Blue Army

No Guns For This Army, Its Cause is World Peace

A thin, almost emaciated, priest in Plainfield, N.J., started an army in 1947. Without a gun in its arsenal, it may yet be one of the most powerful armies in the world today.

"The Blue Army" is an army dedicated to peace under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It's weapons are prayer and sacrifice, and it has had an amazing growth — now over twenty million members!

Monsignor Harold V. Colgan, pastor of St. Mary's church in Plainfield, wanted to do something about promoting the message of Our Lady's apparitions at Fatima in 1917. When he conceived the idea of the Blue Army, he thought at first in terms of his own parish.

Of some religious movements, their success compels the observer to say: "The finger of God is here." This must surely be applied to the Blue Army. For Monsignor Colgan's minutemen for Mary grew far beyond the limited bounds of his city parish. Today the Blue Army's 20 million members are found in 33 different nations.

The frail priest who founded the Blue Army continues as its head, now as international president. A dynamic layman, John M. Haffert, is now Blue Army Commander in the United States.

Blue is traditionally the color of Mary, and Monsignor Colgan selected the title "Blue Army" to emphasize the spiritual combat motivation. It is aimed at two vital goals, specified in the Fatima apparitions of 1917:

World peace and the conversion of Russia.

Even the second aim, the conversion of Russia, has been phrased in terms of a spiritual call to arms. The late Cardinal Eugene Tisserant used this graphic phrase to describe this Blue Army goal:

"The Blue Army constitutes a sort of spiritual mobilization for a most precise objective, namely, the conversion of the people of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and their satellites."

Blue Army members are convinced that if enough people comply with the requests attributed to Our Lady when she appeared to the three children at Fatima, Portugal, they will provide the spiritual fulcrum to lift the world into an era of peace.

MONSIGNOR COLGAN

To this end, Blue Army members pledge themselves to:

1. Pray daily at least part of the Rosary.

2. Wear the Brown Scapular as a sign of consecration to Mary.

3. Offer the sacrifices entailed in fulfilling one's daily duties, in reparation for the sins of the world.

While the Blue Army urges its members to make the five First Saturdays (Holy Communion on the first Saturday of the month for five months consecutively), this is not part of their basic pledge.

The Marian organization doesn't see itself as competing with other Catholic organizations, but rather, supplementing them. By its nature, (no meetings, no dues, no specified activities except the spiritual works mentioned in its pledge), it is a spiritual apostolate open to millions.

Blue Army leaders feel that the group is an avenue for many who have felt that the organized apostolate was beyond their capacity. The Bishop of Fatima, Most Rev. Joao Vanancio said in 1964 that it was one approach open to "children, old people, invalids, millions of parents for example, absorbed exclusively from morning to night in household chores, care of their children or work in fields or the factory, without either time or possibility for the intense organized work of the Apostolate."

The Blue Army can be invaluable, he said, "to mobilize these reserve forces and bring them to the conscientious service of the Church, to collaborate with other movements to give new life to the various forms of apostolic activity." (Excerpted from "The Voice of Fatima," Sept.-Oct. 1964 issues, Fatima, Portugal.)

Blue Army members who are anxious to spread interest in their apostolate often form a "cell." This is a small unit of four or five people, who meet regularly for a program of spiritual renewal and study. They deepen their knowledge of Catholic doctrine on Mary, the current needs of the world and the bases of militant atheism. (They feel that it's imperative to be informed about the enemy faced in this spiritual combat.)

A cell leader in the Rochester area, who has just returned from a visit to Fatima is Mrs. Eldora Scott, R. D. 1, Foster Rd., in Holcomb. While at the Marian shrine, she attended the first School of Formation for Blue Army crusaders.

Mrs. Scott and her family have a special reason to be grateful to Our Lady of Fatima. They report that a son, Norbert, was cured of a lifelong physical ailment on July 22, 1964. This year, in a pilgrimage of thanksgiving, Norbert was confirmed by the Bishop of Fatima in April.

The Scotts are members of St. Mary's parish in Honeoye. Mrs. Scott invites anyone interested in forming a Blue Army cell to drop her a note at the above address.

In less than two decades, Monsignor Colgan's modest plan to encourage his own parishioners to heed Mary's message at Fatima has grown into a worldwise force.

His small mimeographed bulletin has developed into a popular national magazine titled Soul. Blue Army headquarters, once located in his rectory office, now has a national office, the Ave Maria Institute, in Washington, N.J. The international headquarters is the Blue Army House in Fatima, Portugal.

In the spiritual realm, the little acorn planted in 1947 by the Plainfield, N.J. priest, has grown into a mighty oak.

—Father Robert Kanka

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Silent Sunday

By Mary Tinley Daly

According to Fowler's "Modern English Usage," mentioned in this column recently, there is a natural distinction between the words "remember" and "recollect."

"Recollect," he says, "means not so much remember as succeed in remembering, and implies a search in the memory."

