

## Cursillos 'Instant' Holiness

Rome — Bishop Juan Herras y Benet, 37, Bishop of Ciudad Real in Spain, said in the Council Hall that the Cursillos de Cristiandad, or "Brief Courses in Christianity," are a most effective method of presenting Christianity to modern man as a powerful force capable of changing his life and that of society.

In an interview granted to Divine Word News Service, the bishop called the Cursillos "much more powerful than a retreat" and said, "Repeated experience proves that in three days it is possible to change a man's mentality."

The "Cursillos de Cristiandad" were founded in Spain by Bishop Herras in collaboration with numerous diocesan and religious priests, but especially with the laymen. Laymen play the principal role in giving these courses which are geared to the speech, mentality, and psychology of modern man," the bishop said.

"We work on the premise that modern man is very busy and has little time for religion," he said, "and so the highly concentrated course is compressed into three days." He said that groups taking the course were restricted to 30 or 35 members so that all could get both collective and individual attention.

Each minute of the three days is occupied according to a pre-arranged plan, and participants make five meditations given by priests and attend 15 classes given by laymen. "The priest is unseen, like the soul in the body," the bishop said, "and the entire responsibility for running the Cursillos rests in the hands of a layman who is asked by four or five other laymen, all of whom come from various professions." Bishop Herras said a layman who draws his examples from daily life and from his own life can convince other laymen more readily than a priest.

The courses are Christocentric, which means they center around the personality of Christ. "Mankind looks for an ideal personality to follow," the bishop said, "and in the Cursillos we have found the way to present Christ as this ideal." He said the courses make Christ stand out "as a forceful and influential personality, capable of changing man's life and giving him the solution to human problems." The latest discovery of modern psychology and pedagogy, as well as other efficacious natural and supernatural means, are put to work in the course.

Today some 30 United States dioceses are giving the special courses, as well as other dioceses in Central and South America, Europe, Africa and Asia. The groups making the courses are heterogeneous, being men of high and low estate, white and black. God says 100,000 men have made the courses in Spain, and another 100,000 have made them in other parts of the world.

Bishop Herras mentioned the Cursillos in the Council Hall because they were "an effective contribution to the Sanctity of the Church made by laymen." He said that women also were beginning to make the courses.

## God's World

### The Eternal 'Why'?

BY LEO J. TRESE

Have you ever rummaged about in a box of junk and encountered some item the purpose of which you could not guess? It may have been a peculiarly shaped piece of metal, obviously a part of some mechanism. Only if you saw how the piece fitted into the machine from which it came, would you be able to understand its function.

Life is full of such apparent pieces of meaningless "junk." That is a great number of life's occurrences seem to be quite unexplained events that happen by pure chance. Some of these incidents have a happy issue; many of them, such as sickness, accidents and disappointments of various kinds, seem to be pure disaster.

Who of us has not at some time said, "Why did it have to happen that way? Why couldn't it have been this other way instead?"

The reason why we are tempted to resent many of life's happenings is because we are unable to see life as a whole, from beginning to end, whether it be our own or another's. It is impossible for us to see how this seemingly chance episode can have any significance because we cannot see where it fits into the total picture.

One of the less obvious lessons of Christmas is precisely this matter of the meaningfulness of all that befalls us. We are reminded again that God's wisdom and providence "reach from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly" (Wisdom 8:1).

AS FAR AS GOD is concerned, there is no such thing as "pure chance." Nothing happens absolutely without, except what is willed by God, at least permissively. Even the evil which humans do, evil which God permits as a necessary consequence of the free will which He has endowed man — even this evil which is used by God for His own purposes, is worked by God into His plans for us.

This is strikingly illustrated in the Gospel account of the Nativity. Seven hundred years before Christ's birth, the prophet Micah had foretold that the Savior would be born in Bethlehem, the City of David. Yet Mary, whose God had chosen to be the mother of His Son, lived in Nazareth, far from Bethlehem. How could the prophecy be fulfilled?

In Rome, Caesar Augustus decreed a census of his empire. In Judea the census was to be taken according to the Jewish custom, each man returning to the city of his ancestors to have his name inscribed there on the census rolls. Consequently Joseph, a direct descendant of King David, had to journey to Bethlehem for the registration.

The emperor was motivated by ambition and pride. He wanted to increase his tax revenues and he wanted a list of men available for military service. If Mary and Joseph had been

## Dansville, K.C. Communion Set

Dansville Council of Knights of Columbus will have their first monthly Communion and breakfast Dec. 16.

Communion will be during the eight o'clock Mass and breakfast will be served at Old Madrid following the Mass.

All men of the parish are invited to join in a body. Next month Communion and breakfast will be at Wayland at St. Joseph Church in February it will be held in Westinville.

## Oldest Bishop Content At Age 95

Albany — (NC) — Retired Bishop Edmund F. Gibbons of Albany, who is 95 years old and lives what he calls a life of "complete contentment," has become the world's oldest bishop.

"I thank God for my long life and especially the latter part of it," the Bishop said in an interview here.

Bishop Gibbons, who was the sixth Bishop of Albany, serving from 1919 until 1954, now resides at St. Peter's Hospital. He attends Mass each day and enjoys reading.

