parish. Father Beck is called a parishioner by his parishioners who receive daily counsel in his Force chapel during World War II. Father Gerry has had such attendance at Sunday Mass celebrated by holding a birthday party. When cancer hos- pitalized him, they offered prayers for the chaplain's speedy recovery. This photo- graphic shows Father Beck at the left, playing checkers with a convict against the background of a state penitentiary here not an institution but his parish. Father Beck is called a parishioner by his parishioners who receive daily counsel in his Force chapel during World War II. Father Gerry has had such attendance at Sunday Mass celebrated by holding a birthday party. When cancer hos- pitalized him, they offered prayers for the chaplain's speedy recovery. This photo- graphic shows Father Beck at the left, playing checkers with a convict against the background of a state penitentiary here not an institution but his parish.

lantic in my life, John," the later Bishop Neumann repeat- ed fellow quavered, "but when you get aboard, go up to the cap- tain, slip these two coins in his hand and say 'As a favor, sir, would you try to steer close to shore on the trip across'." That way, John," the man con- tinued, "if anything happens you can always swim to safety."

Death on Vine St.  
 It was a pointless and silly sort of story, but a few days later the body of Bishop John Nep-

## GOD LOVE YOU!

By MOST REV. FULTON J. SHEEN

★ ★ ★

Sanctified suffering moves the human heart more than any other single instance. No one is ever better simply because he has suffered, as the thief on the left was not better. But those who suffer in union with Christ on the Cross not only make themselves happier; they make the world better.

Take the case of the leper colony in Korea. Seventy of these act as catechists. Do you know any group or club or industry in the United States where there are seventy catechists? These same lepers have converted some 800 people in a very short time, and they have 400 others now under instruction. Every morning the colony meets for common meditation, some 400 lepers receiving Communion. All gather for the rosary and night prayers in the evening.

More important than this, there is Perpetual Adoration in the colony. Do you know any Catholic club of the same size, namely, 800, which has Perpetual Adoration and the rosary every hour, night and day, for the propagation of the Faith?

Can you read this story and turn to another page without adding a prayer or sending a sacrifice to the Holy Father for a mission such as this? What a joy it is to know that there is such a love of Christ in a world in which the press heralds only cold wars, futile conferences and discords. The bodies of these people may be filled with sores, but would to God our souls were as clean! Will you not send us your prayers and sacrifices that you may be remembered by these people? All offerings sent to The Society for the Propagation of the Faith are forwarded directly to the Holy Father, who knows where they are most needed.

GOD LOVE YOU to Mrs. A. W. for \$2 "This represents ten per cent of the first salary that my daughter, who is just fifteen years old, has earned. Our family custom is to give the first ten per cent earned to God. What better than to send it to the Missions!" ... to Mrs. H. for \$50 "I send this in appreciation for two favors I have received. ... to M.P. for \$5 "As a fireman, my job is saving lives. As a Catholic, it is saving souls." ... to Mrs. M.O. for \$1 "I promised to send \$1 a month if my daughter maintained a straight A average, thereby getting her tuition free next year. My prayers were answered, and this is the first dona- tion."

The ten letters of GOD LOVE YOU spell out a decade of the rosary as they encircle the medal originated by Bishop Sheen to honor the Madonna of the World. With your request and a corresponding offering you may order a GOD LOVE YOU medal in any one of the following styles:

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- \$ 3 small 10k gold filled
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## School Aid Debate

(Continued from Page 4)

primarily on nonreligious education which is often in effect antireligious? Protestants, Catholics and Jews have a lot more thinking to do on this subject."

What does Will Herberg say on this subject?

A distinguished author and professor of Judaic studies at Drew University, Dr. Herberg says: "Justice, I think, is entirely on the side of those who call for public support to parochial and other religious schools performing a public function, so also is the practice of other democratic countries, where almost without exception, religious schools meeting the set requirements are given public support as public institutions."

What does Prof. Henry Steele Commager propose?

In the New York Times magazine of February 26, 1961, the distinguished American historian of Amherst College, Dr. Commager, makes substantially the same recommendation: "Society requires education because it has a paramount interest in an educated citizenry. . . . The problem of reconciling the tradition of separation of Church and State with public aid to denominational colleges and universities is more complex and perplexing."

"Perhaps it is sufficient here to note that our academic cousins, the British and the Canadians, seem to have solved the problems by giving state aid to both public and denominational schools without impairing either religious or intellectual freedom, and that the time may have come when we should rethink our own traditional and instinctive attitudes in this area."

"Taxes to support higher education are like taxes to support elementary education, strengthen defense, build roads, maintain hospitals, safeguard the young, operate libraries and museums and maintain public order. The principle that underlies all of these enterprises is that they are essential to the well-being of society."

What important truths emerge from this friendly discussion?

1. There is nothing in the Constitution that forbids the use of public funds, Federal, state or community, for the education of the youth of America in all subjects except religion, in public, non-profit church-related or other private schools.

2. The method of allocat-

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## Latin America Area of Hope

Cincinnati — (NC) — A "dynamic upsurge" is taking place in the Church in Latin America, a mission authority said here.

Father Ronan Hoffman, O.F.M., Conv., professor of sociology at the Catholic University of America, said that he sees "solid ground for optimism" about the Church in Central and South America.

Chairman of the Latin America program of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, he addressed the fourth biennial meeting of major seminary representatives of the CSMC at St. Gregory's Seminary this week.

Eighty students from 27 major seminaries in the U.S. took part in the discussions under the direction of Father Henry J. Klockner, CSMC national secretary.

Father Hoffman, who recently returned from an extensive tour of Latin American countries, said a "much more dynamic apostolate" is evident there.

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maucens Neumann lay inert by the hearthfire of a stranger's parlor. The snapping flames of a log fire flickered across the room reflected in the baubles of a withered Christmas tree. When the priest from the cathedral arrived with the Holy Oils, the Bishop was already dead.

### Buried at St. Peter's

Across the world in the dead man's little home town of Prachatitz, it was already evening, and being the eve of Twelfth Night, the "Sternsaenger" were abroad in the crooked streets. Small boys in long robes and paper mitres in the guise of kings, singing carols from door to door.

In Philadelphia, there was mourning for the little prelate the Fourth Bishop of Philadelphia. The body of Bishop Neumann was interred in the Redeptionist church of St. Peter at Fifth St. and Girard Ave., where he made his weekly confession and his monthly retreat.

When Archbishop Kenrick came up from Baltimore to preach the eulogy, he graciously acceded to the request that the Bishop enjoy at least in death, the company of those among whom he so dearly wanted to be in life, his Redeptionist confreres.

People called him a "living saint." They spoke of cure and prophecy. They contrived to lay hold of anything he had worn or used. They prayed to him, kneeling at his tomb. And as the fame of his holiness increased, his cause was introduced. In 1921 his virtues were declared heroic by Pope Benedict XV. He was accorded the title of "Venerable." And now thousands upon thousands are praying, and hoping, that one day their Bishop Neumann will be raised to the ranks of the Blessed.

Gains Noted  
 Taipei — (NC) — The number of Catholics in Formosa has now topped the 200,000 mark. Figures released by Church authorities here show that Catholics now number 200,119 compared with 20,112 in 1952 — nearly a tenfold increase in nine years. The statistics are for the year ended June 30, 1961.

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