

Truth and Fiction

By Father John S. Kennedy

Anyone who has read one or more of the books of Marc Oraison, the French priest who is also a physician and surgeon, knows that Oraison is distinctly unconventional. One would very likely want to know more about him. Father Oraison now satisfies such curiosity in "Strange Voyage" (Doubleday, \$5.95), which he calls "the autobiography of a non-conformist." Yes indeed.

In 1931, Oraison entered the university at 17, already intending to become a doctor. There he encountered the impact of scientific fact, and sensed the conflict between this and a simplistic, naive concept of religion. "I already felt the need to articulate a fundamental act of faith both in Christ and in things I was just discovering."

His social life during university days was active and joyous; he was something of a champion waltzer, as well as the producer of plays and musical recitals. And all the while he was doing hospital work in preparation for a medical career.

It was during the occupation of France in World War II that he was drawn to the priesthood. "The inability of medicine to resolve the problem of death led me to the desire to 'say Mass' — that is, to make the Resurrection present in our daily lives."

He went to the seminary at the Institut Catholique in Paris. At the time he was 29 and he found the seminary regulations irksome and in large measure unreasonable. When, for example, Paris was being bombed in 1944, the rector's supreme

concern was that the order of the seminary not be disrupted and that its isolation from the surrounding world be strictly maintained.

In the marriage course, the professor asked Oraison, as a doctor, to give two lectures on sexual physiology. In his preparation, he became dissatisfied with the idea of sexuality as merely organic, and it was then that he made his discovery of Freud and psychoanalysis, by which his thinking would thenceforth be influenced.

He was ordained in 1948, and became a student-curate at La Trinite in Paris. He continued to work on a thesis for the doctorate in theology, and took as his subject the problems of sexuality in the light of psychoanalysis. This was later published as "Christian Life and Problems of Sexuality." He was awarded his degree with the highest distinction.

It was not long before he was busy addressing seminaries and priests, testing candidates for the priesthood, counseling priests on their problems. He was soon in trouble with the pre-Vatican II Holy Office, and attempts were made to stop him from publishing. But he had staunch defenders in the French hierarchy.

In the midst of his difficulties, it never occurred to him to leave the priesthood, much less the Church. He repeatedly asserts his faith in Christ and in the Church. He is critical of much outmoded structuring which he sees as at odds with inescapable present reality, but he respects authority and regards as necessary obedience properly understood.

New Book Explores 'Church Lobby'

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — The "church lobby" is as firmly entrenched in the nation's capital, as the Washington Monument, according to a new book which will be read with keen interest by executives of national religious agencies here.

"The Growing Church Lobby in Washington" (Wm. B. Eerdmans) by James L. Adams is one of the first detailed studies of religious influence in national policy during the 1960s.

Adams, a Cincinnati newsman, began gathering data for the book when he was a Fellow at the Washington Journalism Center in 1967. He holds that the "church lobby" is "stronger than an army" in some cases. In fact, he attributes more power to the lobbyists

than most of them feel they have.

Among the groups Adams considers church lobbies are the National Council of Churches various departments of the U.S. Catholic Conference, Jewish agencies, social action sections of major Protestant denominations, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

He comments that the U.S. Catholic Conference is perhaps the strongest religious agency in Washington. He also highlights the operations of the National Council of the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church and the United Presbyterian Church.

Churchmen were highly visible in the 1964 proceedings for a federal civil rights law and again in 1965 as the Office of Economic Opportunity was forced to go against the wishes of Sen. John Stennis (D-Miss.) in refinancing the child development program in the Delta.

In the school bill of 1965, he states, a new alignment of

forces developed on the question of aid to private and parochial education. Many Protestant and ecumenical groups sided with the Catholics against Reform Jews, evangelicals and Unitarians.

The author concludes, however, that President Lyndon Johnson pulled a fast one on the church lobbyists by linking the education bill to poverty and having it passed before the Churches could adopt position papers. He also feels that the 1965 act represents more of a crack in the church-state "wall of separation through which tax funds can be leaked" to private education than it was an honest grappling with the real issues.

On opposition to the Vietnam war, Adams says that if "flames could have been smothered by words, the religious leaders would have brought about instant peace." He holds that their outcry has produced little tangible political results in Washington because the law-makers know that the religious anti-war critics are "generals without armies."

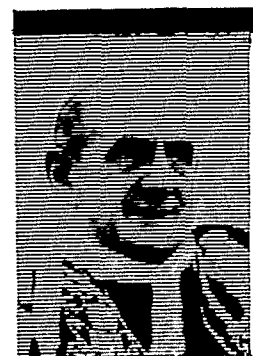
African Novelist To Speak Here

Peter K. Palangyo, African novelist, will speak on "Africa and Afro-America" at St. John Fisher College on Tuesday, Dec. 1 at 8:00 p.m. in Basil 135.

Palangyo, a biologist by training, did graduate work at the University of Minnesota, but abandoned the sciences in favor of literature. He is in the Black Studies Department at the University of Buffalo. His novel, "Dying in the Sun", is the first novel by a Tanzanian to be published in the African Writers Series. His second novel, soon to appear, is entitled "The Face of Man."

DICKEY AT BROCKPORT

James Dickey, whose novel "Deliverance" was on the best-seller list for 25 weeks earlier this year, will read from his poetry at 8:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 3, in the Gold Room of Edwards Hall (Communications Building) at the State University College at Brockport.



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