Told that when Archbishop Alfonso Carinci died in Rome on Dec. 6 at the age of 101 he became the oldest bishop, the prelate was at first gently doubtful.

But advised that a canvass by the N.C.W.C. News Service shows him to be the oldest bishop, the prelate again referred to the happiness of his later years, especially those spent at St. Peter's Seminary here "where I enjoyed seeing young men in the course of training for the priesthood."

BISHOP GIBBONS, who was ordained to the priesthood in Rome on May 27, 1893, was asked his reaction to the Second Vatican Council and the changes it is bringing about in the Church.

"I hesitate to speak of the council," he said, noting that he had not been directly involved. "Of course, the changes are startling. But whatever changes are good for the Church, I heartily recommend."

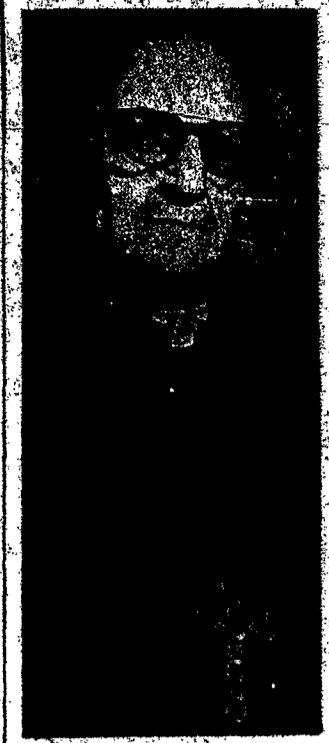
"I leave it to the Holy Spirit and the bishops of the council, but it will be difficult for me to learn to say Mass all over again. I love the Latin in the Mass and the breviary."

Bishop Gibbons was born in Hartsdale, N.Y., on Sept. 16, 1893. He was raised in Albany where his father, a stonecutter, came to work on the construction of the state capitol.

During his almost 36 years as Bishop, he not only greatly expanded facilities in the diocese, such as increasing parishes from 138 to 193 and establishing two colleges, but also played a role in statewide and national movements.

He helped form the New York State Catholic Welfare Committee and the New York State Catholic School Superintendents' Association.

Bishop Gibbons is greatly interested in the beatification cause of the Indian girl, Kateri Tekakwitha. He initiated the proceedings for her beatification and he hopes to live to see her be given the title of blessed.



ARCHBISHOP CARINCI

## Prelate, 101, Dies in Rome

Rome — (NC) — Archbishop Alfonso Carinci, the Church's oldest bishop, died here at the age of 101.

He was fully conscious until three hours before his death on Friday, Dec. 6. He joined in the prayers for the dying with those around his bed, including his confessor, Francesco Cardinal Roberti of the Roman Curia Luigi Cardinal Traglia, Pro Vicar General of Rome, nephews and nieces, and members of the staff of the Fatebenefratelli Hospital.

Archbishop Carinci was secretary-emeritus of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. He was the only Father of the Second Vatican Council who could remember the First Vatican Council, which met when he was a boy of eight.

The story is told that when Pope Pius XII wanted to make him a cardinal in 1946, the Archbishop declined, saying: "I am so old that it is not worth the expense for the vestments."

The aged prelate was general director of the Sacerdotal Union of Daily Adoration, a worldwide organization of priests who devote an hour a day in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

The United States unit of the union is headed by Rev. Eustachio J. O'Brien, pastor of St. Peter and Paul's Church, Elmira. In this country there are 956 priests enrolled as members from 23 archdioceses and 87 dioceses. Lay people may also enroll in a similar program as members of the Eucharistic Legion which now has a total of 350 members.



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## Trent, Prelude To Vatican II

Vatican City — (RNS) — Strong hopes for many beneficial results from the Second Vatican Council were voiced by Giovanni Cardinal Urbani, Patriarch of Venice, during an address at a general assembly in St. Peter's Basilica attended by Pope Paul VI.

The assembly, which took place Dec. 3 on the eve of the Solemn closing of the Council's second session, was highlighted by the promulgation of a motu proprio in which Pope Paul outlined a series of faculties and privileges intended to strengthen the powers of bishops throughout the world.

Noting that the assembly was held to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the closing of the Council of Trent in 1563, Cardinal Urbani said that "only in the perspective of the centuries have we been able to see and enjoy the fruit of that Council and to treasure its teaching and other contributions."

## Approves Pope's Holy Land Trip

Vatican City — (RNS) — Vatican Radio reported that news of Pope Paul VI's scheduled pilgrimage to the Holy Land was greeted in many parts of the world with "deep emotion and unanimous approval."

It said that the religious and political circles of the trip were viewed as "historic" and "sensational" and as a "symbol of the hope for religious unity and peace among all men."

and instrument of salvation for the contemporary world."

Making special reference to the presence of the Protestant and Eastern Orthodox representatives who have followed the work of the Council as accredited delegate observers, Cardinal Urbani said:

"Because we live in the unity of faith and in the bond of charity, the presence of representatives of Christian brethren still separated from us is especially dear. Their presence seems to us like the realization of the burning desire of the Tridentine fathers... like a confident sign of a new spiritual climate that cannot but bear fruit in time."

The broadcast stressed the "purely religious significance" of the visit and observed that embassies in Rome, Jordan and Israel are expected to do everything possible to facilitate the journey.