

CATHOLIC WORKER



Vol. XIX No. 8

MARCH, 1953

Subscription:
25c Per Year

Price 1c

Capital Punishment

By ROBERT LUDLOW

There isn't a great deal written in English by Catholic theologians on capital punishment. That is from the standpoint of opposition to it. I remember a paragraph or so in one of Father Luigi Sturzo's books and then a statement from Father Weir who was for many years chaplain at Joliet prison. Father Sturzo feels that capital punishment is a relic of barbarism and that as we outgrow this and become socially mature we will eliminate it. Father Weir opposes capital punishment on both ethical and pragmatic grounds. Ethical, because he feels it is but an application of the pre-Christian principle of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Pragmatic because, on the basis of statistics, he finds that it does not decrease the amount of crime—that a comparison of crime statistics between those states and countries that do not have capital punishment and

those who do fail to show any significant difference. If people realize this and still want capital punishment then it is simply that they want vengeance—and vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.

One's Ideology

I bring this matter up again because of the Rosenbergs. And because some Catholics and some liberals have made it an article of faith to believe in the guilt of the Rosenbergs and to clamor for their execution. There seems to be little concern for the truth in all this. One judges the Rosenbergs guilty or not guilty depending on one's ideology. If you are a Communist you believe it self evident the Rosenbergs are not guilty, if you are a certain type of Catholic or a certain type of liberal you believe them guilty. In all of this there is little concern for the Rosenbergs themselves or the case on its own

(Continued on page 6)

The Sword Is Not the Answer

"We see the work of the devil spreading throughout the world today and we are appalled by the wickedness of it all. We are overwhelmed with the compromise of ostensibly sincere and good men with the forces of evil.

We see the church in many countries back to the days of the catacombs with our bishops, priests, sisters and brothers murdered or in chains.

We see large standing armies ready for the march of plunder and rapine and murder and the subjugation of whole peoples into slavery. And with our souls groaning in anguish, we ask ourselves: "What can we do about it?" Shall we, the followers of the gentle Christ, take the sword and place our hope in retaliation and revenge?

The answer to that question was given by Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane as Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. "Put up again thy sword into its place," Christ said, "for all who take the sword shall perish with the sword." The sword then is not the answer and it never was the way of Christ."

Excerpted from a sermon given at St. Patrick's Cathedral by Reverend David Gannon of the Graymoor Franciscan Friars of the Atonement. Cardinal Spellman presided at the Mass on January 15, 1953 which marked the end of the Chair of Unity Octave.

PAX



Holy Father Begs Mercy For the Rosenbergs

By MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Pope Pius XII has intervened to ask for clemency for the Rosenbergs. He did not do so out of consideration of the merits of the case, but because of motives of charity.

That is the fact. It is largely unacceptable to the American press, and every effort has been made to suppress or impeach it.

The Press

The story broke in the American press on February 13. At that time it was given a straightforward statement. Thus, the New York World Telegram eight-column banner: "Pope Urged Mercy For A-Spies," and the subhead, "Charity—Not Merit of Case—His Motive."

The World Telegram story was a United Press dispatch from Vatican City. It quoted Osservatore Romano, semi-official Vatican paper: "As he has mercifully done in other similar cases, so also in this one he has not failed to intervene. . . ."

The New York Times story, a special dispatch from their correspondent, Arnaldo Cortesi, substantiated the Pope's intervention. It made a point of the fact that intervention was not unusual. "L'Osservatore Romano was careful to point out that when it was a matter of saving human lives, the Pope never refused to intervene, though without being able to enter into the merits of the case." The Times listed recent appeals: for the Italian General,

(Continued on page 7)



On Pilgrimage

By DOROTHY DAY

Spring begins in February, I tell everyone exultantly, but if they don't visit the country they won't know it. Tamar's garden has snow drops blooming and they came out on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

I went there the other day and found Mary Elizabeth sitting on a heap of dirt, watching John Murray dig a ditch for a drain from the cellar so that Tamar can set up her laundry in the cellar instead of in the bathroom. Mary Elizabeth, 19 months old, is only as big as a minute, but full of a tremendous energy and joy of life. At that moment she was still, quietly enjoying a large hunk of clayey dirt which she ate while she watched John. I hear that down south there are regions where people are known as clay eaters and medical men have decided there is something in the soil craved and needed by those who eat it. But all children love to eat dirt.

