

# THE VALYERMO Chronicle

S A I N T   A N D R E W ' S   A B B E Y

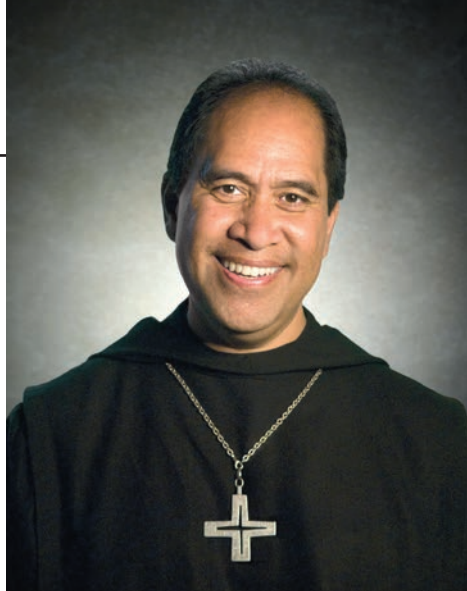
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## LETTER *from the* ABBOT

SAINT JOSEPH IS ONE OF MY favorite saints for several reasons, but specifically for two reasons. One of the reasons is because I am drawn to quiet humble people who by the simplicity of their life speak eloquently of their love for God. Saint Joseph seems like that to me. Saint Joseph plays a significant and essential role in our salvation history, but there is little known or said about him. Not a single word of his has been recorded. He is a quiet, unassuming, behind-the-scenes figure. He was one of the chosen few to whom God revealed His plan of salvation. In a dream he was told, “For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; [ . . . ] you shall call his name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. (Mt. 1:21). Yet not a single word of his has been recorded. Saint Joseph’s role in our salvation was to safeguard and provide for the Mother of God and her Child; in essence, he was given the responsibility to protect God. Can you imagine having this responsibility? And according to scripture, he did it quickly, without complaining, without resisting, and without questioning. Quiet. Obedient. Faithful. And not a single word of his has been recorded.

All this makes me want to know more about him. So I have to read between the lines. I reflect on the many times people have said to me, “You’re just like your dad,” or “You remind me of your mother when you say that because that’s exactly what she used to say.” I suppose it is reasonable to think that if we want to know more about what Saint Joseph was like, we should look at Jesus, the Child whom he helped to raise. Certainly, Jesus learned



a great deal from his earthly parents and imitated them in many ways, much like children do today.

When I was teaching, we had parent-teacher conferences like all schools. As soon as a parent walked into my classroom for their appointment, I knew immediately—even without looking at my appointment schedule—the student this parent belonged to. The parent not only looked like their child, (my student), but the mannerisms, the facial expressions, even speech patterns were similar to their child. Of course, it was the child who imitated the parents and not the other way around.

It is almost certain that Jesus picked up a lot of His mannerisms, speech patterns and facial expressions from Saint Joseph and His mother. Even more importantly, it’s fair to say, that as parents they played a vital role in teaching Him, through their actions, good Jewish values, the value of prayer, to say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’, the value of a good work ethic, the importance of treating people with respect, the importance of living a virtuous life, and many such things. This

is what all good parents do, and I'm sure the quiet humble saints Mary and Joseph were no exception to this.

The second reason Saint Joseph is one of my favorite saints is a more personal reason. It has to do with my dear late mother. I remember when my mother was recovering from a stroke. (One rarely/never recovers from a stroke). Even though my mother was not on her death bed, I knew the end was not far. So I began to pray to Saint Joseph, patron saint of a happy death, to grant my mother who was a dedicated and faithful Catholic her whole life, a peaceful and happy death. I didn't want to see her suffer or in pain. I prayed three years for this intention. On the day of her passing, I was in the house, though not in the room with my mother. My aunt was with her. My mother, Sosefina — or Josephine in English — died peacefully in her sleep. A favor granted by God, through the intercession of Saint Joseph. I will never forget this favor, and will be ever grateful to Saint Joseph for his prayers and protection over my mother, for whom she was named.

Saint Joseph will always be one of my favorite saints. I admire him and have a deep respect for him who quietly and in an unassuming way loved and protected God and His mother. Although I have some idea of what he was like from the very few scripture passages and reading between the lines, perhaps in the next life if God allows, I will get to actually meet him and know more about him. But for now, I believe he himself would tell me, 'if you want to know more about me, simply 'look at Jesus'. Pray for us, Saint Joseph. ✠

*Abbot Damien*

# THE VALYERMO Chronicle

№ 267 ✠ SPRING/SUMMER 2021

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El Greco, *St Joseph and the Christ Child*, circa 1690

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# MIDDLE- EARTH AFTER COVID

JANICE FORD DAURIO, OBL.OSB

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CHANGED ALMOST EVERYTHING, INCLUDING WHAT WE DO WITH OUR DAY. BY FORCING US TO use our time differently, the pandemic made us acutely aware of how we use time. Now we have a chance to keep some of the good uses of time developed in the Purple tier.

