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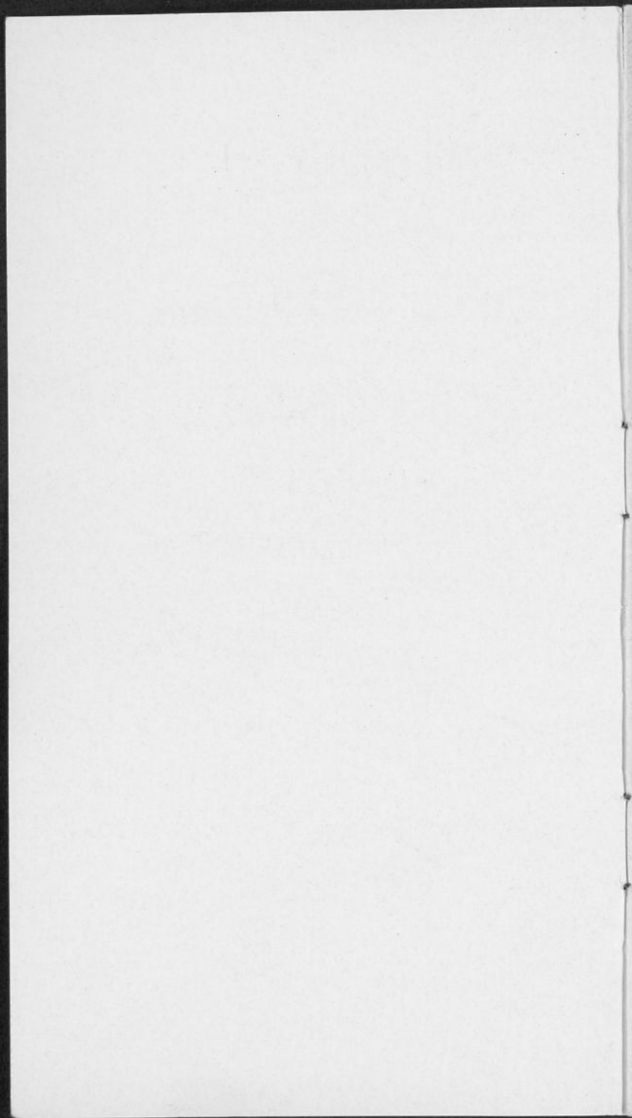
PUT OUT?

A CHARACTER SKETCH

ON THE EDITORS OF

"THE CONVERTED

CATHOLIC MAGAZINE"



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*A Character Sketch on the Editors of
"The Converted Catholic Magazine"*

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Did They Leave OR Were They Put Out?

*A Character Sketch on the Editors of
"The Converted Catholic Magazine"*

THE *Converted Catholic Magazine* is published by Christ's Mission, Inc., whose address is listed in the magazine as 756 Seventh Avenue, New York 19, N. Y., but seems actually to be at 229 W. 48th Street, the location of the Union Methodist Episcopal Church. The periodical is edited by former Catholic priests, who use as their slogan "When thou are converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22: 32).

Christ's Mission was founded by an ex-priest by the name of James A. O'Connor nearly eighty years ago, after being suspended by his bishop because of drunkenness. Many Catholic clergymen who are relieved of their posts by their Ordinary's suspension, or by an action of their own which automatically terminates their Catholic ministry, have been wont for years, to go to Christ's Mission to receive direction in procuring other work. More recently they are em-

ployed to assist in editing its magazine or to do field work for it, which is profitable today, because of the new organized opposition to The Catholic Church.

The *Converted Catholic* is sent to nearly every member of Congress, and to many thousands of Protestant Ministers. Its editors accept offers to "lecture" in places where Catholics are not numerous. On those occasions subscriptions to the magazine are gathered.

The present editor-in-chief is one L. H. Lehmann, who was a native of Ireland, educated at Mungret College, and was seemingly ordained for a diocese in South Africa, because he worked there for some time. Returning to Ireland he was selected to defend Mungret Apostolic College against the Jesuit College at Mungret which, it was alleged, was trying to control the funds of the Apostolic College. He worked on this case in Rome, and won a decision which, however, was reversed in favor of Mungret College.

Shortly thereafter Lehmann left for the United States, and appealed to Archbishop Curley to assist him in inducing the late Bishop Barry, of St. Augustine, Florida, to accept him as a priest in that diocese. We are informed by the Chancellor of St. Augustine that Father Lehmann worked at Lake City, Florida, in

1928, and lived at Perry, Florida, until November, 1929, when he entered a civil marriage with a young woman of Perry and fled with her in the parish automobile.

Lehmann, therefore, did not leave the Catholic Church because he became acquainted with its errors as he tells his readers, but rather because, violating his priestly vows, he automatically severed his connection with the priesthood.

