

ON THE RIGHT SIDE



Fr. Paul J. Cuddy

Since our CJ Tour of Oct. 16-30, many have asked: "What is Spain like?" During the Holy Year of 1950 Father Kress and I spent a week in Spain with a friend, Father Del Olmo-Ibanez, a Spanish Vincentian. 1950 was only eleven years after the dreadful Spanish Civil War. It was only five years after World War II. A deep-seated anti-Catholicism and a great disappointment on the part of the liberal press because Franco defeated Communism in Spain, placed Spain as a leper country among nations. In 1950 all Europe and the West — including Communist Russia, which even then held Poland, the Ukraine, Hungary, Lithuania et al in bondage — were showered with Marshall Plan money, machinery, food, technical help.

Spain was hated and unaided. Fr. K. and I recall the trucks and autos were old clunkers hardly able to wheeze down the road.

Today industries flourish. Building programs are prodigious. Were it not for the curse of inflation, which is over 20 per cent, it would be a very prosperous country.

Our CJ Group flew from Lisbon to Madrid. From there to the Toledo of El Greco, Avila of Saints Teresa and John of the Cross, El Escorial of Philip II and to the remarkable Valley of the Fallen. Fr. Lane remarked of the Valley: "It would be worth coming to Spain just to see this." From Madrid we flew to Seville. From then on, we went by bus to Cordoba, Granada, and Terremolinos, which is a kind of Miami Beach sprung up this past decade for the tourist trade.

In Granada there is a chapel adjoining the cathedral. There I met Senora Josefa Mendar, who is the Spanish Princess of Battenberg, and her daughter, who is a nun, beautiful in her religious habit. The effervescent princess was showing a non-Catholic friend from California the tomb of Ferdinand and Isabella. I edged forward to listen to her description. Soon they

welcomed me to join them. I asked the princess: "How is the Church in Spain?" "Very good. The Church is the strongest support of the Spanish people. It was very wealthy, from gratitude of many who made great donations. King Ferdinand III was one. The Church later lost most of its property, but was indifferent to this. We Spaniards are people of the spirit. The material is very secondary. Now much has been given again to the Church." Then she pointed to the two sarcophagi of Ferdinand and Isabella, with the images of the King and Queen lying in the sleep of death, each with a head on a stone pillow. "Do you notice the head of Isabella sinks lower into the pillow than that of Ferdinand? That is because she had more brains."

In Madrid I talked with a university student who said: "Spain has had terrible publicity in European and American presses. When a half dozen terrorists murdered Spanish policemen and were executed all the press screamed at the atrocity. Executions go on every day in Communist Russia. Neither the Press nor governments protest. In 1973, tourism was our number one industry. Today Spain exports cars, buses, etc. as well as fruits." The 1976 tourist finds that "the cheap prices" he hoped for are equal to the prices in the United States today.

On returning home I phoned Father Caliman, pastor of St. Jerome's parish in East Rochester, and the most knowledgeable priest in the diocese about Spain. "Father Tony, we saw wonderful things and got a smattering of history, but necessarily superficial. What is a good book to give an over-view of Spain?" Without hesitation he replied: "Iberia" by James E. Michener. He also wrote Hawaii. It's probably the fairest you can find in the English language." I got the book, and know of no other which elucidates so well Spain's complex history.

Of the "Black Legend" Michener, who is no Catholic, wrote "I was guilty of the grave error which Spanish critics charge against most Anglo-Saxon writers: I had been contaminated by the Black Legend, that body of charges assembled by non-Spanish scholars, especially Protestants, to discredit Spain and Catholicism. Even worse damage was done by fellow Catholics, the Italians, who to create a political counterbalance to the Spanish influence in Italy, did so by spreading existing rumors and creating new ones. As I read the studies deflating the Black Legend, I found that they were directed at people like me, for I was almost the archetype of the person corrupted by the Legend." (Iberia, pp. 372-373)

Since the tour will be richer to our group by extended knowledge, and pictures, I have sent a copy of Michener's book to each person. Why not borrow theirs, or get it from the public library?

BOOKSALE

The annual sale of books culled from library shelves at St. Bernard's Seminary will take place in the library Dec. 13 and 14 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

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Rosary March Scheduled For Dec. 12

Diocesans are invited to participate on a local level in the nationwide Rosary March for America next Sunday, Dec. 12, the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The march will begin at 3 p.m. at the Liberty Pole in downtown Rochester, proceed along Main Street and St. Paul to St. Mary's Church for Benediction.

The theme of the march is thanksgiving for the first 200 years of our nation and a petition for help for the next 200 years. Marchers are asked to arrive at the Liberty Pole at 2:30 p.m. to form the procession.

Open House Set At Edison Tech

Edison Technical and Industrial High School offers both career and academic courses with a broad range of intellectual requirements," a spokesman noted recently. It draws students from all over the county, and therefore is in competition with all the other high schools, Ronald Feinen pointed out.

Besides the range of "shop" courses that the school's name suggests, there are programs leading into the fields of textile and metal fabrication, graphic arts, advertising design and computer science, Feinen said.

To acquaint the public with what he called a "revolution" in vocational education, the school has scheduled an open house for 7-9:30 p.m. tomorrow, Dec. 9. Junior high school students and their parents are specially invited. Application forms will be available. Edison Tech remains at 725 Clifford, pending completion of new facilities at Lexington and Cofax.

CWC TEA

The cloistered Carmelite Nuns will be the beneficiaries of this year's Holiday Tea, sponsored by the Business Women's Group of the Catholic Women's Club. The tea will be held in the group's clubhouse at 494 East Ave. on Sunday, Dec. 12, from 3 to 5 p.m. Members bring canned goods and household items to stock the shelves of the Jefferson Road monastery. In charge of the event are Mrs. Melbourne J. Porter and Mrs. Walter V. Hanss among others.

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