

OBITER

PRAYER FOR PEACE. 'Is our prayer for peace a Christian prayer? For there is a Christian way of asking for peace as there is, too, a Jewish way and a pagan way of crying to heaven when war threatens or when it is declared. For, when we ask our Lord for peace, it is the peace that he wills that we must ask of him and not the peace which we would like.'

'"Peace", it has been said often enough, "is the tranquillity of order." For some, plainly, it is just tranquillity, and what they see above all else in the menace of war is the disturbance of their quiet nights, their morning tea, and their holiday arrangements. As for the rest, they will violently disagree about that order whose tranquillity they pray for. . . . It is at least probable that the order dreamt of by Moscow is not that liked by the White House. So when we pray to our Lord to grant us his peace, to bring peace to the world, we must first of all wish for peace as he wills it.

'Is it fantastic to hope that Christian prayer should be the same both sides of the frontier and that it should say to God:

"O Lord, grant us peace, the peace you will, beyond all our own egoisms;

the peace of your kingdom first of all, so that the peace of the nations may be in truth established;

the peace of your justice and not of our own interests.

All alike we do not know, we cannot see, we may be wrong.

Do as you will with us.

We are ready to accept the demands that this involves. Those demands alone can bring peace."

'If before a war, or—once it has broken out—in the midst of it, four hundred million Catholics could join in such a prayer, then already there would be established the foundation of true peace.

'In reality, before praying for peace, each one must build it up in his heart, must make his heart at one with the heart of Christ. We must not just wait for war to break out before praying for a just peace; we must work with all our strength to see justice done. We have every one of us a share in the responsibility of war. Merely the way we read a daily paper is a factor in the struggle. . . .

'Before praying for peace we must begin by examining our own consciences. In asking our Lord for peace we would do well to unite ourselves with him. And, while praying for peace, we must start by establishing it about us, in the situation we find.'

(The Abbé G. Michonneau in *Témoignage Chrétien*. 4 August, 1950)

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LA REVUE NOUVELLE (Casterman; Tournai) devotes most of its August number to 'Europe's Last Chance'. Articles on European federation include 'Europe without the English?' by Marcel Hayoul. The traditional English suspicion of 'the constitutions, laws and tortuous contracts of the Latins' is examined, but M. Hayoul makes too little allowance for the concept of the Commonwealth (however much modified since the War) as an element in the European debate. The same number quotes from a recent statement of the Cardinals and Archbishops of France, which has more than a national importance:

'Remember that a Christian's responsibilities do not end at the frontier of his country. . . . You have not the right to be detached from the efforts being made today to give Europe, despite so many secular rivalries, a unity sufficiently strong to guarantee its freedom, its security and its well-being. In face of that task, difficult as it is but essential, you cannot be mockers and sceptics. Be rather men of good will, who believe in a United Europe because they have the will to establish it.'

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PRO RUSSIA is not, as its name might seem to suggest, a movement for Soviet propaganda. It exists 'to assure for Christian Russians the understanding of their Christian brothers of other nations, and the spiritual and intellectual help that Christian Russians need after their great trials'. The movement's headquarters are at 1 Stewart Street, Ontario, Canada, and its organisers emphasise that 'it intends to have no economic or political link either with the present leaders of the U.S.S.R. or with the leaders of the American and European nations. It is simply a fraternal movement of the Christian peoples outside of Russia with two hundred million of their brothers, whom historical and political circumstances have separated, to their common misfortune and that of the entire world'. The means proposed are those of prayer and penance on Russia's behalf, and the motto is *Christos voscresse!* 'Christ is risen', the ancient acclamation of Russian Christians. A bulletin is regularly issued, and through it Western Christians may learn something of Russia's true tradition, so that through that knowledge that may be stirred to a sense of solidarity with their separated Russian brethren.

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LIFE, in a recent issue, devoted an article to the work of Père Couturier, the Dominican artist and co-editor of *Art Sacré*. Details were given of the new church at Assy in the French Alps, built and decorated under his direction, and the accompanying illustrations of the work of such artists as Paul Bony, Fernand Léger, Rouault and Père Couturier himself, reveal the importance of this attempt to harness what is best in modern art to the service of the Church.

ART SACRE itself devotes its current number to the function of Poverty in religious art. With their customary wit and mordant commentary the Editors contrast a traditional use of local materials and simple decoration with the inflated ambitions, so pathetic in their outcome, of much modern ecclesiastical art.

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM REVIEW, with a 'special Holy Year number' maintains its excellent standard. Of special importance are articles by Daniel-Rops on 'The Impact of the Cinema on Spiritual Life' and by Father Gemelli, Rector of the Catholic University of Milan, on 'Cinema and Psychology'. The illustrations include 'stills' of recent films including some continental documentaries which deserve to be seen in England.

DIEU VIVANT (No. 16) has a posthumous article by Emmanuel Mounier, 'The five stages of *Esprit*', and extracts from the last journal of Bernanos.

ALDATE.

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A CORRESPONDENT WRITES:

Two dioceses, Birmingham and Northampton, have already produced pamphlets in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the re-establishment of the Catholic Hierarchy in England by Pope Pius IX. In *The Story of the Archdiocese of Birmingham*, R. H. Kiernan gives the history of Catholicism in the midland counties from the accession of Elizabeth to the present day. The author, after relating the story of the martyrs and confessors, goes on to speak of the growth of religion under the Vicars Apostolic of the Midland District and the Bishops of Birmingham. Amongst these prelates two stand out as amongst the greatest bishops who have ministered to English Catholics since the Reformation, John Milner and William Bernard Ullathorne, and the present flourishing state of Catholicism in what was for centuries a very Protestant part of the county is proof of the remarkable qualities of these men, and also of the devoted zeal of their successors.

The *Centenary Souvenir of the Diocese of Northampton* differs from the Birmingham pamphlet in giving not a narrative history of the diocese as a whole but a detailed story of each parish in particular. Brigadier Trappes-Lomax, whose knowledge of English Catholicism in penal days is unequalled, deals with the early missions of East Anglia before the nineteenth century; his clerical collaborators bring the parish-history up to the present day.

This booklet tells of the wonderful development under the present Bishop and his immediate predecessors in what was for so long one of the most uncatholic parts of the country. The editing of the *Souvenir* is most excellently done, and more than sixty illustrations accompany the reader in his tour of this the largest of our dioceses.