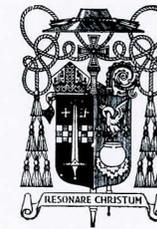


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Dedication

A literary magazine is the product of desire, ability, and effort - qualities which were so characteristic of the 1966 senior staff members.

Their desire to establish an outstanding literary magazine at the Bishop's Latin School sustained *The Miter* during its formative stages. They devotedly gave of their talents and time to found this magazine, and for this we thank them.

Therefore, this issue of *The Miter* is respectfully dedicated to: Nicholas P. Cafardi, Robert J. Kuhn, George A. Kline, Roger E. Craska, and Terrence G. Cronin.

Mr. John C. Ferrante

Editorial . . .

THE SEASON FOR CHRIST

by FRANK J. DiLEO

Once again, the Christmas season, a time of joy and happiness, has made its way through the months of the calendar. As the season comes to its long-awaited peak, it brings an atmosphere of friendship and heart-warming love which are both reflected in the decorated homes. Flickering lights, luminating life-like scenery, lively, green Christmas trees, painted with sparkling bulbs and glittering angel hair, and richly colored center pieces all seem to cast the spell of expectation for Santa Claus and his bundle of Christmas joy.

Inside the homes, Christmas trees are heaped with mountainous piles of brightly wrapped boxes, and the crackling chimnies are topped with red stockings, anxiously waiting to be filled. Each night of this gay season, joyous musical tones, accompanied by the clangs of silver bells, fill the air with a spirit of fraternal love. The spirit of generosity is greatly revived during this, the happiest season of the year.

But, if one takes a close look at the birth of Christ, he sees nothing of the glamorous tidings of modern day Christmas. He reads that Christ was born in a dingy and shabby stable. The Prince of the world had no royal robes or a stately bedroom suite, but wrapped in swaddling clothes, He lay in a manger where only the hay and breath of animals kept His body warm. Yet, the shepherds and wise men honored Him as a king with songs of praise and valuable gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and from this story we can find the answer to bringing Christmas to all the people on the earth. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." This famous law of love has led men to answer the plea of the needy, poor, sick, and homeless. Through the Salvation Army Christmas Drive, The Ozanam Center, and Bishop Wright's Christmas Collection for the orphans we have a means of serving our brethren. This is our way of bringing and sharing our Christmas joy with the less-fortunate children of Christ; "For whatever you do to the least of My brethren, you do unto Me."

The Salvation Army is dedicated to the betterment of the poor and hungry Christs who roam about the slums of Pittsburgh and other major cities. During the month of December, members of this organization are seen standing at many busy street corners, humbly asking for contributions. With a silver bell, they call on our hearts for contributions on behalf of the poor. Once the money has been collected, food and clothing are bought and distributed during the Christmas holidays. On Christmas Day, throughout the many centers, thousands of meals are served to the poor. The warm food gives their body a rest from the gnawing pains of hunger while the clothes protect them from the deep cold of the winter wind.

A second organization is the Ozanam Center. Dedicated to Frederic Ozanam, the founder of the St. Vincent DePaul Society, this center provides free meals to the slum ridden inhabitants of the Hill District. Through private contributions and organized food drives, the Ozanam Center is able to successfully feed these hungry people on Christmas and other days of the year. Some day the poor will no longer need food to keep them alive, but the life of God will free these people from this miserable way of life.

Bishop Wright conducts an annual drive sponsored for the benefit of the orphans in the city of Pittsburgh. Through private contributions, the Bishop tries to fill the hearts of these unfortunate children with as much Christmas joy as possible. A huge dinner and Christmas party fill their hearts with complete happiness. This is our way of helping those who can't help themselves. The colorful gifts give their depressed spirits a new surge of confidence in God's love. It makes them feel wanted and needed rather than rejected and useless.

As the future makes its way into the present, there will continue to be glorious and happy Christmases as there are today. Colorful decorations will liven the spirit of love and joy. Still, there will be more Christs born in slums, hungry, naked, and homeless, but as long as man sees his responsibility towards these brothers and acts on them through such organizations as the Salvation Army, Ozanam Center, and collection for orphans, the less fortunate children of Christ can have some hope that men will bring upon them a spirit of joy and love.



In this issue of *The Miter*, we present a special section on the life of Frederic Ozanam, whose cause for beatification is now being fostered throughout the world.

THE FOURTEENTH APOSTLE

by GREGORY W. RENZ

"Jesus said to him, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.'" On these two commandments Frederic Ozanam based his life. He is the "Fourteenth Apostle," the "Apostle of our time."

