

Once a Prisoner, He Now Helps Inmates

Hsinchu, Taiwan (NC)—A Rochester, N.Y. priest who was ordained in a Japanese concentration camp in 1944 now is carrying an active apostolate in the largest juvenile prison in Taiwan.

He is Father Louis Dowd, a Jesuit veteran of China missions, who has not forgotten what it is like to be a prisoner.

(Father Dowd attended Blessed Sacrament School and Aquinas Institute in Rochester. He entered the Jesuit order Sept. 2, 1931, two years after his graduation from Aquinas. He arrived in the China missions in 1938, one year after the beginning of the Chinese-Japanese War.

Following Pearl Harbor, he was interned by the Japanese. He was offered an opportunity for repatriation to the United States in 1942, but preferred to stay in China.



Work under way to build a shop for vocational training.

He was ordained in the prison camp in 1944, and was expelled from the Red China mainland in 1952. He then joined other Jesuits in the Taiwan missions.)

With patience and tact, de-

spite hide-bound regulations, indifference and even hostility, he has obtained entrance and won for himself a position of trust in the prison housing 300 inmates—boys from 14 to 20 years of age, about half of whom are there for murder.

"I played it in very low key—no direct apostolate," Father Dowd said. "They began to take me for granted."

As the priest became familiar with the guards and teachers, he found that according to regulations the prisoners could receive two hours of religion each week—but no one seemed to know of this.

The boys are serving terms from 3 to 20 years, and classes are held from 9th grade to completion of high school.

"The murders committed

by the boys usually are in gang wars," Father Dowd said. "They are from all over Taiwan, but mostly from the cities."

"Chung Tang-min, the boy I went originally to see at the appeal of his mother, has become a wonderful Catholic. He realizes what a fool he was to get involved with gangs, and his big joy now is to help others."

Father Dowd now has a group of some 45 boys coming to his conferences, about 25 of whom are Catholics. He has baptised a few of those taking instructions, but he goes very slowly. Once weekly he has a discussion group, another day he celebrates Mass, and on Sundays he brings some kind of entertainment for those wishing to participate.

He sometimes shows a movie; sometimes brings in

a basketball team. The biggest entertainment has been supplied by cussillistas from Taipei.

Some of the musicians of Taipei bands who had made the cursillo (little course in Christianity) heard of Father Dowd's apostolate—and, anxious to help, volunteered their free time on Sundays. They play the sort of music young folk appreciate.

Among Father Dowd's activities in Hsinchu is directing a Catholic Social Service Center. He has organized Young Christian Worker groups and credit union leagues. The center provides a hostelry for migrant workers coming into the city. He helped found a bag factory which gives employment to many people in producing thousands of handbags. Apprenticeship training also is



Vocational training program teaches youngsters industrial skills.

given in various arts and crafts.

Persons desiring to assist this work may address him as follows: American Jesuits in China, 284 Stanyan St., San Francisco, Cal. 94118.

Sister Marks Anniversary

King Ferry — Women from five area parishes where Sister Francis Helen, SSJ., works attended a reception here June 25 marking her 25th anniversary as a Sister. It was held in Our Lady of the Lake Church hall.

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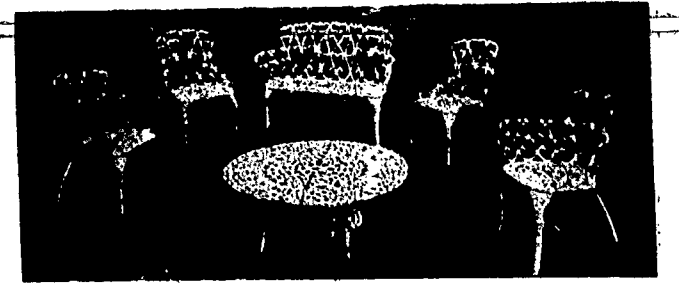
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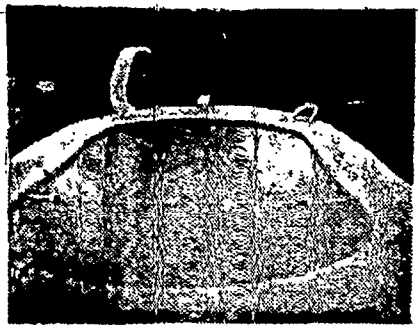


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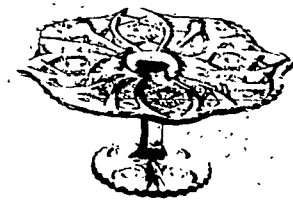
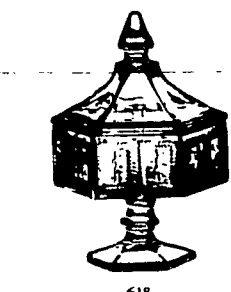
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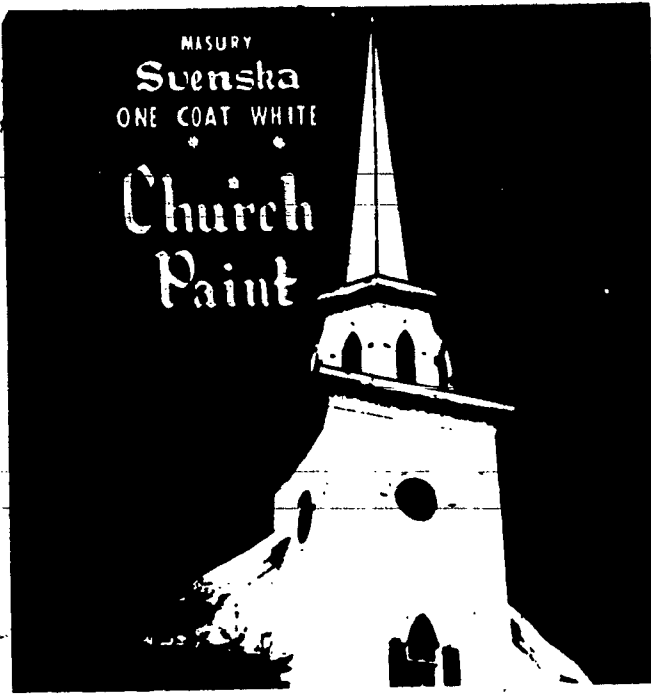
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