Pre-Covid, our day was structured for us by pressing tasks, mostly chosen by others. Once the pandemic hit, we were suddenly bereft of those normal tasks that we used to complain about. Bad as having too many phone calls and emails is, worse is having too few. Once the text messages and emails dried up to a trickle, we, not others, had to decide what to do with our time. We had to be both abbot and monk. The existential realization of our radical freedom became apparent: okay, now what do we do?

Many people began reading more. Some took up novels about pandemics and isolation; some read dystopian novels. But others just wanted to escape to another world. J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is unapologetically escapist, and that's a good thing.

Why should a man be scorned, if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home? Or if, when he cannot do so, he thinks and talks about other topics than jailers and prison-walls? . . . Critics . . . are confusing, not always by sincere error, the Escape of the Prisoner with

the Flight of the Deserter. (*On Fairy-stories*, 13)

As a hopeful sign that post-pandemic times may not be far off, people are now talking more about what the pandemic might have changed for the good.

One of the good pandemic changes can be the recovery of the joy of re-reading, especially of a much-loved novel. Re-reading is different enough from first-time-reading that it deserves its own name. Perhaps it should be called “re-lecture” (from the French) or “re-lection” (from the Latin). A brain scan might show that re-reading lights up different neurons compared to an initial reading.

One reported motive for re-reading was that people wanted “to travel easily, and with little effort, to familiar places, characters and experiences” (*The Conversation*, UK). When so much was uncertain, re-readers wanted to forget that the future is uncertain. Re-readers “find solace in the familiar” (Azbigmedia).

We re-read because we retain something of the child, thank God. “Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in



spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, 'Do it again!'" (G. K. Chesterton).

Humans have two kinds of activities — what a contemporary philosopher calls “telic” and “atelic.” A “telic” activity has a terminus; you do it, it’s done, and that’s that. Examples could be winning a game, getting a degree, running a marathon, losing 10 pounds, making a retreat. Reading a book is a telic activity if the goal is to check it off your list of Things to Do.

By contrast, re-reading is an atelic activity. Atelic activities do not aim at

any completed state; the “goal” is the activity itself. We don’t re-read *Lord of the Rings* for self-improvement. We don’t re-read for a sense of accomplishment. We don’t re-read to find out what happens: we already know. We are now free to just enjoy the story itself, and to experience that longing sweetness that comes from once again being in Middle-earth. We re-read because we want once more to be spending time with those beloved people (and hobbits, wizards, and elves) in those places (the Shire, Bree, Rivendell).

## RE-READING *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*

We go to the Prancing Pony to enjoy knowing who the man in the corner is when the hobbits don’t.

Suddenly Frodo noticed that a strange-looking weather-beaten man, sitting in the shadows near the wall, was also listening intently to the hobbit-talk. He had a tall tankard in front of him, and was smoking a long-stemmed pipe curiously carved. His legs were stretched out before him, showing high boots of supple leather that fitted him well, but had seen much wear and were now caked with mud. A travel-stained cloak of heavy dark-green cloth was drawn close about him, and in spite of the heat of the room, he wore a hood that overshadowed his face; but the gleam of his eyes could be seen as he watched the hobbits. (Bk. 1, chap. 9, “At the Sign of the Prancing Pony”)

Since we know the stranger’s identity, we can relax and savor the scene itself. We can enjoy the incantatory thrill when the stranger’s identity is revealed in the most glorious P. S. (actually, P. P. S.) to a letter

in a novel:

Make sure that it is the real Strider.  
There are many strange men on the  
roads. His true name is Aragorn.

All that is gold does not glitter,  
Not all those who wander are lost;  
The old that is strong does not wither,  
Deep roots are not reached by  
the frost.

From the ashes a fire shall be woken,  
A light from the shadow shall spring;  
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,  
The crownless again shall be king.  
(Bk 1, chap. 10, “Strider”)

We can more deeply ponder Aragorn’s stand for objective moral truth in his answer to Eomer’s question, “How shall a man judge what to do in such times?”

“As he ever has judged,” said Aragorn. “Good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among the Elves and Dwarves and another among Men. It is a man’s part to discern them as much in the Golden wood as in his own house.” (Bk 3, chap. 2, “The Riders of Rohan”)

Tolkien introduced to the English language a word that deserves more use: “eucatastrophe” — “the sudden happy turn in a story which pierces you with a joy that brings tears (which I argued it is the highest function of fairy-stories to produce).” (*The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, Letter 89, to Christopher Tolkien) We want that sweet joy again at the revelation of the true identity of the White Rider, all the sweeter because at first mistaken for Saruman.

The old man . . . stood, grown suddenly tall, towering above them. His hood and his grey rags were flung away. His white garments shone. He lifted up his staff, and Gimli’s axe leaped from his grasp and fell ringing to the ground. The sword of Aragorn, stiff in his motionless hand, blazed with a sudden fire. Legolas gave a great shout and shot an arrow high into the air; it vanished in a flash of flame.

“Mithrandir!” he cried. “Mithrandir!” (Bk 3, chap. 5, “The White Rider”)

Painful though it is to re-read, we want to be with Frodo and Sam when their sufferings are intense — not because it’s therapeutic but just because we want to be with them.

“Do you remember that bit of rabbit, Mr. Frodo?” he said. “And our place under the warm bank in Captain Faramir’s country, the day I saw the oliphant?”