Frederic Ozanam learned in his earliest years how important it was to love his neighbor and to manifest this love in some way. His father and mother spent their lives working for Christ in the slums of Lyons, in southern France. They devoted themselves to assisting the poor and weak who were unable to improve their own environment. This is love of neighbor in action, and Ozanam captured the spirit of this love from his parents.

While he was attending the university in Paris, a question was thrust to him which he mediated upon and, finally, acted on. A student asked him, "And you, who pride yourself on being a Catholic, what are you doing for the poor?" This question set the stage for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Ozanam meditated and prayed about this question. He looked back and saw his parents' reaction to the second great commandment of God. He knew that love of neighbor and the expression of that love would lead to love of God, a Catholic's primary objective in life. He finally decided with seven compatriots to start a society based on charity, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

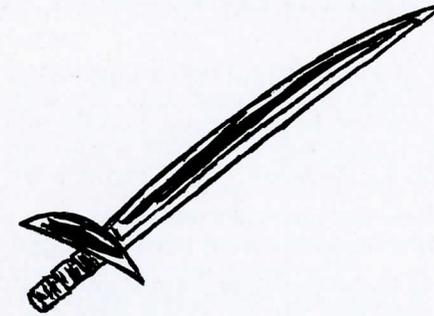
The society started out as a small unit of eight members. Since its founding in May, 1833, the membership has exploded, and there are now units of the society spread all over the world — Europe, Asia, the Americas, Africa and Australia. Hundreds upon thousands of people, poor and needy, receive help from the society every day. It is one of the largest organizations in the Church today.

Frederic Ozanam started this movement. He inspired it in its early difficulties and inspires it now as it faces new obstacles. He is truly another apostle of Christ. That makes fourteen.



THE CONQUEROR

by JEFFREY J. CRUMBAKER



His first field of battle was the Paris of 1833. His enemy had ravaged the city. It ran through the streets, alleys, and canals. It spread into the three and four story buildings that made up Paris. Up the steps of the dark, narrow halls, it echoed and, then, savagely fell upon each family. The fires did not burn in the hearths. The food was eaten, and none took its place. Clothes became scarce, as did money. To take its place, disease was unleashed. General Poverty was the rampant foe which Frederic Ozanam challenged.

He and his army of six strode into the Parisian slums. They fed the emaciated poor. They rekindled the fires in the hearts of these discouraged peoples. They hunted down their enemy and halted its steady advance. Yet, for all of this, he would not be famous. He had to do something that nothing before or since has been or is tantamount to. Frederic Ozanam's spirit of love was so great that it sparked hundreds over the city of Paris to aid the poor. This spark flamed and grew, driven on, and given strength and urgency by the beating of Ozanam's gracious heart. Then, the heart stopped in 1853 at the age of forty—but not before his life's work was splashed over the world.

Would this army, which he enlisted to spare the pitiful poor of his day, collapse as did the armies before him? Hardly. Initiated by that one brilliant flash of love and pity that began with Frederic Ozanam, this army of love exploded over the entire world. His love spilled into the world and blossomed into the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

In these few words, I can tell you of the life of Frederic Ozanam, for his life was short and simple. However, I can never begin to tell you of the grandiose results of these forty years of Frederic Ozanam.

Amid a roar of shouts and the clash of a thousand weapons, a vast army swept forward like a tidal wave engulfing all. At the fore of this pulsating blanket of men rode Alexander of Greece, and at his feet lay entire Asia Minor.

Three-hundred years later, the Gallic fields were blazing with the red blood of its warriors, and over all reigned Caesar of Rome and his legions, who carved their fame with flashing swords.

One thousand years passed, and mighty England's gray beaches and emerald fields were strewn with the bodies of the island kingdom's youthful fighters. They fell victim to the broadswords of the knights of William-the-Conqueror.

But in the light of a new hero, these demigods were dwarfed. Alexander, Caesar, and William have passed over the hazy bridge of faded millenniums. A new warrior, having begun with six followers, has spread an intricate army of millions over the entire world. In every city, there is at least one bastion for his army. His knights work ceaselessly.

He and his soldiers did not wield swords, rather, they wielded the weapon of love. Their ramparts were not constructed of boulders and logs, but, rather, of love. The legacy they left and which is still carried on today is not one of mutilated bodies, but one of love. The leader of this army of love was Frederic Ozanam. His allegiance was not to Greece nor Rome nor France, but rather, to God and to God's people.