That is exactly what a "Day of Recollection" should mean and did mean to the author of this column recently. With other Ladies of Charity, we met of a Sunday morning for a few hours of conferences, Mass, luncheon, rosary, Holy Hour, just what one should expect, a routine no doubt carried on throughout the Catholic world.

Its effect, though, was subjective. 'Twas Sunday and every Sunday we go to Mass, nearly always in our parish church; we follow the liturgy, we remember the truths of our religion but we don't "search the memory" in this realm. The church is crowded, there are distractions, sometimes we find ourselves thinking of the parish announcements until the priest is well launched into his sermon. Later, we greet friends, embark upon the parking lot hazzle, go home, fix breakfast, read the papers and proceed with ordnary mundane Sunday activities.

Refreshing

That Sunday was different. Matter of fact, we had felt no particular need of a Day of Recollection, we were in no special mental or emotional torment, were not trying to "think things through," had no sense of crisis. Maybe that is why the effect of the day was so delightfully refreshing—like a quiet afternoon imposed by a wise mother upon a child who doesn't realize he has been playing too hard and too long.

The little addendum to the printed program requested "Please observe silence during this period," a request hardly necessary since nobody wanted to talk, cherishing this opportunity for temporary withdrawal thought, prayer, and concentration on the spiritual life within each of us.

Morning conferences conducted by earnest young Father Lucien C. Hendren set the tone of the day. He asked us to meditate on Mary's role: her awareness of God, her importance, so that she could say truly "My soul doth magnify — or reflect — the Lord" and that a similar role should be ours; reflecting Christ and bringing true charity to others. An analogy Father Hendren drew between two bodies of water in the Holy Land: the River Jordan with its fresh, life-giving waters and the Dead Sea, stagnant and useless, since it has no outlet, proved subject for individual contemplation needing no long sermonizing.

Quiet walks on the grounds were interspersed with visits to the chapel, then Mass when, praise be, we could once more sing that childhood favorite, "Mother Dear, O Pray for Me," nowadays 'way down on the ecclesiastical Hit Parade, and at Communion time, "Panis Angelicus."

Food for the body as well as the soul was provided that day, a luncheon favored by most women — chicken salad, rolls, petits fours, cookies, coffee and punch. As we ate in silence, one of the Sisters read aloud the inspiring story about the early life of Blessed Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton and of her conversion to Catholicism — a choice of reading as appropriate as the menu.

Followed a rosary, said privately as we walked around the grounds, then regrouping for a question and answer period. Understandably, most of the questions had to do with recent changes in the Church in this post-concilliar era.

The day closed with a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament, the utter silence broken only by the quarter-hour chiming of the small chapel clock and an occasional fervent prayer by the young priest.

Benediction — and back into the world we had left. 'Twas less than five hours, actually, but it seemed like time suspended, an unforgettable experience.

Sea Chaplain

Buenos Aires—(NC)—Father Alex Dalpiaz, P.S.S.C., a native of Chicago, has been named chaplain of Argentina's Apostleship of the Sea, an organization devoted to the spiritual care of sailors.

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New York — (RNS) Sterling W. Brown, p of the National Confer Christians and Jews, ha establishment of a chai menical studies at John University as a "dram sound educational effor tend the intercreedal tion set in motion" by Pope John XXIII.

The chair at the Jes versity was named in h the late Walter J. Tuo his wife, Mary. Mr. Tuoh chairman and chief e of the Chesapeake an Railroad, was an activ ber of the NCCJ. He Cleveland, May 12.

Dr. Brown said that fluence stemming from emplary life of the late J. Tuohy would have co to ameliorate man's inh even if no special act been taken to perpetu memory and extend h sense of values."

However, Dr. Brow with the establishment Tuohy chair by John at University Heights "Mr. Tuohy's influence will accrue interest a tribute the more to t life of man."

The NCCJ president that the ecumenical which will utilize the of visiting Catholic, Pr and Jewish theologians character with the nob ditions of the Jesuit o

He noted that a "nu European universities h had such ireonic arrang Few institutions in have undertaken to pro visiting lecturers in from a religious grou than their own."

"None that I know added, "have sought to a continuing opportuni as that being developed Carroll University. It and doubtless will recei support from Protestan and Orthodox, as well olics."

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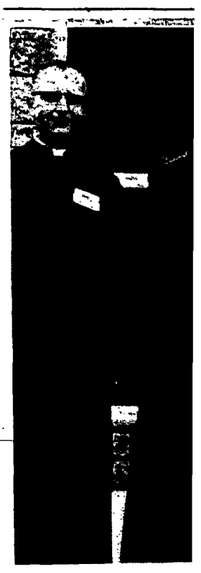

The

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They were membe group totalling 74 w cluded priests, nuns people at Queen of Pe sion Seminary at Jaffr ter, N.H. Retreat were Oblate Father Bennett, Father Dalla Soyza of Ceylon an Silverius Shields of V ton.

Theme of the retr based on the Vatica cil's statement on the

"Thei