ANDREW SOMMESE

A more recently appointed assistant editor is Andrew Sommesse. He belonged to the Order of St. Augustine and was graduated from Villanova College. He was ordained following his third year of Theology, but completed a fourth year as a priest-student at the Augustinian College.

The Rev. Edward V. Stanford, O.S.A., writes concerning him:

During his year as a student priest, he left the College without saying a word to anyone and turned up in his home parish in Brooklyn, where he announced to the pastor that he was joining the Diocese of Brooklyn. Realizing that he was mentally unbalanced, the pastor telephoned to Washington and one of the superiors went to Brooklyn.

Andrew Sommese returned with this superior willingly to Washington. Upon the advice of his superiors he went willingly to see an outstanding psychiatrist in Philadelphia, who diagnosed his case as a mental one of doubtful curability. He was committed for a time to the Kirkbride Sanitarium in Philadelphia and later to Mount Hope in Baltimore; showing some improvement he was released and permitted to visit a married sister in Brooklyn. From then on, his religious superiors were unable to get in contact with him, as his married sister strenuously opposed any efforts at communication. Later he was accepted by the Lutherans and placed at a Lutheran church in Philadelphia. I understand that he is now married.

ANNIBALE MALINVERNI

One connected for a long time with this organization is the ex-priest Rev. Malinverni. He was a priest in Italy, pastor at a town named Fiesco. His trouble was also marriage.

Canon Pelani of the Diocese of Cremona, in a letter dated June 19, 1922, directed to Father Montonari, of Los Angeles, substantiates this charge. He and his reputed wife came to the United States.

WILLIAM EDMOND BURKE

This former priest is now listed as "field representative" in the November, 1948, issue of *The Converted Catholic Magazine*.

Burke was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Scranton, Pennsylvania, in 1931. The Chancellor of Scranton has supplied us with the following information concerning his career:

After a few years he became a problem case due to heavy drinking and other infractions of clerical propriety. His language was violent and his behavior gave scandal. Complaints were also received about his failure to pay just debts. Around 1940 he disappeared with a woman older than himself and is said to have attempted marriage civilly with her. Many who knew him are of the opinion that he is not entirely normal mentally. In fact he was sent at one time to an institution where care is provided for alcoholics and mental cases. He has recently become the tool of bigoted and unscrupulous groups who delight in exploiting such an apostate in an attempt to discredit the Church, and he apparently has no scruple in serving such

a nefarious purpose for whatever monetary returns he may derive therefrom.

JOSEPH ZACCHELLO

A young Italian ex-priest, who was connected with *The Converted Catholic Magazine* a year ago, but who now seems to be finding it more profitable to go out on his own as a publisher of books and tracts with the backing of anti-Catholic organizations, is Joseph Zacchello.

He was born at Stalino, a town in the Province of Venice, Italy, and attended a Preparatory Seminary in Piacenza. Zacchello came to the United States and finished his fourth year Theology here, preparatory to Ordination on October 22, 1939, for the Congregation of the Fathers of St. Charles. His first assignment was to St. Callistus Parish, Chicago, where he gave considerable trouble to the pastor, Rev. Sylvio Zanoni, which resulted in his transfer.

He spent a short while at St. Francis Cabrini Parish, Chicago, after which he was moved, because of a threatened scandal, to St. Joseph parish, New York. Here he lasted only a few months, having attempted marriage in February, 1944. It was only a short time until he procured a civil divorce and attempted a second marriage.

Zacchello is still a young man and is credited with having edited a dozen pamphlets and books, one of which is entitled "The Priest Who Became a Christian."

The Converted Catholic Magazine defends the Protestant viewpoint against the Catholic one on every doctrine and the enemy viewpoint on matters relating to history. It, therefore, confirms Protestants in their inherited and acquired prejudices. Of course the only reason why these former Catholic priests are with such an enterprise is the livelihood they are able to receive from it.

Clare Boothe Luce told the writer that she has received from ministers from every part of the country copies of *The Converted Catholic*, with a note to the effect that she should read it if she wishes to learn "the truth about Romanism."

She also told that an ex-religious who left his Community went to the office of *The Converted Catholic* to see whether they could form any contact for him for employment and they offered to let him work in their own office. After only three weeks he became disgusted because he discovered that there was no sincerity among any of the editors; that they could not believe what they

were writing for Protestant consumption; that he, therefore, left them.

The campaign by *The Converted Catholic* has given an impetus to the circulation of anti-Catholic Tracts, among them the stories of Maria Monk and Margaret Shepherd, *self-styled* ex-nuns, who have been dead for many years and who were frequently exposed during their lifetime as frauds. They never were nuns.

