

Dublin and Tapes of Another Kind

Columnist Father Paul J. Cuddy recently led a Courier-Journal tour of Ireland. Following is his continuing account of his trip.

By FATHER PAUL J. CUDDY

During the C-J Ireland Tour of last October, we four priests with the group conveniently celebrated Mass with our group in Dublin Hotel. When we left we discovered we should have had permission from the Bishop. The reason some groups had been coming through, celebrating liturgies forbidden by liturgical regulations. Before the May tour a charming Mary Doran, receptionist at the Gresham Hotel, had arranged for us to celebrate Mass at St. Kevin's chapel, off the pro-Cathedral proper. The distance, as one native put it picturesquely, was "four minutes, slow walking."

After a hearty breakfast: fruit, porridge, Irish ham, bacon, eggs, soda bread which has an oat meal flavor, toast, marmalade, coffee or tea, we started to "do" Dublin.

First stop was the Carmelite Church of St. Teresa. Bishop Sheen preaches the Novena in honor of St. Teresa each year. We were informed: "When Bishop Sheen comes, they build a platform in the middle of the church. The pulpit is full of radio and TV men and equipment. Then on to the Irish Sweepstakes where I had the honor" (an Irishism of acting as turf accountant for some Elmira friends. The sweeps employ 4,500 persons, many of them widows. This supplements their small pensions. Like so much of Ireland, the minimum of sophisticated machinery: IBM machines, electronic devices; and the wider use of people gave us a nostalgia for simpler days and simpler ways.

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

Father Paul J. Cuddy

A Dublin tour always includes Trinity college. It was founded by Elizabeth I in 1591 to establish Protestantism firmly in Ireland. While anti-Catholicism still exists there, it is less blatant. Its library exhibits the Book of Kells, the Gospels in Latin written by Irish monks during the 8th century, on rare vellum and rarer colored inks. It has beautiful and intricate pictures, script and designs; and is perhaps the most beautiful book in the world.

Georgian architecture and Phoenix Park are among Dublin's pride. The park includes the White House of the President, a herd of deer, football and polo grounds, and a zoo. Downtown, the Franciscan church of "Adam and Eve" has a curious history. Until the Emancipation Bill was passed in 1829 English Law forbade Catholic worship. Catholics used to slip into the pub called "Adam and Eve" go down stairs where Mass was clandestinely celebrated, away from the eyes of police and informers. The story is that one day, while Mass was being celebrated in the cellar, the pub floor collapsed, killing some of the worshippers. When religious toleration was granted in 1829, the Franciscans built the Church of St. Francis. But to this day all Dublin refers to it by its pub-day name. The Church of Adam and Eve.

After a hearty noon lunch the afternoon was free. I was still wondering how to start circulating Bishop Sheen's 15 taped

conferences in Ireland. Miss Mary Doran suggested Veritas, the headquarters of the Irish Catholic Truth Society, only three blocks away. With a set of Sheen tapes under my arm I set off. Veritas is a large, efficient, busy religious goods and catechetical store. It was near closing time. I asked for the manager. "Downstairs, Father." But he had gone. I began a chat with a grand young Mr. Frank Moore. He seemed to be a clerk, about 22 or 23, and handsome in a virile Irish manner. So I told him about the taped conferences, and my hope to get them circulated in Ireland. He studied them, and beamed: "Beautiful. Americans do things so well. How can I get a set?" "Are you interested?" "I am." "In buying a set?" "Yes. The store can pay for that." "But you are so young. Do you have the authority?" He looked amused and annoyed. "Of course! I do the buying for this department." "Then if you will give me 8 pounds you can have this set." He was delighted. I would gladly have donated it if he would propagate the message, but 8 pounds are 8 pounds. After the exchange I said: "My special hope is to get these talks on Radio Erin. Do you have any connections with radio people?" "I do have some friends in the radio administration I will do what I can." You can imagine my return to the Gresham floating on Cloud Nine.