Nickie, the terror, is the most talkative member of the family. He is a great conversationalist and his tones contain all intonations, moods, emotions. He boasts, he thrusts out his chest, he is deep-voiced and aggressive, he struts; or he is tender, embracing his little sister, having just knocked her down; or "I'll kiss Granny," implying that none else will, and he will come to the rescue; or he is full of fierce excitement over a dog, a bird, a truck, a bus, which he calls upon everyone to share; or resignation, "Okay, all right, I won't,"

(Continued on page 8)

Food and Population

By GEORGE CARLIN

We received a long letter from President Truman's secretary shortly before the February change of office acknowledging our letter on the McCarran Immigration Act, and a few days ago the Immigration Service in Washington reported the letter had been forwarded to them.

The Act admits only 100 Japanese from a nation of 85,000,000 to enter the United States each year. The situation of the Japanese is extremely desperate.

This month the following took place in an effort to solve the food problem of the world, and the inequality of arable land:

(1) An announcement in "Commonweal" reports that the National Catholic Council of Rural Welfare has set up GROW, an organization to increase the growing of food for undernourished countries. They are starting with France. They ask for contributions of \$5 to send hybrid corn abroad. The organization is located at 3801 Grand avenue, Des Moines, Iowa.

(2) Japanese Catholics set up a Catholic Action Committee to combat the spread of birth control and to work toward growing more food in Japan. They would appreciate any articles on agricultural advances that may be clipped from American journals. Address: Mr. G. Motoo, Catholic Action Committee, c/ Head office of Kyowa Bank, 34 Shiba-Miyamoto-cho, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

(3) The National Council of Catholic Women in Washington, D. C. came out against the McCarran Act because of its racial discrimination and unfairness towards minorities.

(4) Agriculturists continue to make gains towards growing more food, and turning deserts into arable land. The New York "Times" on 16 February reported from Amman, Jordan: "One hundred acres of grass is sprouting in the desert thirty miles north of here. It is a result of a rainsaving method developed in the western United States, but to the Arabs it is nothing less than a miracle. Their uncounted acres of arid soil have been wastelands for centuries."

Our Need for Women's Clothing

By ANNABELL LUND

A part of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality that is usually active, is the women's clothes room. Here, through your charity, we are able to relieve the needs of many women and children for clothing.

Opening the packages on their arrival, is a pleasant experience. It always brings back childhood memories of looking for surprises. It also brings happiness at the thought of people's love for their fellow-men, shown by their generosity. Because of the size of the clothes room, the clothing must be sorted and folded in the back office. Sometimes I wish I could wave a magic wand and make it about three times larger. But this disadvantage is minor. Thank God we have a Clothes Room and clothing to give out.

One day recently, a young woman presented herself for clothes. She said despondently, that the few clothes she owned were being held for inability to pay her rent. She went on to say she was a pianist but not having the money to join the Union, she could not obtain work. It was as if God sent her in to us at the right time, for she found a complete outfit, even to gloves and boots. The suit fit her to a "T." She said with delight, it was better than the one her landlady was holding. If you could have witnessed her happiness, it would have repayed you double for the sacrifices you make. For it is you, our readers, who make it possible for us to alleviate needs such as these

Incidents like this compensate somewhat, for the times when we must turn people away, unable to satisfy their needs. This is especially true of women who wear large sizes. So often, large women will come in search of a change of dress. After looking at the many pretty dresses, and usually finding them too small, they will say disappointedly "Why wasn't I born small" or "I'll have to reduce." Sometimes, this will happen to the same women two and three times in succession. My heart goes out to them and having to tell them to try again seems so unsatisfactory.

Underwear is a necessity that is always scarce and there is such great call for it.

The gratitude of the poor is warming. Even small pieces of goods to be used to fix up the home, are received with joy. Yesterday, a woman took odds and ends of material, saying, "I am old-fashioned, I can sew and make them into scarfs." A few women always ask me to save them scraps of material with which to make patch quilts.