The Apostle of Our Times

by ROBERT F. DEBSKI

The year was 1833. It was winter in Paris, an usually cold and ruthless winter. The wind was piling the snow into a deep drift outside the door of the decrepit building, one constructed in the late Renaissance Period and, gradually, crumbling to the ground. Inside, huddled around the blazing fireplace, were seven men, six quite young, students in fact, and the seventh about middle-aged. One was apparently saying something of importance, for all were quite attentive and listened carefully to the speaker's every word. The word *charity* could be heard often.

The year is 1966. It is Christmas Eve as a frost-covered car stops in front of a feeble shack in the local Negro ghetto. Two men step out. One has a firmly-tied bundle under his arm, quite large but light. The other is balancing a squat cardboard box on his shoulder. They knock on the door, and a young colored woman appears with two small children clinging to her ragged dress. The two men enter and place the packages on the floor inside. One slides an envelope from his pocket, pushing it into the woman's hand. Both men politely say good-by, return to the car, and drive on.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul operates in almost every parish. Most Catholics are acquainted with its purpose. Simply, it is sworn to charity, the giving of something to another. It specializes in aiding the poor. The two men who found themselves in the slum district on Christmas Eve, a day when society dictates that they should be home with their families, are members of this organization. They sacrificed their time and energy for others. Jesus Christ preached that this is good.

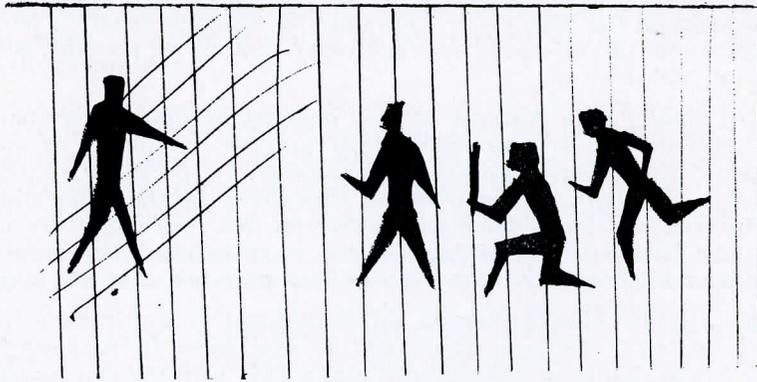
What is the stimulus behind this benevolent group? Who was the motivating force, the gear which set the machinery in motion? The answer lies in that snow-covered building in 1833 with the man speaking gentle phrases of love and kindness. His name was Frederic Ozanam. He and his companions decided that they were going to move the world. They weren't angels disguised in the clothes of men and endowed by God with the power to perform miracles. They were men, plain, every-day men with one exception, each not only sincerely believed in the Christian doctrine of love, but was also tired of passively sitting by. They were prepared to stand up and do something. Christ lived in every man. Christ even lived in the wretched poor who inhabited the slums. So, they resolved that they would give and give until all France had been infiltrated, then, the remainder of Europe, America, and the world. Christ preached that this is good.

Pope Leo XIII called the nineteenth and twentieth centuries "The Age of the Lay Apostle." Frederic Ozanam fulfills this role. He was convinced Christ had chosen him to become the roots of a great movement. He loved Christ. He did not refuse this call. He would go forth and teach all nations the law of love. What better method than by self-example? Charity had been forgotten. Here was the challenge. The result was the creation of a society which breathed his breath, walked in his steps, and loved his neighbor as he himself did. Christ preached that this is good.

Soon, Ozanam died; rather, his body died. All that was truly Frederic Ozanam lived on and is still living. He lives in the society which he had founded. Christ preached that this is good.



RUNNING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION



by RAYMOND M. NIEDENBERGER

The days were quickly growing shorter and colder. The dry, multi-colored leaves were abandoning their life line and were floating carelessly to the frozen ground below. The time had come again for Mother Nature to dip into her vast storehouse of beauty and to cast her spell over humanity with a seasonal change.

As Pete walked through Hamilton Park, located in a suburb of Larimer, several excruciating thoughts ran through his head, chilled by the night air. He recalled the tragic events of that morning when he had backed off from a fight with the class athlete, Jim Dears. He had been humiliated in front of all his classmates and Cathy, the only person who meant anything to him. Now his life was worthless! Even Cathy had turned her back on him as he ran down the narrow, tile corridor at Lingley High. He could not forget the tears pouring down across her rosy, delicate cheeks. She wanted to be his friend, but time and again he had failed her.

Suddenly, he started to run down the cobblestone road which curved through the forestry, stripped of its summer magnificence. His thin legs stumbled through the brown bushes which had once supported fresh, green life. He wanted to escape. Who cared for him or would miss his boring presence? Perhaps Cathy had cared, but he even let her down. He gradually came to a stop after a few minutes because he was a weakling: physically, socially, mentally, and probably spiritually. He wouldn't dare face the sneers and persecution of society ever again. He tried to figure a way out.