After dinner and the rest, the group went at 8 p.m. to a village outside Dublin for an evening of rousing patriotic and sentimental singing, given at a small hall adjoining an ordinary pub. My Guardian Angel introduced me to two brothers in the pub. One was 17, the other 19. Both are semi-skilled workers.

With the ice broken over a bit of stout, I asked: "What is happening with the young people your age regarding religion?" T replied: "Oh, about 75% don't go to Mass — including ourselves." His brother nodded assent. "Ah, is that so? And are you mad about something? At some priest or nun? At the Church?" "Oh, no. But the Church will have to catch up with the times."

"And what would you want the Church to do?"

"Well, first it should permit contraception. And it should grant divorce. And I think if a fellow and girl love another they should be permitted to have relations without considering it a sin." It was no time for a theological discussion, so I just smiled and said: "Might it not be that your reason number three is really number one?" They blushed a bit and smiled an acquiescence.

I have checked the statistic, 75%, and conclude it is a great exaggeration. But Ireland is suffering from the uneasiness of uncertainty and a kind of ecclesiastical closing of the eye when stronger shepherding is needed. We talked for an hour, and at the end T laughed: "I supposed when we marry our wives will be bringing us off to Mass." I replied: "And I am hoping that you'll be at Mass long before that, and will be bringing laggards with you." I gave each a little calendar with the Serenity Prayer; we shook hands, and I promised to write to them.

In the small hall with us was a young group from Boston. Some of the group recognized some of the Boston group. They simultaneously exclaimed: "It's a small world!" Everyone shook hands and we all left, light with the gaily of the evening, ready for a good night's sleep, and off to Sligo the next day.

THE OPEN WINDOW

Father Louis Hohman

Dear Father Hohman,

It is getting near the end of Easter time and we have been having an argument in our house. We know that Church law still says we must receive Holy Communion during the Easter time, but what about confession? My husband says that he remembers from his catechism days that one must go to confession at least once a year. I have been told that one need not go to confession unless one has mortal sins to confess. In that case I could make my Easter duty without first going to confession. Who is right?

Sincerely,
W.H.

Dear W.H.,

The law about yearly confession says that Catholics are bound to confess once a year ALL MORTAL SINS committed since their last confession. Actually this doesn't really have anything to do with the other obligation of the Easter duty. But the obligation of confessing once a year has usually been attached to the obligation of Easter duty for the reason that someone in mortal sin would have to go to confession before making the "Easter duty." So you are right in the sense that if you were not conscious of being in the state of mortal sin, that is, alienated from Christ in a

substantial degree, you would never be obliged to go to confession.

It might be well to examine the reasons behind these two laws. In reality, considering the benefits to be derived from the Sacraments, there should be no need for laws commanding our reception of them. Human nature being what it is, the Church feels that it is useful to remind people in this forceful way of the mistake it would be to neglect the Sacraments for a long period of time.

If, for example, a person is alienated from Christ for a year or more (or even less for that matter) that person is being very unwise. And on the assumption that the Eucharist is a pledge of our resurrection to eternal life, it would be most unwise to fail to receive it for long periods of time.

Jesus Christ is our spiritual food and to refuse to partake of that food for a long time would be tantamount to courting spiritual starvation. The most appropriate time to do this minimally would be in the season of celebration of Christ's resurrection which, I say is a pledge of our own.

I hope you and your family are discussing this academically and not working at the minimal level. As the saying goes, "do yourself a favor!"

WORD FOR SUNDAY

Father Albert Shamox

Sunday's Readings: (R1) Acts 7:55-60. (R2) Rv. 22:12-14, 16-17, 20. (R3) Jn. 17:20-26.

The first reading for the Sunday after Ascension Thursday reveals that Christ had ascended to the right hand of the Father. The expression "right hand of the Father" is only a metaphor explaining that, after the resurrection, Christ was no longer restricted by his humanity; that now he could act freely as Son of God with "no strings attached."