Within the last year I have learned that even if a person does not have the good fortune to find much to fit her, if her heart is heavy with care, and she finds a little sympathy, it will mean so much. Trying to help people to see that God is near even in their darkest moments, it is so important. We have so much to learn. If with God's grace, we can learn that Christ wants us to give ourselves whole and entire to others, for the love of Him.

Since the holiday season, the Clothes Room has been quite empty. In spite of this, several women found something to wear. One woman who had been trying for months to secure a winter coat her size, found one from among the few on hand. This seems to prove that God satisfies our wants when we least expect it.

We know little of the many and urgent needs of the poor until we have spent some time at a work like this, where one is brought into daily contact with the needy. Each day presents new and different adversities. For example, mothers who can not send their children to school because they have no winter coat to wear or no shoes; or women who after a stay in the hospital, return home to find their belongings have been discarded.

When hearing of these different hardships, I am often tempted to wonder why there should be all this need. But then I am reminded to look at the Crib of Bethlehem to see there the King of heaven and earth born in complete poverty, even to not having a bed, and I am made to realize that poverty is a blessing. However, frequently we fail to recognize Christ when He presents Himself to us in the guise of the poor and the afflicted. Nor do we always recognize the treasure in Christ's words, What so-ever you do to these my least brethren, you do unto Me" and "Even a cup of cold water given in My Name shall not go unrewarded."



Mardi Gras at La Casita de San Jose

By EILEEN FANTINO

Mardi Gras time at La Casita de San Jose started with a costume party, a mellow guitar, a small feast of home-made cake and candy, and ended in a near tragedy. Just as we started cleaning up the scattered decorations and squashed jelly beans one of the children ran up to the door screaming, "Ernestine was hit by a car!" We looked out through the rain and saw her in the middle of the street, limp and still. When we reached her she tried to get up and kept screaming that her leg hurt. We brought her inside and used the police phone in the street

to call for an ambulance. She didn't seem to be suffering from any internal injuries and could soon bend her leg. The interne was alarmed when he saw her and looked as though he thought she wouldn't live two minutes. Ernestine had painted a mask on her face for the costume party and had on a very wierd assortment of clothes. There weren't any injuries but she was taken away for X-Rays. The driver who hit her had not even stopped to see if she was dead. In this era of atom bombs and mass slaughter of every nauseating description, it may have become easier to dismiss a human life, to look over one's shoulder at a stricken child in the path of more turning wheels, and to keep on going. It still comes as a shock that some people can be so callous.

Benedictines and the Catholic Worker Movement

By WACLAW ZAJACZKOWSKI

Being a stranger I am not sure if I am qualified to make any useful suggestions. But after two months spent in Benedictine monasteries (Benet Lake, Wis. and Fifield, Wis.), I happened to have the opportunity to read the February issue of the "Catholic Worker" and the book "On Pilgrimage" of Dorothy Day, and while reading that beautiful rhapsody of CW movement I kept thinking about another book which brought me to Fifield written and sent to me by Dom Rembert Sorg, the Prior of King of Martyrs Priory at Holy Cross Mission, Fifield, Wis.

My thoughts were: Why is there so much individualism in the Mystical Body of Christ? Why is there so little cooperation among the members of the same supernatural Organism? Why so much lonely struggling toward the same specific goal instead of working together hand in hand?

I read a sad and disheartening account of Jack and Mary Thornton on their hard experience in farming with no instruction, no friendly help, a story duplicated in a hundred other cases, a picture of helplessness, discouragement and eventual failure, while on the other hand I see the experienced and successful Benedictine farmers like Dom Rembert Sorg of Fifield, Wis., or Fr. Simon Long of Benet Lake, Wis., who could and—with no doubt—would communicate their knowledge to the inexperienced prospective farmers of CW movement.