His desperate thoughts were interrupted by a shrill, piercing scream which penetrated his heart and soul and broke the autumnal stillness. His stringy muscles tensed, and an immediate sweat of fear trickled down his narrow forehead smudged with dirt. Then the forest's only sound

was his own magnified heart beat, pumping life into his limbs which seemingly served no purpose. Regaining a little courage, he hesitantly crawled through the brown, dead brush piles and snapping twigs in the direction of the bloodcurdling shouts.

Over a little knoll, constructed of leaves, topsoil, and small bushy evergreens, he observed several dark, unidentifiable shapes about fifty feet from his hiding place. He slowly wiggled through the reddish-brown leaves and porcupine-like evergreens, driven on by an unusual curiosity. Inch by inch, he edged his way towards the black, ominous figures. After a period of time which seemed like centuries, he was now able to see clearly what was happening.

The repeated thuds of brass knuckles and the muffled, agonizing cries of some unfortunate turned Pete aghast with horror. He unbelievably stared at the hate-filled faces which grew uglier and crueler with every kick and punch delivered. His limbs tried to move. There was no response. He was frozen to the cold, hard ground which was enveloped in the darkness of midnight.

He wanted to run. Why should he play the hero? He wasn't the only one who knew that he didn't have any guts. He could call the "cops" at the "Sneak a Snack" on the outskirts of the city. They probably would arrive in twenty minutes or so. These possibilities darted through his mind in a matter of seconds, and they were confirmed by a quick reversal of his chilled body from the ghastly scene. His joints responded. With the palms of his hands pressed against the clammy earth, he began to retrace his previous route.

His senses became ultra-sensitive as a final plea for help pierced the coldness of the night. This second cry brought Pete back to the reality of the situation. The only thing that he could see was Cathy's face, red from sobbing, and her back turned to him as he hastened down the corridor. Without any further meditation, he jumped up and dashed towards the gang murder. He swept the first culprit off his feet with an incredible block tackle. Wildly, with every ounce of strength summoned to his small, bony hands and his lean arms, he swung his fists at another form, covered in a stiff, black-leather jacket. Another jaw crunched under the iron fist of justice. For a brief moment, he came face to face with the victim, battered from the merciless attacks. Enraged at the sight of this cruel massacre, he started to wheel around to face another attacker, but he was quickly stopped in his tracks.

The sudden, sharp pain of a switchblade caused Pete to stumble and fall alongside the lifeless corpse. As the warmth of death gradually overcame him, he heard the disorganized retreat of his assailants. He experienced a pleasant feeling as his life oozed out the narrow slit in his back. A warm smile spread over his face as his last minutes on earth slowly trickled away. He had done something for his "brother." This was the satisfaction for which his soul craved.

The papers the next day related the story of how two Lingley High School students, Jim Dears and Pete Filos, had been jumped and stabbed in Hamilton Park by an unknown gang. The public, including Cathy, never did uncover the truth, but it didn't matter. Pete had proved himself to Cathy even if she wasn't aware of it.



Autumn



Autumn

by GILBERT Z. PUZNAKOSKI

Her echoing voice resounds through the leas
And her flowers turn dry from their search,
But seeks she the lips of a mouth that is cold
And the love of a man growing white.

Autumn Tragedy

My leaves of flame flourish and flit to the ground
Under my bright blue sky.
Everything's brilliant and color abounds,
But yet I am cold and I die.

by DAVID H. CAREY

Illogical Occasion

The season has betrayed its godly maker,
Its logic has been stayed,
That Nature's death-time have such a taker,
In brilliant bursts its glory arrayed.

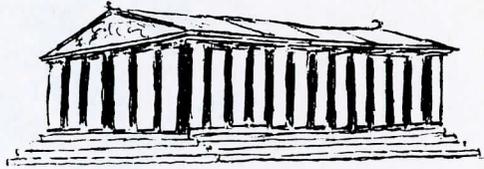
by JOHN A. YURKO

Autumn Prayer

by DAVID H. CAREY

Lord, make me like the autumn wind,
Who sings and dances gaily with your every leaf,
Who lends a mighty hand to turn a mill or sail a fleet,
Who comes and goes without restraint, to suit Your every pleasure

THE PARTHENON



by ROBERT F. DEBSKI

There exists but one edifice on the face of the earth which could be titled "The Perfect Building." It is so graceful, so majestic, that the term "man-made" would be an insult. This masterpiece is the Parthenon or Temple of Athena.

