

THE FONT LETTER

Vol. 2, No. 14

Fontbonne College, St. Louis 5, Missouri

Jan. 26, 1950

RETREAT SCHEDULE

8:50 Mass
9:30 Breakfast
10:15 Conference
10:45 Private Devotions
11:00 Conference
11:30 Lunch

12:30 Examen of Conscience, Wednesday, Thursday:
Stations of the Cross, Friday
1:00 Rosary (aloud in chapel)
1:30 Conference
2:15 Spiritual Reading (private)
2:30 Conference
3:15 Benediction
7:30 Conference for the Resident students

NOTES OF THE FIRST DAY OF RETREAT

FIRST CONFERENCE: "A retreat", according to Fr. Charles T. Hunter, S.J., in his opening conference, "is a time of conversion, a whole-hearted return to God for three days. And today is a particularly good time for the opening of retreat since it is the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, one of the greatest saints in the Church."

In these three days we should strive first, to rid ourselves of our evil habits and passions, and secondly, to lay ourselves open to the tremendous outpouring of grace available in the time of retreat. Retreat is the time to put our lives in order. Like St. Paul, we should ask: "Lord, what will you have me to do? Speak through my retreat master and tell me."

SECOND CONFERENCE:

Thee, God, I come from
To thee go. -- Gerard Manley Hopkins

God is the Alpha and Omega, the ABC-XYZ of our whole existence. We came from Him; therefore we shall return to Him.

We must build our lives on a sturdy foundation so that the winds and rain of life do not cause our destruction. God aids us in building our lives because He is a loving Father Who desires above all else to have us all abide with Him in our heavenly home. Because God is perfection, He needs not our praise. Our love and adoration please Him, however, and so we must think not only of petitioning God, but of praising Him.

God is my whole existence. I must live FOR Him in order to live WITH Him.

THIRD CONFERENCE: A retreat is a vigorous conditioning exercise through which we build ourselves up to a healthy state and by routine habits then established remain in a spiritually healthy condition.

Because life's purpose is the honor and glory of God by praise and reverence, we must find the way to do these acts of worship. Since God is realized in the culmination point of the Mass, we can unite ourselves fully with His divinity by our participation in the Holy Sacrifice.

Spiritual poise may be obtained in two ways. The first is doing God's will. This can be done at any time under any conditions. Never wait for the perfect set-up in which to serve God, for this set-up never comes. It is by using the insignificant opportunities that we fulfill our duties to God.

The second way to attain spiritual poise is to use the things God has given us for their one purpose, to lead us back to Him. These God-given gifts, whether physical beauties or defects, material wealth or poverty, health or sickness, personality or talents, belong to us only for the fulfillment of this purpose. Their worth in bringing us to honor and glorify God is the fundamental principle by which we are able to judge our success or failure in the employment of them.

FOURTH CONFERENCE: In your appeal to God, go first to Mary, then to Christ, then to God Our Father in Heaven. Such an appeal will bring a certain answer--peace of soul. Peace is the tranquility of order which brings us to a true knowledge of self.

Examine yourself throughout all your life. What kind of pride do you possess? . . . What do your friends think of you? . . . What are your involuntary thoughts? . . . What is the secret about your character that you guard so closely? . . . What are the motive forces of your life? . . . What are your tastes in literature? . . . How do you justify your actions? . . . What does your physical nature tell you of yourself--are you nervous, irritable, calm, complacent? . . . What irritates you in others? These faults could be your own. . . . How would you write a recommendation of yourself as applying for marriage, the convent, or a position in business? . . .

St. Paul, the patron of our day, was converted. Unless we are converted and become as little children, we shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

TO THE HOLY CITY FOR THE HOLY YEAR

When His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, on Christmas Eve rapped three times on the sealed door of St. Peter's, the Holy Year of 1950 was initiated. Thousands of Americans, among them many St. Louisans, intend to join the pilgrims from all parts of the world and visit the Pope and the great religious shrines in his Holy City.

The NFCCS is sponsoring tours for students from all over the nation. Arrangements are made for various groups to go to the Holy Year activities from 37 to 49 days at prices ranging from \$521 to \$554.

The SS Roma has been chartered for these tours, which are open to all persons, students and non-students, between the ages of 16 and 30. Chaplains or moderators will travel with each group of pilgrims. Information in detail will be found on the bulletin board in Ryan Hall.