Some years ago *Our Sunday Visitor* published a book of 160 pages entitled "Defamers of the Church," which contained the records of more than one hundred people who toured the country during *The Menace* days, nearly all of whom were *mountebanks* capitalizing on the bigotry incited by *The Menace* and the sister sheet *The Appeal to Reason*, both of which had a weekly circulation of more than 1,000,000. Many Protestant clergymen who invited these fakirs to speak from their pulpits later became ashamed of themselves for having kept such bad company.

Christ's last words to the Apostles, it seems, are unfamiliar to them: "Blessed are ye when men revile you and persecute you and ill-treat you and say all kinds of evil things about you untruly. Rejoice and be glad because your reward is very great in Heaven."

How Explain

Why does the fallen priest turn against his Church? That question is answered by one of them who recently returned to the Church, full of repentance not only for his apostasy, but even more because he had "taken up a bitter pen to write against the mother I once loved so well."

He tells us that he never liked the designation "ex-priest," but would prefer that the renegades be referred to as "stray shepherds," having in mind that the lost sheep were still of the fold, and that the lost shepherd still belongs to the fold.

He refers to "injured pride" as the chief reason for the "stray shepherd." In some cases he found his superior, his bishop, or his pastor against him, and by degrees his nerves became taut. In that attitude "his judgment failed him," and "God seemed far away," while the devil was very close by, "filling his ears until he could hear nothing else, with the suggestion 'you will go mad unless you make the break now.'"

After the break "the stray shepherd goes into the wilderness, finds his new life beset with hardships, including the difficulty of finding suitable employment." He writes: "Enemies of the Church rejoice over the ex-priest. When-

ever possible they contact 'liberated' priests who have 'quarrelled with Rome.' They make a noisy fuss over them and invite them to lecture and tell their stories.

"When he meets another who is in the same predicament as he is, he discovers that they are out not because of 'lack of faith' in the Catholic religion, but because of a hidden nostalgia, and while they may profess 'never to go back,' between them they will say: 'if you are around when I am dying call a priest for me, no matter what I say.'"

They feel hurt because their former confreres in the ministry and all the Catholic laity who knew them have turned against them, and the new "friends" they make are not actually friends, but distrustful.

In fact this "stray shepherd" writes that "lost shepherds are saddened to see Catholics betraying their religion, and are heartened when they hear that one of themselves has made his peace with God."

He thinks that Catholics should expect a certain percentage of the clergy to go astray even though they retain their faith, and that these should be prayed for rather than persecuted, because their blunder consisted in opposing grace, and

what they now need most is the penetrating grace of God.

Do you ask how all this fits those who are editing *The Converted Catholic*? We are certain that much of it fits. The conversation, reported above, which Mrs. Luce had with one of them, points to that. But of course, they would be received back only after they would agree to apologize to their readers for the things which they wrote so untruly, calculated to strengthen the prejudices of those not of the faith. This becomes, however, increasingly more difficult to do with time, because of their continued resistance to grace, . week by week, month by month.

But Bernard Fresenborg, the author of "Thirty Years in Hell," which many a Protestant minister has in his library, did that thing, so did Paul Miraglio, who gave scandal by the pen and wrote from the bitterness of their hearts rather than from the convictions of their minds.

Has It Ever Occurred To You

That the real ex-priest is one who either was guilty of gross misconduct in the Church, for which he was expelled from the ranks of the priesthood, or who lost all faith in the supernatural?

That, if the former, he was "without

a job" and out of revenge attacks the Church, to which he owed his all, in which he sincerely believed, and whose standards of morality must have been much higher than his own, or he would not have been ejected?

That, if the latter (one who voluntarily relinquished connection with the Church), he never speaks about the Church except in terms of endearment, unless he finds it profitable to affiliate with some rationalistic organization?

That no real ex-priest can make charges of corruption against the Church without acknowledging that he was long a party thereto, and would still be, had he not been relieved of his charge by his bishop?

That the ex-priests, Slattery and Seguin, now availing themselves of "bigotry's opportunity," came over to the States years ago from another country, where they were given to habitual intemperance; that they unsuccessfully sought Catholic bishops in this country to take them in; that they took to the lecture platform when they were "down and out" both in relation to the priesthood and their pocket-books?

That these men, after years of deliberation solemnly vowed to remain chaste and unmarried; that the Almighty accepted such a vow, and that,

therefore, they violated a most sacred obligation when they married?

That people welcome these imposters without questioning their antecedents?

That they would not be out enlightening (?) other people if there were not 25c per dupe in it for themselves?

That all but a very few on the lecture-platform, who represent themselves as priests, are "bogus" or fakes; that most of them were never Catholics, but prepared their tirades from books written in Know-Nothing and A.P.A. days?

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