If one were to see this monument today, the disappointment would be great. All that remain are some scattered ruins, smashed by a shell during the Greek-Venetian War which destroyed the entire middle section. To observe this marvel at its climax, one must travel back in time to the fourth century B.C.

The Parthenon (about the same size as the Lincoln Memorial) stands on the sacred Acropolis, high over the city of Athens. The building itself is constructed in Pentelic marble, a fine-grained white stone. The perimeter consists of stately Doric columns, simple vertical pillars, tapered in a slight degree and capped by plain, but geometric, slabs. Based on the post-and-lintel principle, these pillars serve as a support for the tremendous roofing, white rectangular slices of limestone topped by giant triangles. The front of these triangles depicts in engaged polychromatic statuary the mythical tale of Athena springing from the head of her father, Zeus, who had just eaten his wife, Metis. At the peak is a small figure of Athena flanked by two legendary sphinx with outstretched wings.

The interior holds the center of attraction. Here is another structure enclosed by two feet thick, solid walls. The only entrance is a doorway which leads to the treasure, a second statue of Athena. This one is much larger and more life-like. The Greek goddess is shown clasping a slender spear tipped with silver and wearing a radiant gold breast-plate adorned with the snake-head of Medusa.

The Parthenon is truly one of the most spectacular works ever constructed by man. Its simplicity, beauty, and architectural designs have yet to be equalled.

Love ?

by JAMES R. BEDILLION

Friendship was mine,
until the time
No one spoke;
my heart broke.

Time quickly turned.
My heart burned
To speak again,
just once again.

Death soon came;
I was blamed.
Then they spoke,
my heart broke.

WHAT LIFE SO WAKED



by GILBERT Z. PUZNAKOSKI

The morning mists hung low over the puddles of Jane Street as Happy turned the corner.

"Hey! Petey-boy, how ya ben, man?"

He was addressing a shabby boy of similar age.

"Aw, not too bad, Hap. How you?"

"O.K., I guess." That was what he said, but not what he meant. Actually, he wasn't 'O.K.' He was lonely, and right now, all that he could boast over was his need to talk with one of his old friends.

"You remember the way it used to be?"

"Yeah Hap, things was good then. No trouble, nothin'."

Hours could have been spent there, but the boy kept shuffling feet as if he were in a hurry.

"Hey Hap, I gotta go now, man. My girl's waitin for me up at K&K's. I'll see ya 'round, huh?"

"Yeah, sure, kid. See ya 'round."

Happy began feeling like the fog, dank and listless. His old-time pal didn't even have time to talk with him. Yes, things had changed. It was the Redevelopment Authority that Happy blamed; after all, they were the ones who tore up the old neighborhood. They were going to build a modern complex there. So, some families moved away; others moved into the low-cost apartments on the other side of town.

"Not our place, man," thought Happy, "They didn't take our place. Dat's still there."

It was drizzling slightly, and Happy was confused. Tom Hicks, who was a little crazy and who never liked Happy, came by. Happy thought of how he could get to talk with him.

"Maybe if I offer him a weed," he said.

So, he pulled out his pack, and got one ready. It was his last one, but if it worked, it would be worth it.

"Hi, Tom, want a cig'ret?" It was a bit obvious, but Happy hoped Tom wouldn't notice.

"S-s-sure, m-m-ma-a-n-n," he got out with considerable twisting and grimacing.

"Wher ya goin'?" Happy asked.

"S-s-s-ee d-da b-b-bird-s in d-da f-f-five a-an' t-ten."

"Oh yeah? Mind if I come along?"

The answer came back affirmative: he'd scare the birds away. Happy stopped and let the boy go on. But, going into some store seemed like a good idea. It was raining; at least, a store was dry.

Happy cut across old Mrs. Hanna's garden—or what used to be her garden. Now, it was only a bunch of stones waiting to be buried by a parking lot. He cut over and went into Enrietti's, a small magazine store. You weren't allowed to loiter, but you could look at all the books and then buy one for a dime, and everything was fine. Mr. Enrietti didn't especially like that, but you weren't loitering. He began to look around the shelves when he saw Jenny. She was the only girl he treated as a lady, not that she looked like one, but because he really liked her. Her family was one that had moved out altogether. Now they lived in a small place out near the edge of nowhere.

The shelf was long, but Happy crept down the aisle very slowly trying not to catch her attention just yet. He waited until he was right in back of her before he spoke.

"Hi, Jenny."

Half startled came the reply. "Oh! Hi, Hap; you sorta scared me there."

