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# The Priest Who Outfoxed the Nazis in Rome

Catholic Press Features

New York — The scene is Nazi-occupied Rome during World War II. Msgr. Hugh O'Flaherty who made a practice of risking his life to save enemies of the Germans, is visiting an Italian nobleman to get funds for his rescue operations.

Suddenly the place is raided by Nazis, headed by the hated and feared chief of the German SS in Rome, Col. Herbert Kappler.

The priest runs to the cellar of the palace, which at the moment was being loaded with the winter supply of coal. He strips off his black coat, rips his shirt off, rubs himself all over with coal dust and climbs up the chute to the trapdoor through which the coal was poured into the cellar.

A German voice calls out in poor Italian, "You men hurry up with your work and get out of here." The monsignor, disguised as a coal carrier, gladly obeys.

After the war, Col. Kappler was jailed for his crimes and only one person ever visited him—Msgr. O'Flaherty. In 1959, Kappler was baptized a Catholic by the very man he would have murdered years before.

This is but one of the adventures in the story of "The Scarlet Pimpernel of the Vatican," who is credited with saving more Allied lives than any other person in the war.

Msgr. O'Flaherty was so successful at saving war refugees and escaped prisoners, that during the 1943-44 battle years he was the Gestapo's "most wanted man in Rome."

J. P. Gallagher, an English journalist who persuaded Msgr. O'Flaherty to talk about his war activities shortly before the priest died in his native Ireland in 1963, has published Msgr. O'Flaherty's secret diary in a book titled "The Scarlet Pimpernel of the Vatican" (Coward-McCann).

The "pimpernel" name was first popularized in 1905 by Baroness Orczy, who created a fictional and dashing French Revolution hero who



FATHER O'FLAHERTY



KARL MALDEN

## Will the Real 'Scarlet Pimpernel' Please Stand Up?

was artful at making escapes via clever disguises and ruses. She dubbed him "The Scarlet Pimpernel" after a flower of the same name that closes up and hides itself at the approach of bad weather.

Msgr. O'Flaherty, robed in black with purple trim, was "literally and figuratively a Scarlet Pimpernel" according to biographer Gallagher, but there was nothing fictional about Msgr. O'Flaherty's exploits.

When Rome was liberated by the Americans, the underground escape organization headed up by the priest was hiding no less than 3,925 persons in and around the city — Jews, American soldiers, Arabs, Greeks, English and others—not to mention the uncounted numbers his organization had smuggled out from under the Gestapo noses up to then.

"Operating an amazing rescue network from inside Rome's German College itself, with his own secret line to SS headquarters," Gallagher reports, "he deftly

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mass-produced forged documents behind the Vatican walls, and stole boots from a German supply factory so that rescued POW's could rejoin their fighting forces well-equipped.

"This breathtaking series of narrow escapes, inspired plotting and defiance," fairly cries out to be filmed," commented "Publisher's Weekly" in a review of Gallagher's book, and if it ever is, the title role could go to actor Karl Malden, who bears a resemblance to Msgr. O'Flaherty.

Msgr. O'Flaherty, who was secretary to the Holy Office in the Vatican Curia, first became involved when Pope



James A. Clapp

## Ex-Rochesterian Gets Doctorate

James A. Clapp, son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Clapp of Timp Drive, recently received the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences in Urban Studies at Syracuse University's Maxwell School.

Dr. Clapp has been appointed assistant professor of Political Science to teach and co-direct a new Masters program in urban planning at San Diego State College. He attended McQuaid High School (class of 1958).

## Retreat, Camp-Out Planned for Scouts

The annual Otletiana Council Catholic Scout Retreat will be open to scouts of all faiths this year. In addition to Sunday Mass, other religious services will be held.

Father Joseph P. Brennan will be the retreat advisor and John H. Bacon, retreat chairman. The three day program will be supervised by seminarians, from Friday evening, Sept. 27, through Sunday afternoon.

The camp site will be on diocesan property on the west side of Lake Avenue, directly across from the Seminary.

Closing registration date is September 16.

## Rose Garden Party

A band concert, art show and coffee break will be added to the natural attractions of the Maplewood Park rose garden for "Sunday with the Roses" August 25.