The QUEEN'S WORK of St. Louis also is to sponsor a tour to the Holy City and the principal shrines of Our Lady, as Lourdes and Fatima. Arrangements are not yet completed, but will be posted on the Ryan Hall bulletin board in a few days. The cost of this tour is \$692.

In the spirit of the Holy Year, the St. Louis regional organization of the NFCCS, comprising Fontbonne, Webster, Maryville, Quincy College, Quincy, Illinois, and Saint Louis University, is to give away one of these tours in the NFCCS set. In a campaign that will open Feb. 7 and close March 31, the members of the Overseas Service Program of the NFCCS will sell tickets at 25¢ each for this award. Marilyn Miller, regional chairman of OSP, and Catharine Nelson, campus chairman, will explain the plan at a assembly in the near future.

Two Fontbonne students, Betty Beffa, senior, and Catherine Miceli, sophomore, both from St. Joseph's Academy, have recently been in Rome, Betty last summer, and Catherine in 1948. Catherine gave an account of her experiences on the WEW program, "Tune in the Colleges" on Jan. 24. Both students consider their trip to have been the memorable event of their lives.

Of keen interest to these two travelers and of first concern to Holy Year pilgrims are the four major basilicas, which must be visited for the gaining of the special indulgences. St. Paul's Outside the Walls is magnificent and impressive and alive with reminders of the Apostle of the Gentiles. St. John Lateran's, like the other three, goes back to the time of Constantine. Here is the Santa Scala, or Holy Stairs, consisting of twenty-eight steps in which holy relics are imbedded and up which pilgrims ascend on their knees. Like all the noble church buildings of Rome, St. John's contains world-renowned works of art.

St. Mary Major's is entitled the Christmas basilica because the Crib of Bethlehem is preserved and venerated there. It is the station church for the Christmas midnight Mass.

The greatest of the basilicas is St. Peter's, located in Vatican City. There is no way, the travelers say, to describe its vastness and beauty, and the feeling of awe which St. Peter's inspires. The huge dome, all lined with gold mosaics, is one feature that contributes to make this the most majestic of churches. Catherine Miceli walked, or rather ran, she says, all the way up the circular staircase to the very top and from that elevation enjoyed a view of Rome that literally takes one's breath away.

St. Peter's contains the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles, the Confessio, about which some discoveries have been made in recent months, and announcement of them is expected to be given during the Holy Year. Also, it has Michelangelo's "Pieta" and many other famous statues.

Other masterpieces, of course, are to be seen in many places in Rome, for example in the Pinacoteca galleries in Vatican City, which house three of Raphael's widely known paintings--"The Coronation of the Virgin", "The Madonna of Foligno" and "The Transfiguration". There also are many works of De Vinci, Domenichino, Titian, Murillo, Giotto, and Fra Angelico.

The Sistine Chapel, erected by Pope Sixtus IV, is another spot rich with gifts of the Popes and especially with the famous murals of Michelangelo. On the wall behind the altar is the gorgeous fresco of the Last Judgment and on the vaulted ceiling those picturing the Creation, the Fall of Man, the Flood, and other important events in sacred history. Many details of this ceiling were reproduced in color in Life at Christmas time. "I consider the Sistine chapel one of the most magnificent places I visited," was the comment of Betty Beffa, who is a student of art.

However, the highlight of the trip for both Fontbonne students was an audience with the Holy Father, Betty's on August 2, 1949, and Catherine's on August 4, 1948. Of hers, Catherine says: "For a certainty, my seeing the Holy Father was the best part of our trip and an experience which I will never forget. The Pope at that time was in his summer residence at Castel Gandolfo about twenty miles from Rome. We were ushered by the colorful Swiss guards into the hall where His Holiness was to hold audience that day. All the four walls were lined with people, many of them Americans. We waited for an hour, and then the Pope entered, preceded by secretaries who took the official roll call. The Pope made his way around the room, talking in various languages to the many groups of visitors. I admit my knees were shaking when he approached us. He spoke first to my parents in Italian and told them they should teach us to speak Italian and preserve the language in our home. He then addressed my brother and me, and gave his pontifical blessing to Fontbonne, its teachers and students, for he assured me he remembers his visit to the college in 1936. He gave a similar blessing to my brother for his school, St. Louis University High. He went on to talk of our mutual friend, Bishop Cody, who had arranged our audience. I was really surprised. The Holy Father is as easy to talk to as a member of my own family."