“No, I am afraid not, Sam,” said Frodo. “At least I know that such things happened, but I cannot see them. No taste of food, no feel of water, no sound of wind, no memory of tree or grass or flower, no

image of moon or star are left to me.” (Bk 6, chap. 3, “Mount Doom”)

We want to experience again the bittersweet joy (No “And they lived happily ever after”!) at Frodo’s and Gandalf’s departure, leaving behind Merry, Pippin, and Sam at the end of this fairy story that redefines fairy story, and is to be preferred to many a theological tract on heaven.

And the ship went out into the High Sea and passed on into the West, until at last on a night of rain Frodo smelled a sweet fragrance on the air and heard the sound of singing that came over the water. And then it seemed to him that as in his dream at the house of Bombadil the grey rain-curtain turned all to silver glass and was rolled back, and he beheld white shores and beyond them a far green country under a swift sunrise. (Bk 6, ch. 9, “The Grey Havens”)

I hope you are dissatisfied with my choice of passages; I hope that dissatisfaction prompts a re-reading (or re-re-reading). Now that you know what is going to happen, when you re-read *Lord of the Rings* think about why Tolkien says this about the book:

*The Lord of the Rings* is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision. That is why I have not put in, or have cut out, practically all references to anything like “religion” . . . (Letter 142 to Robert Murray, S. J.)

Let us raise a glass, perhaps on Zoom, to the joy of re-reading. ✖





# My Life with Saint Joseph

BY PAUL F. FORD, OBL. OSB.

EVER SINCE POPE FRANCIS shared his favorite image of sleeping Saint Joseph when he was visiting Manila in January of 2015,<sup>1</sup> I had to have my own copy of this statue, now gracing my desk.

Thanks to Pope Francis's proclamation of this year of Saint Joseph, 8 December 2020, to 8 December 2021, and to Father Aelred's invitation to write about him, I happily confess that Saint Joseph has grown on me in my seventy-four years.

Here's how.

The first time Saint Joseph "registered with me" in December of 1962 when Pope St. John XXIII added his name to the Roman Canon, unchanged for nearly 1400 years. Liturgical renewal was on its way.

Nine years later, inspired by my novice master Father Vincent,<sup>2</sup> I read *The Jewish Jesus* by Robert Aron.<sup>3</sup> In five short chapters Aron pictures the birth and childhood of Jesus, his immersion in the life of the synagogue, the journey to

<sup>1</sup> During the "Meeting with Families" held at the Mall of Asia Arena in Manila, on 16 January 2015, Pope Francis spoke of his devotion to the Sleeping Joseph in these words: "On my table I have an image of Saint Joseph sleeping, and when I have a problem I write a little note and I put it underneath, so that he can dream about it; in other words I tell him to pray for this problem."

<sup>2</sup> Father Vincent Martin, OSB (1912–1999) <https://www.saintandrewsabbey.com/category-s/96.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Maryknoll, NY: Orbis 1971. Aron (1898–1975) was a French Jewish historian who was active in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Jerusalem, Passovers, and the High Holy Days. What I wasn't expecting how vivid and real—even to the sound of his singing voice and his prayer-shawl-covered body swaying with piety—became the person and importance of Saint Joseph to Jesus and then to me. The foster father of Jesus is the icon of the Father for Jesus. Can there be a more important male in the life of Jesus?

Although the man Joseph is mentioned only twice in the Gospel of John,<sup>4</sup> the gospel is full of the influence of Joseph. The later-Lenten gospel readings from John<sup>5</sup> can especially be read as a description of what Jesus learned about God his Father from Joseph his foster-father. Beginning with “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work” (4:34), we hear Jesus say, “My Father is at work until now, so I am at work” (5:17); “Amen, amen, I say to you, a son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees his father doing; for what he does, his son will do also. For the Father loves his Son and shows him everything that he himself does, and he will show him greater works than these, so that you may be amazed (5:18–21)—and so on, through the list in Father Felix Just’s “Scripture Index of Lectionary Readings Used for Weekday Masses” just mentioned. Cumulatively one comes away with the strong impression that

Jesus experiences the Father through Joseph. Hence the growing popularity of the title, “Joseph, shadow of the Father.”<sup>6</sup>

Marrying Janice Daurio was life-changing for me, even at the patron-saint level. Now a husband and provider, I frequently sought (and continue to seek) Joseph’s intercession. I added Joseph’s name to my names: Paul Francis Xavier Peter Joseph. As a wedding present Dr. Michael Downey gave us an icon of the marriage of Mary and Joseph,<sup>7</sup> an event I had never really thought about. My insomnia haunted me for another twenty years; but I found some comfort in imagining Mary and Joseph staying up with Jesus as he feverishly cut his teeth—and I put my open hands to ‘touch’ theirs under my pillow.

When I began to teach Mariology at the seminary in spring of 1988, I chose as my textbook *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament*,<sup>8</sup> the work that saved my bacon thirteen years prior, when I was



Îcône La Rencontre, Atelier Les Clémences, 1648 Hauteville Suisse

4 1:45 and 6:42.

5 <https://catholic-resources.org/Lectionary/Index-Weekdays.htm>

6 See the book, *The Shadow of the Father*, by Jan Dobraczynski (Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), originally published in Poland in 1977.