"How've you been?"

"Fine, just fine. You still go out like we used to?"

"Naw, ain't nobody 'round any more. All gone."

Time passed, and they said little. Thoughts, however, raced through their minds: the times when they'd skip classes and go to Mr. Henry's back yard, or when they'd go out after school, and the whole gang would climb up the fire escape on the paint store and throw rocks down on the cars. Then they remembered the times when just the two of them would sit and talk.

"Member how we'd used to talk, Jenny?"

"Yeah, that was fun. But, all that's gone now, Happy. I can see that. We ain't never gonna have that again."

The words pained him, but Happy consoled himself with the notion that somehow he could be with her again.

"Why ya in town?"

Came down with some friends. Don't get too much of a chance to come in any more."

Happy thought for a while, then blurted out. "Ya still like me though, don't ya?"

"Yeah Happy, I still like you. Dem things never change."

Outside a horn sounded. Jenny hurriedly took the book over to the counter and paid for it.

"I gotta go now, Hap. You wanna come and meet my boyfriend?"

Happy's heart felt a cold shiver. "No."

"Come up and visit some time. I got a lotta nice friends." With that she closed the door and got in the car.

Happy turned to the shelves; he could not look out and see his one hope fade.

"Yeah man, everything's gone!" he muttered to a book.

Later, as he stepped out the doorway, he thought he could see the sun coming out from behind the clouds that covered the hills. For a moment the golden light trickled down through the fog and clothed the trees with warm hues. Then, the clouds enshrouded their brilliant toy again or he began to cry; the birds were silent for a second. Silent. Only the sound of shoes on the rubble as a dark figure was swallowed up in the mist.

Somebody told him once, and now he recalled:
What life so waked would dare not sleep.



A TASTE OF HELL

by RAYMOND M. NIEDENBERGER

What taste of Hell do the damned digest?
Perhaps loneliness' bitter flavor rests
Among, like the island-stars in the vast sea.

Autumn Harvest

by JOHN A. YURKO

Over the pasture frocked with yellow,
Among the scented pines, green on high,
Across the gnarled brook, soon to mellow,
As summer senses the onslaught of Autumn.

The blue sky reels in fervent anticipation
Of the return of his grey comrade.
The worker in the field finds the end of his occupation
Among the bounty provided for all.

We stand on the hillside, surveying all,
As the young wisps of huts below summon the evening,
And the darkening valley unveils its soundless call,
Preparing for the night time stillness.



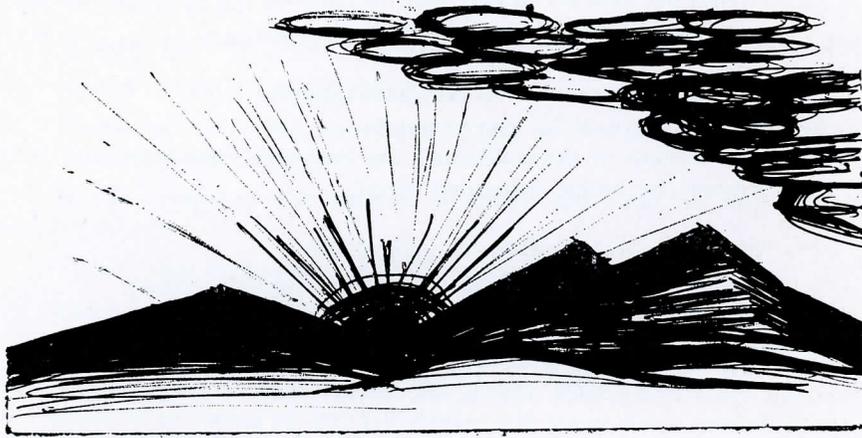
Eternal Mold

by GILBERT Z. PUZNAKOSKI

A poet can ne'er be made
Nor e'er stops his breath:
An entity of eternal mold
Like a phoenix never far from death,
But replete of life untold.

Decision

At Dawn



by DOUGLAS L. REILLY

“Either you give up this mad belief, or you will die.” The words still rang in Father Drake’s ears as he crouched in his cell staring at the earthen floor.

Father Drake was prisoner 113, and his cell was on the south side of the prison camp. As near as he could guess, he had been a prisoner about a month now, having been captured in late November. Already this once handsome young man in his late thirties was gray-haired. He had lost nearly forty pounds in that month because of the insufficient food that was (and often was not) given him. His weakened frame ached relentlessly from the beatings he had received. He spent most of his time in a cell which admitted no sunlight; consequently, his eyesight had failed considerably. Father’s stooped body bore silent testimony to the narrow confines of his cell.