St. John in the second reading tells us that this disappearance of Christ after his ascension was not to be forever. He will come again. "I am coming soon."

In the meanwhile the Gospel narrates what he is doing at his Father's right hand. He is praying, praying for his disciples and for those who believe in them. He prays that the unity between them will be so marked that the world also will come to believe in Jesus. To achieve this, he will send the Holy Spirit.

The martyrdom of Stephen shows the Spirit already at work. St. Luke explicitly ascribes the triumph of the first martyr to the Holy Spirit — "Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit."

Because Stephen is the first martyr of the Church and because firsts are always important, like that of Christopher Columbus, it would be well to contemplate and meditate upon Stephen's death.

The New Testament offers details of only two deaths: that of Jesus and that of Stephen. Perhaps the inspired writers want us to learn that the way a man lives is more important than the way he dies; or, to put it differently, that the way he dies is determined by the way he lives.

When the enraged men dragged Stephen outside the city of Jerusalem, as they had done with Jesus, Stephen turned not to the mobs to try to mollify them, nor to the courts, nor did he plead the fifth amendment, rather he "looked up to heaven." And in the sky above, he saw the glory of God. That glory did not come

into existence at that moment. It was always there and is there now. The spiritual world is nearer than we often think. From that vision of a greater life beyond this, Stephen drew the power to dare all and to bear all.

Amid "the glory of God" Stephen saw him who is the glory of the Father, namely, Jesus. It is significant that in this particular instance Stephen saw Jesus standing, not sitting, at God's right hand. Our Lord had warned the Jews that they would see him sitting; Stephen saw him standing. The difference is noteworthy. To the Jews Jesus will sit as judge; to Stephen he stands, he stands, ready to give him the crown of victory. He stands, ready to assist him. No friend ever sits by when his friend is in need. A nurse brings a little child to a park to play. As long as the child plays on the grass, the nurse sits and takes no notice. But as soon as the child ventures near the busy thoroughfare bordering the park, and approaches danger, the nurse stands and gets the child to bring it back to safety.

The lot of the Christian is ordinarily persecution. Because you are not of this world, Christ once told his apostles, the world will hate you. The Mother of God said to Bernadette at Lourdes, "I do not promise you happiness in this world but in the next." Stephen was a lovable, personable youth. There was nothing in his character that aroused hostility. What caused his persecution was that he held convictions that clashed with the prejudices and the worldly interest of his contemporaries. But even such convictions would not have caused his sufferings and death had he kept them to himself, compromised them, toned them down to the corrupt spirit of his age. Instead he faithfully proclaimed his convictions; therefore he was stoned to death!

For a Christian to compromise Christian principles is like the deluge to the world; a flood that will drown it. For a Christian to suffer persecution for his faith is like the deluge to the ark; a flood that lifts it nearer heaven.



Photo courtesy the Strong Museum

Winslow Homer's Return of the Gleaner will be on public display for the first time at the Seton Show.

'Evening of Art' To Aid Hospital

An elegant "Evening of Art" will be hosted by the 70th Seton Branch of St. Mary's Hospital on June 8 from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Nazareth College Arts Center.

The most ambitious undertaking in the branch's history, the show and sale will take up almost the entire Art Center. More than 1200 invitations have been issued.

Proceeds from the benefit will help purchase Fluorescein Angiography Equipment. The relatively new unit consists of a microscope and camera attachment used in diagnosis and treatment of many eye problems.

Highlight of the show will be an exhibition of Winslow Homers

from the Strong Museum Collection.

This exhibition was assembled from Margaret Strong's personal collection and will be viewed for the first time that evening. Following the show it will be placed in its permanent home at the Museum. Homer is particularly noted for his seascapes. Included in the collection are oils, water colors, prints and three dimensional objects.

Also included in the show and sale are works by 33 area artists and craftsmen.

Among the artists represented are Milton Bloom, Isobel Boyd, John Menihan, Bernadette Merkel, Wendell Smith and Carl Zollo.