7 A devotion to the Holy Spouses is promoted by the Oblates of Saint Joseph, whom I taught at our seminary. See <https://osjusa.org/prayers/holy-spouses-rosary/>

8 John McHugh (Doubleday, 1975).

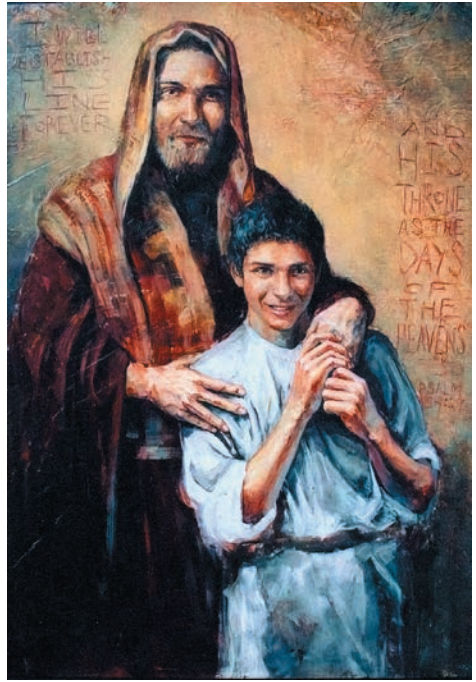


called upon to defend Catholic teaching at Fuller Seminary, my alma mater.

I had left Saint John Seminary in 1973 with very little organized and somewhat shallow thinking about Mary. In 1975 Fuller challenged me to stand and deliver. Canon McHugh's book gave me confidence to know why we Catholics say what we do about the Mother of Jesus.

Rereading the book in 1988, I now found Saint Joseph in McHugh's work. I also found the extended Holy Family. McHugh was such a thorough scholar that he retrieved the entire tradition (four centuries worth, back to the first Jesuit exegete and one of the first Jesuits, Alfonso Salmerón<sup>9</sup>) about how Joseph could be a just man and at the same time willing to divorce Mary. Salmerón teaches that Joseph had a proper fear of the holiness of God now resident in the ark of Mary's womb and soon to be running around his carpenter shop.<sup>10</sup> And McHugh endorsed the great Anglican exegete J. B. Lightfoot, about Jesus growing up in a large Nazareth family of as many as perhaps just one of Joseph's brothers as head of the household, three widows, with a number of male and female children, all cousins of Jesus.<sup>11</sup> My imagination about the home and work life of Jesus expanded greatly.

So in the past four decades I have paid attention when Joseph is mentioned and venerated, and I have looked for healthy portrayals of him (my favorite image is by Christopher Santer, of Joseph and the teenage Jesus). I have found great prayers to Joseph, such as this Carmelite prayer for the March 11 through 19 novena:



Christopher Santer <http://www.christophersanter.com/commissions-sacredart/josephandjesus>

### PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

St. Joseph, you taught the Son of God  
to be a real man.  
He related to you as child to father,  
friend to friend, man to man,  
craftsman to craftsman,  
pray-er to pray-er.  
Teach us to walk the path  
of true spiritual childhood  
in communion with him.  
Help us to listen, as you did,  
to the gentle whisperings of the Spirit.  
Carry us on our journey  
until you carry us home  
to the Father with Jesus,  
in whose name we pray.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> 1515–1585

<sup>10</sup> McHugh, 167–172.

<sup>11</sup> McHugh, 234–254.

<sup>12</sup> Discalced Carmelite Nuns/Carmel of St Teresa of Jesus, 7201 West 32nd Street, Little Rock, Arkansas 72204-4716 <https://littlerockcarmel.org>

Here is a solid hymn text, from the great Jesuit versifier, James Quinn,<sup>13</sup>

1. Joseph, we praise you, prince of God's own household,  
bearing the promise made of old to David,  
chosen to foster Christ, the Lord's anointed,  
Son of the Father.
2. Strong in your silence, swift in your obedience,  
saving God's Firstborn when you fled from Herod,  
cherish God's children as you cherished Jesus,  
safe in your keeping.
3. Saint of the workbench, skilled and trusted craftsman,  
cheerfully toiling side by side with Jesus,  
teach us to value lives of hidden splendour  
lived in God's presence.
4. Husband of Mary, one in joy and sorrow,  
share with God's people love and peace and blessing;  
may your example help our homes to mirror  
Nazareth's glory.
5. Saint of the dying, when your work was over  
Jesus and Mary stood beside your deathbed;  
so in life's evening may they stand beside you,  
calling us homeward.

This last verse reminds me of the four years I served Msgr. O'Reilly's Mass at the seminary side altar with a painting of the death of Saint Joseph.<sup>14</sup> For four years I served for and I contemplated that scene.



Michael Masteller © 2020 used with permission.

Like the mirth of Jesus, the one thing too great for God to show us when Jesus walked upon earth,<sup>15</sup> the only thing missing from this reverie is the fun of Mary and Joseph. As I write this, the world is getting ready to bury Prince Philip and I am loving the stories about the laughter he brought to Queen Elizabeth with all of his pranks. The best part of my parents' marriage was their playfulness with each other. But we are left to imagine how happy was the rollicking family compound at Nazareth.