Father Drake had been given his ultimatum that afternoon. The Communists, having tired of tormenting him, had given him his choice—deny his faith and go free or else, die the next morning. All but one of his foreign colleagues had denied their faith and left. The one stalwart who persisted had been swiftly executed. Father knew how much the peasant priests feared death at the hands of the Reds. He feared it too. Nevertheless, he tried not to let his fear get the better of him.

Father was still staring at the floor of his cell when the full impact of the words struck him. He was going to die the next morning. . . . He had never been this close to death before. He thought of facing the loaded barrels of ten rifles, of their sudden and furious reports, of the muffled thud of each bullet as it crashed into his body, of the intense pain to follow. . . . The bite of a mosquito brought him back to reality. His forehead had broken out into a cold sweat. He shuddered, thankful to be alive now.

“Deny your faith and go free,” the captain had said. Then it occurred to Father that he did not have to die. He could merely pretend to denounce his faith. He would be set free. Again he could resume his work among the peasants. Not relishing the thought of death, he tried to convince himself that he was more valuable to the Church alive than dead.

“Thou art a priest forever.” He remembered these words too. He had been consecrated another Christ, and now he was planning to forsake his duties, run away from his responsibilities. What would the prisoners, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, think after they had learned how another priest had denied his faith and been set free? Still more important, was it right? Or, was he obligated to die? Overcome by his emotions, he could no longer think clearly.

For the next several hours he experienced sheer mental agony. He thought of his home in Kansas, of his parents and relatives, of life itself. Then he thought of the early Christian martyrs. Still, he could not resolve his problem. Was he being selfish in his plan to lie to the Reds? Was he really interested in working among the people, or was this plan conceived for the sole purpose of saving himself? His mind was indeed troubled that night. He prayed for strength. God seemed far away from him in this hour.

Then he made his decision—his forehead stopped sweating, his mental torment ceased. His mind was resolved; nothing would shake him from his plan of action; he stood firm. Peacefully, he lay down to sleep, for death waits for no man.



The Love of Man

by ALBERT J. SHANNON

The love of man
Is a personal pride;
Be it God, or nature,
Or a girl, as his bride.

He respects all he has—
Till death do they part;
Be it God or nature,
Or a girl in his heart.

A man keeps his love—
Till the very end;
Be it God, or nature,
Or a girl, as a friend.

Be it God, or nature,
Or a girl . . . As a girl;
The love of man
Has a place in this world.

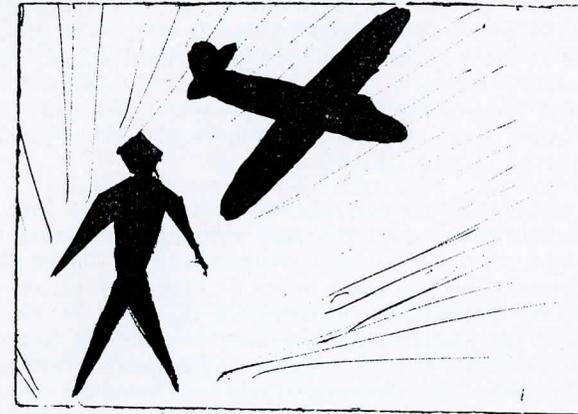


Olive Branch

by GILBERT Z. PUZNAKOSKI

Move on to grave those
That can of life be filled
And live with them who
Stand afar the shroud. For
Then, our Mourning stars to
Morning stars will change.

The Life That Bore Death



by FRANK J. DiLEO

“Colonel Young, you aren’t twenty years old anymore. Your mental and physical capacities are no longer as responsive as they were five years ago. You haven’t fully recovered from your recent accident, and, unless you drastically slow down your pace, you could suffer a break-down.”

Although these severe words of warning were always ringing in Colonel Young’s ears, he never paid much attention to them. He seemed to think that he was an iron man with an inexhaustible supply of resources. A break-down was the farthest thing from his mind.

Momentarily, he was staring at his dust-covered mirror, earnestly trying to rebuild his shattered composure. Since he had been recently thrown into a state of utter shock and confusion, everything surrounding him seemed so strange although this had been his only home for the past five years. Even the tarnished desk which bore every scrape, cut and nick of his once sturdy hand seemed so repulsive. His memory was so blank that he couldn’t even kindle a spark of the black puffs of flak nor the treacherous fighters which caused him many heart-aches during daily bombing raids.

