



Gypsies on Pilgrimage

A group of young gypsies hold huge candles before the Lourdes grotto during their annual pilgrimage to the world-famous Marian shrine. (RNS Photo)

Love, Death in the Barrio

By Al Antczak

FULLERTON, Calif.—(NC)—This is a Mexican love story. It's locale is La Perla, a little restaurant in this town's old barrio. It's the story of John Reyes — a man kept alive for 11 years by much love and two pints of blood each week.

La Perla means pearl. The real pearl in this story is John's wife — dark-haired green-eyed Jenny who likely knows more about love than hundreds of other today's women put together.

La Perla, is 2 next to the Reyes' old frame house. It's

where Jenny has worked 12 hours a day — for years, to support John and their four daughters, Mary, Margaret, Martha and Helen.

John Reyes contracted Osler-Weber-Rendu's disease. He could not retain his life's blood. In this disease the capillary walls thin, dilate, rupture under normal blood pressure. Then there is intestinal bleeding, nose bleeding, sometimes bleeding under the skin.

Loss of blood is so severe transfusions are required. For Reyes they were at first one, then two a week.

That's how he came to live on love. First, that of Jenny and the girls. They would not go on relief, even though the great cost of treatment exhausted their funds. So they started La Perla — Jenny and the girls.

Every taco, every tostada, every tamale made was a labor of love.

There was love, too, from the neighbors, some nearby and some distant and unknown — blood donors who gave blood to the Red Cross which in turn gave it to Mr. Reyes.

There was love of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange who provided service and medication for Reyes at nearby St. Jude Hospital and never sent a bill.

There was the love of the doctors who cared for him — and never sent a bill.

"I have never been short of a doctor," Reyes once said. "Sometimes, I am embarrassed to think of all the goodness I am accepting. But what can I do? I am dying. Thank God for the help of all who have been so good to us."

Reyes came to this country from Zacatecas, Mexico. He worked in the citrus industry, was a box maker in the packinghouse. Later he worked for a glass company — then he could work no longer.

He said of his wife: "This woman is a worker. She has great fiber and spirit. I thank God for her."

"You know, sometimes I hear of my acquaintances having quarrels and complaints. Yet they have health, good jobs, nice homes, new cars and good money," he added.

When he looked at Jenny, their eyes met and sparkled. There was happiness in their faces. Outside, the late afternoon sun was shining on La Perla with its bright signs on its frame walls.

That's how life was for John and Jenny.

On the feast of the Assumption the shades were drawn at La LPerlo. The lights were out.

John Reyes, 64, died that morning at St. Jude Hospital where he had been so well loved. He was buried from his parish church, St. Juliana's.

La Perla is still there in the barrio. Its story of love, courage and faith doubtless will be told and retold as long as it stands — maybe longer.

Cdl. Wright Gets "19" Case

Chicago — (NC) — The case of 19 Washington priests who were disciplined nearly two years ago for their stand on birth control has been sent to the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy, a priests' monthly reported here.

The September issue of Priests USA, newsletter of the

National Federation of Priests' Councils, cited a letter from Jean Villot, papal secretary of state. The letter said the Washington priests' case had been sent to the "competent" Roman congregation, which is the Congregation for the Clergy, headed by American Cardinal John Wright.

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COURIER / NATION

Salinas Priest Reprimanded

Salinas, Calif. — (RNS) — A young parish priest who publicly castigated the U.S. bishops' ad hoc committee on farm labor, was publicly reprimanded by his superior, Bishop Harry A. Clinch of Monterey.

Father Michael Cross, accompanied by high school and college students, crossed picket lines Sept. 1, stating that he was picking lettuce during a strike because of the "unfair intervention" of the bishops' committee during the farm labor dispute here.

"It was a complete sellout of mutual trust and respect between the clergy and the faithful," Father Cross said.

Bishop Clinch said "It is regrettable that a young Catholic priest of Salinas saw fit to accuse the National Catholic Bishops' committee of prejudice . . . The primary concern of the bishops' committee is to help all contending parties to meet and work out mutual problems through the avenue of collective bargaining. They enjoy the full confidence of this diocese of Monterey and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Moreover, they are here at the invitation of the teamsters, the UFWOC, and several large growers."

Cadet Denied C.O. Discharge

New York — (NC) — West Point senior Cary E. Donham has lost the second round in his fight to get a discharge from the Army as a conscientious objector. A federal judge here refused to order the Army to release the cadet.

Donham had earlier been denied a discharge by an Army review board, which judged that he lacked the "depth of sincerity" required of a conscientious objector.

Chicago See Runs Huge Kitchen

Chicago — (RNS) — The Chicago Archdiocese has set up a central kitchen to serve the nation's largest school lunch program outside the public school system. Meals will be prepared there for 10,000 children in 38 innercity parochial schools.

Cardinal John Cody dedicated the facilities last week and entertained government and church officials at a sample lunch. On the menu were ham with candied yams, macaroni salad, bread, butter, milk and jello. The meals are prepared a day in advance, refrigerated, transported to the schools in refrigerator trucks and heated quickly in convection ovens. In schools that lack cafeterias, the children eat at their desks.

The archdiocese provided \$43,000 for the conversion of an office building into a kitchen, plus one-fourth of the \$170,000 paid for equipment and its installation. The remainder came from federal funds administered by the state

Courier-Journal

Wednesday, September 16, 1970

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