To sum up what I know about him: Joseph was such a good man and father that Jesus was never afraid of him or embarrassed by him.

Have a beautiful Year of Saint Joseph. May he help you, and me, have a happy death. ✠

<sup>13</sup> James Quinn, SJ, 1919–2010, © 1980, James Quinn, SJ.

<sup>14</sup> Hector Serbaroli (1881–1951).

<sup>15</sup> The one thing too great for God to show us when Jesus walked upon earth, said G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, the last paragraph.



# From BUDDHA to BENEDICT

(CONTINUED)

BY TA-TEH HSIU-SHIH (*Fr. Thaddeus Yang An-Yuen, O.S.B.*)

**FR. THADDEUS YANG WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF SAINT ANDREW'S Abbey, Valyermo. Born in 1905, he joined our Belgian mother-abbey of St. Andriesabdij (St. André as it was then known) in Bruges in 1927. His significance in monastic and missionary history is explored in detail by David J. Endres in his article: "The Legacy of Thaddeus Yang." International Bulletin of Missionary Research (Vol. 34, No. 1, January 2010) pp. 23–28. We quote from the first two paragraphs of the article, which may be read in full online at: <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2010-01/2010-01-023-endres.html>**

TA-TEH HSIU-SHIH (1905–82),<sup>1</sup> later named Thaddeus Yang An-Jan and hereafter referred to by his shortened pen name, Thaddeus Yang, was one of the first indigenous priestly vocations for the Chinese community of the Order of St. Benedict (Benedictines).<sup>2</sup> Born to a Chinese Buddhist family in Java, Indonesia, and educated in Hong Kong and then Europe, Yang encountered the Roman Catholic Church and the Benedictine Order in Belgium. Attracted to Christian faith, he was baptized and soon thereafter pursued a religious vocation as a Benedictine. After ordination he was sent back to the Far East to labor as a missionary in China. In that role he helped to educate Westerners, especially Americans, about Chinese culture, religion, and the missions. While mission historians have often studied the role of missionaries being sent to

distant lands to preach the Gospel to non-Christian peoples, the mission legacy of Thaddeus Yang, O. S. B., illustrates the reverse situation of an indigenous Catholic missionary who educated Americans about the missions and helped to stimulate interest in mission support.

*Conversion and Calling.* Thaddeus Yang was born on May 15, 1905. His father had lived a life similar to that of a Buddhist monk, practicing a life of solitude and self-denial.<sup>3</sup> From his early years, Yang wished to imitate his father and live the austere life of a monk. His mother, though, cautioned him against it, encouraging him instead to enter the diplomatic service. His education, which his mother hoped would equip him for eventual diplomatic duties, took him to Hong Kong and across Europe to England, Germany, and finally Belgium.<sup>4</sup>

We now permit *Fr. Thaddeus* to speak for himself in two autobiographical articles, "From Buddha to Benedict" (published in the last issue of the *Chronicle*) and here, "The Chinese Adventures of an Indonesian Monk" (*Valyermo, January 7, 1971, Chinese New Year*).

1 Special thanks are due to fellow historians who assisted me in this research: Robert Carbonneau, C. P., of the Passionist Historical Archives, Union, N. J., and Luke Dysinger, O. S. B., of St. Andrew's Abbey, Valyermo, Calif., and St. John's Seminary, Camarillo, Calif.

2 After Yang received his religious name, some still called him "Brother Ta-Teh." His name has appeared in print as An-Jan, An-Yuen, and An Djian. He used "An-Jan" when he wrote the foreword to *The Communist Persuasion: A Personal Experience of Brainwashing*, by Eleutherius Winance. New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1959.

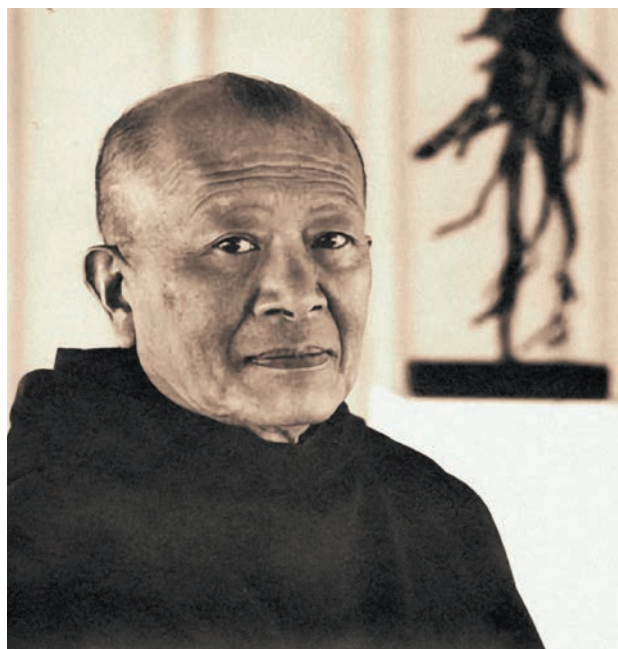
3 Yang's imitation of his father is found in chapter 1, "The Young Ascetic," in Yang's autobiography, titled "Chinese Bonzes and Catholic Priests," dated January 4, 1943, pp. 3–7, folder 9, in box 51, Catholic Students' Mission Crusade Collection, Archives of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (hereafter CSMC).