With a deep sigh, he took a long look into his agonized face, which was robbed of all its vitality. All the pressure of his position was deeply carved into his face. His hair was beginning to show gray streaks, and his drab eyes reflected the ashen color of his face. His whole body yearned for a long rest which would liberate him from this destructive war. Amidst all this nothingness, his memory began to focus the foggy events which led to his unexpected break-down.

March 23, 1942 proved to be one of the worst days in the 312th squadron records. Only seven planes had survived the pounding of the flak, and three of these B-17's were badly damaged. Young circled around the base as he signaled the tower for an emergency landing. His co-pilot was severely injured. The landing gear was jammed, and two of the engines were completely inoperative. He slowly approached the runway and set down the battered fortress. It struck the ground with a rumbling crash as the left wing was torn from the fuselage. The impact hurled the colonel through the windshield. Immediately, emergency vehicles crowded around the B-17. Inside a few moments they rushed all the injured men to the base hospital. For eight months Colonel Young was grounded with a skull and leg fracture.

After he was certified to fly again, the doctor gave him the severe warning. Nevertheless, Young plunged into his work without any reserve. His primary task consisted of reorganizing the battered squadron. During his absence, the countless losses of men and planes had really taken their toll on the morale and bombing efficiency of the crews. He also had to begin preparations for bombing Leepport, an important shipping center in northeast France, together with nearby railroad installations, and fuel depots. Each morning at the 5:30 briefing, Young explained the tactics to the crewmen. By 6:30 the B-17's were airborne. As they approached the target area, heavy flak and nagging fighters began inflicting numerous losses. Even the return trip was very costly since patrolling fighters would pick off stragglers and crippled fortresses. Although the crews were finished for the day, Young had to face the fire of the investigator general. He cried for more pin-point-bombing and a smaller number of losses. During the night, he started preparing for the next stage of the mission, organizing the crews, and searching for the best possible approach and path of escape. His kerosene lamp was still burning at 2:30 in the morning.

After two heavy, active weeks of bombing Leepport, the pressure and late working hours began taking an effect on Young's mind. Ideas were hard to cough up, and one time easy manipulations turned into nightmarish problems with no solutions. His face lost all color, and his body grew very sluggish; still, he never gave up his fight.

At the end of the third week of bombing Leepport, the installations were nearly destroyed. If Young's estimations were correct, this mission would be the clincher. And so, on November 19, 1942, the 312th, joined by two other squadrons, proudly took off for the target area.

Within two hours they were greeted by puffs of flak. The wind currents made it difficult to steer the plane; yet, the colonel set the B-17 on auto-pilot as the bombardier peered through the V.P.I. to the target. Then, he joyously yelled "Bombs away." The bombs from all three squadrons fell squarely on the remnants of the shabby harbor. Huge oil tanks sent towering flames into the air. Miles of railroad track were torn apart. The mission was a success! Suddenly — a blast ripped through the cockpit. The impact shattered the glass and killed the co-pilot. Although the colonel was visibly dazed, he quickly regained his sense of balance. He surveyed the situation; two engines were badly

damaged, and the loss of control made it even more difficult to steady the plane. As the fighters converged on the scene, they began to down the B-17's. But, with the aid of some clutch shooting, the flying devils were repelled.

After hours of torment, the colonel landed his fortress as ambulances rushed on the scene and took the injured men to the hospital. Then, the tired colonel popped through the hatch; but, something strange happened. He couldn't move. His hands remained glued to the hatch door. His face grew as white as snow as streams of sweat poured from his charred face. He was feverishly shivering while his crew looked on in amazement. His body and mind lost all coordination. The inevitable happened; Colonel Young had broken-down. He had had too many sleepless nights, too much responsibility on his weakened shoulders, too many near misses of exploding flak. He had lived among the hall of the dead too long.

Suddenly, his train of thought was interrupted as he took a long look at his lonely office. He finally realized that as a commanding officer he couldn't handle the strenuous work. His only hope now would be to go back to his farm in Kansas and live his life as a live man and not as an empty body.



TRANSFORMED

by GILBERT Z. PUZNAKOSKI

From death to
Always life
The shades
Do sway
And

Night
So turned
By sacred Love
Into a blissful
Everlasting Day.

Alone

by GILBERT Z. PUZNAKOSKI

Just four stars in the black abyss,
Near enough to be there; far enough to be
Mysterious. And I'm alone.

Usually night brings sleep. But now
Only darkness comes. For the first time
There's fear. And I'm alone.

The trees are still. I called, I called;
Where were you? Only the wind was there
To answer. But I'm alone.

O God, help me! That touch, warm and free,
Like one from a Father. Now the Chill
Touches me. I'm all alone.

So you are gone; and I'm still alive,
Only so alone.

