

# Chaplain's book recalls horrors, faith of wartime life

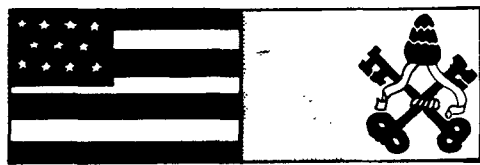
By Father Cuddy  
Courier Columnist

Father Donald Murphy, a native of Elmira and founder of St. Pius X Church in Rochester, was an army chaplain in World War II. Recently he had a private printing of a diary he kept.

It is a daily record of his experiences from just before the Allies invaded Europe on D-day, June, 1944, to the time he was discharged from the Army in 1945. He whimsically entitled the diary, *Bringing Up Father*. Since he had only 250 copies printed, it may become a collector's item.

The diary was kept on small sheets of paper. The notes are brief and concise up to the time he and his unit settled near Konnersreut. There he became a good friend of the famous stigmatic, Therese Neumann in Bavaria.

He wrote extensively about her and the coming of the soldiers to witness her passion, as she underwent the Passion of Our Lord on many Fridays. I myself witnessed that on Sept. 14, 1945 — the feast of the



## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

Finding of the Holy Cross — when I was stationed near Munich, Bavaria.

These points especially struck me upon reading the diary: the constant slogging through mud and rains; the frequency with which Father Murphy got lost trying to find his unit; the horror of war, with men asked to kill one another; the tragedy of men killed and maimed; the agony and disruption in the lives of parents, wives and children (writing letters of condolence was one of Father Murphy's special responsibilities); the rugged conditions in the field such as bathing from a helmet; the drab food and the delight of an occasional good meal; and sleeping bags against destroyed

buildings, bringing with it the constant danger from enemy shells.

When Father Francis Vogt, who was also an Army chaplain, read the book, he beamed, "I could write my signature at the end and it would be about the same thing."

As a priest looking back at the church in the 1940s, what struck me especially was the frequency and number of confessions. Father Murphy kept daily statistics of attendance at Mass, communion and confessions. I have talked with military chaplains today and they are often disheartened by the tepid religious fidelity of so many men in the military today.

I asked a friend of mine, a young Navy lieutenant who is strong in the faith, "In your squadron, what would you say would be the percentage of Catholics going to Sunday Mass?"

He replied, "Probably five out of 30."

If that is true of Mass, how much more dismal must be the record of those not going to confession.

I should like to know similar statistics

from our diocesan chaplains — Father Freemesser in Panama, Father Lewis Brown on the U.S.S. Nimitz, and Father David Mattie with the Navy in Norfolk, Va.

Rose Wolf, an active member of the Catholic Daughters of America Rochester Court and a parishioner of St. Ambrose, has been a good friend mine since my first tour to the Holy Land in 1972.

Since many of the latter pages of *Bringing Up Father* take place in Bavaria — the country from which Wolf came to the states years ago — I loaned the book to her.

She phoned me in Auburn to say, "So many places Father Murphy records I know very well. And I was thrilled to read about Therese Neumann, the stigmatic. I've been reading about her for many years."

*Bringing Up Father* will probably not make the Book of the Month Club, but the account will move the hearts of many — especially those ex-service men who experienced the horrors of combat.

# Zacchaeus' story shows the value of 'cash flow'

By Father Albert Shamon  
Courier Columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) Luke 19:1-10; (R1) Wisdom 11:22-12:1; (R2) 2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2.

When General Dwight D. Eisenhower was returning from Europe after V-E Day, his plane landed in the Azores for breakfast. The general walked around the island shaking hands and signing autographs. All the islanders sought to meet him and greet him.

The desire to see prominent people is common to us all.

Zacchaeus in Sunday's Gospel wanted to see Jesus, to see what He was like, to see if He were as kind and as great a prophet as everyone was saying.

Zacchaeus, however, had two strikes against him: First, he was not just a tax collector — one branded a sinner — but he was the chief tax collector of Jericho.

Jericho, the lovely city of palms located six miles west of the Jordan River and about 16 miles from Jerusalem, was a lucrative customs post. So Zacchaeus was wealthy — the second strike against him. The wealthy were not accustomed to seek Jesus.

But Zacchaeus was different; he wanted

to see Jesus.

During his quest, he had two more obstacles to surmount: the crowds around Jesus and his size (his friends perhaps called him "shorty"). We can well imagine the glee the crowds had in elbowing this hated tax collector away from Jesus.

But Zacchaeus did not get the top post in Jericho for stupidity. Zacchaeus was resourceful. He would not be set aside. He would not let dignity deter him. He ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a sycamore tree along the route of Jesus.

When Jesus came to the spot, He called Zacchaeus by name and invited himself to his home as a guest. Zacchaeus could have refused Jesus. Instead, he cheered, but the crowds sneered. They would not have found fault with Jesus had he gone to Zacchaeus' home to teach, but as a guest!

Zacchaeus was not daunted. "If I have cheated young or old," he said, "I'll restore all goods fourfold." And that day salvation came to his household.

A lot of people are like Zacchaeus in that they are sinners. But they are unlike him in that they refuse to accept Jesus' invitation to come into their homes, lest they have to change. So many are comfortable where they are. They are content to look at Jesus from afar. They don't want to make a

commitment. They don't want to change as Zacchaeus did. The perch in the pew is more comfortable.

We would rather come to Him, than let Him come to us. Yet constantly, Jesus is seeking to be invited into homes — to be enthroned as the Sacred Heart — so that He can say to each family what He said to Zacchaeus, "This day salvation has come to this household."

Zacchaeus did not change himself. It was only by receiving Jesus as a guest into his own home that he became a changed man.

The mission of Jesus was to seek and to save the lost. Why? Because He was God, and God loves all the things He has made. He spares all, for they are His. And He overlooks the sins of all that they might repent (R1).

The Zacchaeus story also exemplifies the Psalmist's response to the first reading: "The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness ... He lifts up all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down."

Zacchaeus' problem as a tax collector was the fact that he collected and collected and kept every red cent. The buck stopped with Zacchaeus. He was rich and miserable.

Zacchaeus knew something was wrong



## A WORD FOR SUNDAY

in his life. It is the same thing that happens to everyone who seeks only to get and never to give. A stagnant pool becomes putrid; only a pool that flows and gives of its waters sparkles and laughs in the sunlight.

Zacchaeus had no cash flow before meeting Jesus — that was his trouble.

Similarly, we all have problems when we are content to sit in the tree, to receive all that God gives and then offer nothing in return.

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