Why don't they get together? Why seems the eye to say to the hand: "I need not thy help" and the head to the feet: "I have not need of you?" Are they not "one body of Christ and members of members?" (1 Cor. 12). Does not the "Holy Rule" of St. Benedict recommend hospitality? At Benet Lake, Wis., I have seen a giant guest house with a capacity well over fifty persons and an equally giant farm with over a hundred milking Guernsey cows and hundreds of acres of cultivated soil. Here, at Fifield, Wis., there are

about four hundred acres of field and pastures and woods, and a barnful of 15 milking cows, not taking into account a horse and herd of calves—all being the fruit of hard and courageous efforts of Dom Rembert Sorg, the author of the "Holy Work," which book is to appear in a third, revised and enlarged edition in Pio Decimo Press. There is also a comparatively large guest house with a furnace and inside plumbing (the monastery proper has outhouses, according to the pattern of CW farms). The "guests" do not necessarily impose financially on community's scarce funds. Even if not occupied in barn or fields they can go on with clearing the fields of bushes (as I do) and cutting the pulpwood or lumber for sale (thirteen or eighteen dollars per cord respectively). There is a specially adapted truck with power lift, a tractor, a power circular saw and a handy motor chain saw. And, above all, there is a crystal-clear Wisconsin air, the beautiful God's nature and the Divine Office regularly performed in the little chapel hiding in the shade of giant firtrees which constitutes the heart and the source of strength for the little community of four monks and one lay person.

Thousands of acres of uncleared land surrounding the Holy Cross Mission (St. Procopius Abbey recently has sold two thousand acres for lack of settlers) probably suggested to its Prior, Dom Rembert Sorg, O.S.B., the idea of Social Irradiation Upon Laity in the form of Benedictine Oblate families settling around the Monastery of farmer-monks who don't consider it below their sacerdotal dignity to milk the cows and to cart the manure, according to the teaching of their Most Holy Father Benedict that "then are they monks in truth, if they live by the work of their hands, as did also our forefathers and the Apostles." (Holy Rule, chapter 48).

The leaders of both Benedictine communities I have had oppor-

The week before the accident a woman passed out at our door. We brought her in and gave her hot coffee. Soon she was telling us her story. She, her husband and five children had been evicted from an apartment in the project several blocks away. They were forced to leave and take a three room apartment in the slum area. There wasn't any place for her one daughter to sleep so she had to be shipped out to a relative. Her eyes burned as she repeated over and over that she didn't care what happened to her as long as she could see her family together again.

There is a building half a block from us that literally floats on a sea of garbage. The owners have other lucrative businesses besides collecting rent from the poor. They were recently fined for the unsanitary conditions that exist in the building, the main complaint being the huge rats making them-

(Continued on page 7)

Maryfarm

By DOROTHY McMAHON

How exciting life can be in a House of Hospitality on the land where people come and go! Men come seeking lodging and food and rest from the noise and confusion of the world and from the lack of love. What inspiration they bring to us who are here! They come in quietness and gentleness and their gratitude is shown by their faces if not by their actual words. Some enter quite quickly into the family group and become a part of it by helping with the work usually the dishes. Others remain silent and aloof and leave the kitchen after each meal saying scarcely a word except to express their gratitude as they again take to the road. Periodically someone comes not in silence but in the loud speech and inebriation of the things of the world. And then if he cannot, or will not, be silent within a reasonable space of time he must be asked to "hit the road." This must be, for all the men sleep in one of the big barns and all must suffer the torture of sleeplessness if one man is awake and talkative. Some, we learn to know well and they are counted old friends when they return. And it is a sad thing to see a man leaving, trudging along down the driveway, with or without some sort of luggage, headed once more for the open road.

It is good to see everyone at table eating whatever food is put there and listening to the reading. Just now we are reading "The Way of a Pilgrim" which is a translation from the Russian. It is the story of a Christian who walked across Russia seeking for one to tell him how to "Pray always" and of how he found such a guide and of the continuance of his pil-

(Continued on page 6)

The Dream

That sleep of Joseph, a throatful of fog,
An eternal ribbon weaving blue and green
Behind his eyes
The terror of unknowing,
Rod of the root of Jesse
Green with promise
Only the flowering to come
That sleep of Joseph is the sleep of all.
Dream . . . dream
Blue sparks burst into a face of lights,
The angel comes again to say fear not,
More shattering than the dream,
Awakening from mystery to mystery,
Clouds weaken us
We strain to answer
And we wake.

Eileen Fantino