4 "Sketch of the Life of the Rev. Thaddeus Yang," interview with Thaddeus Yang in the Benedictine Chinese Mission Office, Lisle, Illinois, May 15, 1945, pp. 2–6, folder 4, CSMC.

## THE CHINESE ADVENTURE OF AN INDONESIAN MONK

### VI

UPON MY ARRIVAL AT SISHAN with Abbot Theodore Neve and Father Raphael Vinciarelli, the community comprised only three members: Fr. Gabriel Roux, superior, and Father Hildebrand



Marga and Fr. Emile Butruille. Father Pie de Coqueau and Dominique Van Rollegem had returned to Belgium; Fr. Jehan Joliet, the founder, was on the plateau of Masangpah, near the major seminary of the diocese of Chengtu.

Fr. Joliet's absence disappointed me. I had known him before he left for China, when I was still an undergraduate student at Louvain. His love for China and the Chinese civilization had impressed me considerably. I saw in him something like

a reincarnation of the famous 16th-century Jesuit Matteo Ricci.

I was told that Fr. Joliet had freely given himself up to the solitary life of a hermit. Had he not rather been put on the shelf because his ideas were at variance with the Abbaye de St. André? Fr. Joliet was a monk of Solesmes. To assist him in the founding of SiShan, the Abbot of St André had deputed first Fr. Pie de Coqueau and then Fr. Hildebrand Marga. Sainly monks but no intellectuals, the

two monks were not apt to appreciate Fr. Joliet's Riccian methods. Hence misunderstandings arose...

Abbot Neve came to Sishan to study the situation on the spot, not, however, without having first appointed Fr. Gabriel Roux to replace Fr. Joliet as Prior. In his mind this appointment was to be a temporary one, until Father Raphael Vinciarelli was ready to take over. The Abbot wanted Sishan to be a "St-André-in-China". Did Fr. Roux know it? If he did he did not show it. He had changed his stability from Solesmes to Bruges and went

out all of his way to make the abbot's visit as pleasant as it could be.

The difference between Fr. Roux and Fr. Joliet is that the latter was a 60-year-old man from Brittany and the former a less than 60-year-old native of Bordeaux. Made a monk after having been an officer of the French Navy on the Yangtse River, Fr. Joliet was straightforward, outspoken, self-willed, uncompromising; Fr. Roux was more "diplomatic", flexible, knowing how to temporize.



After the abbot's departure Fr. Roux disclosed to me his ideas and his plans. The monastery was to be a center of learning which would serve first the Nanchung area, and later the whole province of Szechwan. To prepare themselves for the task, the monks, present and to come, should spend some time outside the monastery to learn the Chinese language and to study the Chinese culture. Fr. Roux had no need to convince me, for his views coincided with my own. He suggested that I should take the lead by leaving right away for Chuhsien-Litupah, in the Wanhsien diocese.

\* \* \*

Chuhsien is the city in which my patron saint, the priest Thaddeus Liu, was put to death for the faith in 1823. The place of his martyrdom, the Taoist temple of the Fire God (Huo-shen Miao)—is a little more than a mile from the Catholic Church. The pastor of the church, Fr. Paul Lei, took me there several times.

I didn't live in Chuhsien but in the Christian village of Litupah, about an hour's walk from the city. The village priest, Father Wan, had asked Mr. Chiang, the director of the girls' high school, to teach me Chinese three or four times a week. Scholar of the old regime, Mr. Chiang introduced me right away into the secrets of the literary and classical languages (Kuo-wen and Ku-wen). Because I was an Indonesian of Chinese ancestry, and a college graduate, he thought it would be an insult to teach me the spoken language (Kuo-yu or pai-hua). True, if one knows the literary language (Kuo-wen) the spoken language (kuo-yu) is very easy to master. Between the kuo-wen and the kuo-yu there is the same difference as between classical and ecclesiastical or

kitchen Latin. My pastor, like any other Chinese priest, juggled with both kuo-yu and kitchen Latin with equal nimbleness. In his mouth Latin would come to life, become a picturesque language. Speaking of our bishop of Nanchung one day, he said to me in Latin, "*Bene cognosco episcopum Paulum Wang: homo est pompaticus.*"

Mr. Chiang taught me a good deal about ancient China. Explaining passages in the *Ku-wen Kuan-chih* (*Anthology of Ancient Literature*), he would tell me the evolution of the terms "T'ien" (Heaven) and "Tao" (the Way) and the religious and philosophical systems of the Chou and Han dynasties.

After three months at Litupah I was recalled to Sishan. Fr. Raphael Vinciarelli wrote me that the Abbot of St. André had decided to send us, Fr. Raphael and me, to Nanking, to prepare the founding of a new monastery on a piece of land offered by Mr. Lo Pa Hong, the great Shanghai philanthropist. The news did not take me off-guard. I knew for quite a while that Fr. Peter-Celestin Lou Tseng-Tsiang had been working for this purpose on his friends in Nanking and on Mr. Lo Pa Hong (I knew Fr. Lou Tseng-Tsiang very well. To write my thesis on political science and diplomacy, I had had to study closely his personality and the time when he was Prime Minister and then Minister for Foreign Affairs and head of the Chinese Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference.) I was rather doubtful about his intentions with regard to the Nanking deal. But as I had not been consulted one way or the other, and since the Abbot had given me the order to go to Nanking, there was no choice except to carry out his order. Besides, I had the strong feeling that Fr. Raphael would not be sorry to leave Sishan.