The program, from 2 to 4, will center about the dedication of a new garden building.

**salvation and service**  
RIGHT REVEREND EDWARD T. O'MEARA  
NATIONAL DIRECTOR

## Are Missionaries Obsolete?

What exactly is the role of the Christian missionary? Re-evaluation of the whole idea of mission has left many Catholics in a quandary concerning the missionary's place in the Church today. Since Vatican II has emphasized the fact that salvation can be gained even by those who are not external believers in Christ, is there a need for missionaries to travel throughout the world spreading the "Good News" of salvation?

The role of the missionary today can be seen in this way. Christ is present among all peoples. He is there among the tribes in the deepest jungles of Africa; He is there in the mountains of Australia; He is there in the deserts of India. He is present even though the inhabitants have never heard of Him. For that is the real meaning of the Incarnation, that Christ became man to redeem all men once and for all. Missionaries, therefore, do not bring Christ to these people; rather, they witness to the fact that He is there already. For it is the Church's obligation to be a sign—a signal—as it were—to the world, telling it that Christ is alive, that He is present among us, that He is willing to be recognized.

By their very being, then, Christian missionaries are performing a service that no other people can perform. If, for some reason, missionaries could discharge no other function than simply being with their people, this alone would be reason for their existence. For they have openly labeled themselves as followers of Christ and as such, they are manifesting to all the world the meaning and beauty of the Christian life.

Granted, then, that Christ has come and remains with all men, what then are we to make of Jesus' last command "to make disciples of all nations"? Does the knowledge that Christ is present among all peoples lessen the obligation to spread the gospel message? Vatican II has been explicit in its response to this question. The Christian missionary has a definite obligation to "preach the gospel to every creature," for what was once preached by the Lord must be proclaimed and spread abroad to the ends of the earth. Therefore, though his primary concern is not mass conversion, the missionary must still make an effort to preach the Word of God, so that his hearers will be moved to accept it. In this way, what is begun by Christ's presence among men can be brought to fulfillment by the acceptance of the gospel message.

But how does all this concern us? How is the average Christian—who will never even see a mission field—affected by this new awareness of the missionary's place in the Church today? The answer is simply this: as the missionary's obligation to bear witness to the presence of Christ increases, so, too, does our own. The Council Fathers have admonished that "wherever they live, all Christians are bound to show forth, by the example of their lives and by the witness of their speech, that they are believers in Christ. Each one of us, then, has the obligation to be a sign of Christ's presence in the world. All of us, of course, can advance the world spreading the "Good News" of salvation; but we can join in prayer and sacrifice with those who do. The best means to support these mission efforts is the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Church's official missionary organization. Through the Society, missionaries all over the world are aided in their efforts to build the Kingdom of God upon earth. Your generosity to the Society will make it possible for more people to recognize Christ in the world.

SALVATION AND SERVICE are the work of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Please cut out this column and send your offering to: Right Reverend Edward T. O'Meara, National Director, 366 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001, or directly to your local diocesan director, Rt. Rev. Msgr. John F. Duffy, 50 Chestnut Street, Rochester, New York 14604.

staked the city by day and by night, taunting the Germans by his very presence, standing alone on the steps of St. Peter's, waiting for those in trouble to come to him and be saved from imprisonment, torture and possibly death.

In the flamboyant style of a true pimpernel, Msgr. O'Flaherty defied the German SS with clever tricks, such as hiding people in Italian jails, where the SS men would never think to look, or passing people through the Vatican gates dressed in his own monsignor's robes. One young anti-Fascist girl was saved by the monsignor by having her wear the uniform of a Papal Swiss guard and marching her right past the Germans, unnoticed.

He mass-produced forged documents behind the Vatican walls, and stole boots from a German supply factory so that rescued POW's could rejoin their fighting forces well-equipped.

"This breathtaking series of narrow escapes, inspired plotting and defiance," fairly cries out to be filmed," commented "Publisher's Weekly" in a review of Gallagher's book, and if it ever is, the title role could go to actor Karl Malden, who bears a resemblance to Msgr. O'Flaherty.

Msgr. O'Flaherty, who was secretary to the Holy Office in the Vatican Curia, first became involved when Pope

Pius XII ordered the Holy Office to be a center of information and aid for POWs, refugees and their families. Msgr. O'Flaherty was appointed as the interpreter for British POWs.