It was in February 1936, cold and dreary at Sishan—cold in both sense of the term. The Abbot's decision had affected diversely Fathers Gabriel, Hildebrand, and Emile. Upon my return to Sishan Fr. Gabriel was absent. He had gone "to take the air" at Suining. I was not to see him again. While at Suining he was stricken with a malignant typhus. Brought back to the monastery he died on April 9, after a long and painful agony.

Appointed Prior, Fr. Raphael told me to leave alone for Nanking.

## VII

FATHER LUCAS CHANG, administrator of the cathedral of Nanking, and Father John Ly, his assistant, received me with open arms. We were in the end of May, and they were getting ready to go to Peking for the consecration of Bishop Paul Yupin, archbishop-elect of Nanking.

Meanwhile I went to see Mr. Lo Pa Hong in Shanghai. He recommended patience. The legal ownership of the land was being contested, he said, without further elaborating on the subject. From Fr. Chang, however, I learned that the land was occupied by the government and it would be difficult to recover it. I suspected that Mr. Lo Pa Hong was using Fr. Lou Tseng-Tsiang's name to put pressure on the government, though Fr. Lou's name did not seem to impress anyone.

Shortly after the arrival of Archbishop Yupin I mentioned the matter to him in hopes that he would take it up with the proper authorities. But I sensed right away that he was not interested in monastic foundations. He would gladly welcome the cooperation of individual Benedictine monks as officials in the

Bishop's House, as college teachers, etc., but not as an independent religious community enjoying canonical exemption. Fr. Lou Tseng-Tsiang's name left him cold. At Fr. Lou's request I presented him with a case containing relics of St. Paul, authenticated by the Holy Office. Keep it for yourself, he said, without so much as opening the case.

On this occasion Archbishop Yupin appointed me English and French language secretary. I made no objection. It was a way of paying my board and lodging at the Bishop's House.

Between autumn of 1936 and Spring of 1937 I called on Mr. Lo Pa Hong several times. On one of these visits I found him rather sullen. "do you think," he asked me bluntly, "that Fr. Lou Tseng-Tsiang really intends to return to China?"—"I don't know", I answered. At this he gave me to understand that if Fr. Lou was not to return to China, a monastic foundation in Nanking did not interest him, Lo Pa Hong.

What had happened between the Abbaye de St. André on the one hand, and Lou Tseng-Tsiang and Lo Pa Hong on the other? Neither Fr. Raphael nor the Abbot of St. André had kept me informed. I was in pitch darkness. Vis à vis Mr. Lo Pa Hong my situation became most embarrassing. Not for long, however.

In March 1937, friends in the government confidentially told me that Japan was massing troops in Korea and Manchuria, ready to invade North China. In May they further revealed that the government offices to which they belonged were about to leave Nanking for Hankow. I wrote to Fr. Raphael. In answer he advised me to return to Szechwan at once. No sooner had I got back to Sishan than the Sino-Japanese war broke out.



## VIII

WHILE I WAS AT NANGKING, three Belgian confreres arrived at Sishan. They were Fathers Eleutherius Winance, Vincent Martin, and Wilfrid Weitz. I found them at Suining, learning Chinese. My joy was all the greater because their living outside the monastery appeared to me to be an opening towards a new era, full of promise for our monastic venture in China. I regretted only one thing, namely, that they should be concentrated in the same city and the same house. One cannot know a country unless one lives with its people. A truth clear as noon-day! And yet how many missionaries have overlooked or forgotten it, much to their own loss and the loss of Christianity. In order to avoid the same mistake, I asked permission to stay with Fr. Andreas Long, pastor of Anyueh, 120 li farther North. There was not a single foreigner in this town of 20,000 inhabitants, and Fr. Long knew neither English nor French.

Mr. Yang Chung-hsiang, director of the Anyueh post office, offered to help me in my studies. He took up where Mr. Chiang of Litupah had left off over a year before. He was well versed in everything Chinese. But I did not stay long enough to benefit by his teaching as much as I wanted to. The lightning-like advance of the Japanese disturbed me. It was the summer of 1938, and already Peking, Nanking, and Hankow had fallen one after the other. The next target would be Chungking, where the Chinese government had just taken refuge. What would become of our community? I went back to Sishan for consultation with Fr. Raphael.

My arrival coincided with the arrival of Archbishop Yupin and Father Vincent

Lebbe in Chungking. The Archbishop had brought along some of his priests and all the lay personnel of his Nanking household. In agreement with Fr. Lebbe, the founder of the Catholic daily *I-Shih Pao*, he was in the process of reviving it as a means to serve China against the Japanese invaders. On the other hand, Fr. Lebbe, who had reorganized his Congregation of the Little Brothers of St. John-Baptist into a medical-corps attached to the 3rd Army Group, was recruiting volunteers for a Catholic “*Tu-Tao T’uan*”—sort of special mission charged with the duty of arousing the patriotic sentiments of the peasant population behind the lines.