It was a specific incident, however, which compelled him to go beyond visiting camps to setting up his rescue network. The decision came as the monsignor watched hundreds of Jews being herded into trucks, "those gentle people being treated like beasts," as he put it.

The Germans had demanded 2 million pounds for the lives of the Jews of Rome, and though this sum was pledged within 24 hours by Pope Pius XII and the Roman nobility, the Germans suddenly changed their minds and decided to herd the Jews to the concentration camps and, eventually, the gas chambers.

The monsignor, then 46, enlisted the aid of the British legation in the Vatican, who, with the aid of escaped British officers, Italian peasants and Roman noblemen, helped him set up his escape network.

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**As I See I Convention**  
By PAT COSTA  
All around the town the consensus seemed to be the same: The Republican convention was with very few exceptions dull, dull, dull.

At our house we agreed. But somewhere along the line, during last week's events we came to the conclusion that in this particular case, dullness could be and was fascinating. The reasons:

When national figures of such magnitude get together, no matter how stuffy they may appear on the surface, under the camera's gimlet eye and the seldom deferential scrutiny of the roving reporter's questions, they produce interesting sights and sounds.

Examples: The manner in which former presidential candidate Thomas Dewey, brushed off a floor reporter as if he were no more than an annoying fly in the early stages of the convention; the haunting similarity between John Eisenhower and his

Here is a list of motion pictures currently playing in Rochester area theaters, and the ratings given them by the National Office of Motion Pictures:

- Paramount — "Where Were You When the Lights Went Out?" (Adults)
- Regent — "Petulia" (Adults)
- Cinema — "Rosemary's Baby" (Condemned)
- Little — "What's So Bad About Feeling Good?" (Adults)
- Monroe — "War and Peace" (Family)
- Riviera — "Dr. Doolittle" (Family)
- Studdo 2 — "The Graduate" (Adults, with reservations)
- Loew's — "Prudence and the Pill" (Condemned)
- Stoneridge — "The Thomas Crown Affair" (Objectable in part for all)
- Panorama — "The Odd Couple" (Adults)
- Towne — "Boom" (Objectable in part for all)
- Waring — "Hammerhead" (Objectable in part for all)
- Statson — "Never a Dull Moment" (Family)
- Fine Arts — "The Detective" (Objectable in part for all)
- Lyell — "King Kong Escapes" (Family)

# TV

Friday Aug. 16 thru

Ratings are those given by the National Catholic Office for originally shown. A-1: morally up; A-2: morally unobjectionable for adults; with reservations; B: all; C: condemned. No Rating: National Catholic Office for Moral Decency. N.B. Before A-3 indicated morally unobjectionable

Movie listings supplied by TV Guide

Time	Channel	Movie
4:00 p.m.	8	Just Around
9:00 p.m.	10	Harder Than
11:30 p.m.	13	Meet Danny
10:40 p.m.	10	The Egg

**Saturday, A**

2:00 p.m.	10	Conquest
2:00 p.m.	13	Curse of the
3:30 p.m.	13	Strangers
5:35 p.m.	10	Knock on
9:00 p.m.	8	Something
11:00 p.m.	10	Combat So
11:15 p.m.	13	Midnight
11:30 p.m.	8	Darby's Ri

**Sunday, A**

2:00 p.m.	8	I'll Get By
2:00 p.m.	13	The Kettle
3:30 p.m.	13	Rooney
5:35 p.m.	10	Terror by
9:00 p.m.	13	The Great
12:15 p.m.	13	Bullets of

**Monday, A**

4:00 p.m.	8	Going Ste
9:00 p.m.	13	The Unfor

**Tuesday, A**

4:00 p.m.	8	Seven Men
8:30 p.m.	8	No Man Is
11:30 p.m.	13	Mohawk

**Wednesday, A**

4:00 p.m.	8	Ghost of
9:00 p.m.	13	Bus Stop
11:30 p.m.	13	Maid for

**Thursday, A**

4:00 p.m.	8	Breakaway
9:00 p.m.	10	Stolen Ho
11:30 p.m.	13	Most Dang