In the name of patriotism, Archbishop Yupin requested Fr. Raphael Vinciarelli to send me to Chungking to head the foreign section of the editorial office of *I-Shih Pao*. On the other hand, with Fr. Raphael’s consent, Fr. Vincent Martin offered his services to Fr. Lebbe’s medical corps. He joined Fr. Lebbe in Chengtu to take off together for the Chungtioshan front. On the same day I left for Chungking.

## IX

CHUNG KING WAS SWARMING with people, literally. Within one or two years its population had swelled up tenfold—from 150,000 inhabitants in 1936 to well over a million in 1938. And the influx of refugees continued. One could meet people from all coastal provinces and hear all dialects and accents. The refugees, mere merchants and laborers as well as intellectuals and government officials, could speak kuo-yu, but the “Mandarin” spoken by people from Canton, Foochow, Ningpo, or Shanghai is like Greek or Hebrew . . . Had I not lived in Nanking

(where there were also “men from every nation under the heaven”) I would have thought I was in the Tower of Babel!

Surprise, consternation almost, the *I-Shih Pao* was not to be published in Chungking but in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province! However, Archbishop Yupin advised me to stay awhile in Chungking so as to acquaint myself with the government machinery. He introduced me to some high officials, among whom Mr. Hsieh Kuan-sheng, Minister of Justice, and Dr. Hollington K. Tong, Vice-Minister of Information.

The Bishop of Chungking, the Most Rev. F.-X. Jantzen, and his procurator, Fr. Louis Brun, were most friendly to me. They insisted upon my staying in the Bishop's House. “Remain with us”, they said, “for as long a time as you wish.” I remained one month—the time required to know the working of the huge administrative machinery. Then I joined the *I-Shih Pao* staff in Kunming.

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Yunnan province, whose capital Kunming was, bordered on Burma and Indo-China. Its high mountains, its great distances, its lack of modern highways—all those circumstances conduced to its almost complete isolation from the rest of China. The governor, the war-lord Long Yun, ruled over the province like an independant monarch. He had vowed allegiance to the central government, but up to the time I came, his allegiance was still purely nominal.

The city of Kunming, though remote from everything, reminded me of Chuhsien and Anyueh, so strongly did its wooden structures and cobble-stone streets evoke ancient China. What was more striking, the language spoken was

the “Peking Mandarin” scarcely adulterated. This abnormalcy, Fr. Joseph Sun, a Yunnanese priest, explained to me, owed its origin to the history of the city. After the invasion of China by the Manchus in 1644, Prince Kuei-Wang, pretender to the Ming throne, took refuge in Yunnan and established his court at Kunming, whence he went on waging a war of resistance until his death in 1662. “The present inhabitants of Kunming”, Fr. Sun told me, “are the descendants of Prince Kuei-Wang's men.”

The diocese of Kunming was vacant. After a long squabble with his missionaries because of his “Lebbist ideas”, Belgian Bishop Georges de Jongh had been obliged to resign. [“Lebbist ideas”, after Fr. Vincent Lebbe. Since his arrival in China in the 1900's, Fr. Lebbe had been campaigning vigorously against political encroachment and in favor of the establishment of native Chinese hierarchy.] The diocese was administered by an elderly French missionary, Fr. Louis Lebon. Lebon was not his real name but he was really good to everybody—even to me. Like Bishop Jantzen of Chungking, he offered me hospitality at the Bishop's House and put the bishop's reception room at my disposal for receiving guests.

The whole staff of the *I-Shih Pao*, priests and laymen, was housed at the girl's high school a mile or so from the Bishop's House. Archbishop Yupin, who had to remain in Chungking as a member of the Legislative Yunan, was represented by Fr. Niu Jo-Wong. Good writer and good administrator, Fr. Niu fulfilled at the same time the office of editor of the newspaper.

But the newspaper was still waiting to be reborn... It would not be published in Kunming, I was told, unless the central

government should be forced to give up Chungking and to entrench itself in Yunan province. This eventuality looked more remote than a month before, when according to intelligence reports from Hankow the Japanese were about ready for an all-out assault on Szechwan province.

Pending further developments Fr. Niu organized public lectures and evening classes by members of his staff—to keep them from boredom and to pay their salaries. I taught English four times a week—twice at the boy's high school and twice at the girl's high school. The rest of the time, I would visit temples and palaces; in company with Fr. Joseph Sun I'd go on excursion to the West Lake, up the mountains, and into the Lolo country. The Lolos were an aboriginal tribe to which Fr. Sun belonged on his mother's side. He informed me that the aborigines were still quite numerous in Yunnan, particularly in the district of Tali, terminus of the Burma Road. As in Szechwan and Sikang, they were divided into different tribes—Lolo, Sifan, Tsangpu, Mosu, Miao, Yao, Hsia, etc., each having its own peculiar customs and language, entirely different from the customs or language of the Han or Chinese proper. Father Sun could distinguish people of different tribes by the apparel they were wearing. He claimed that Governor Long Yun was a half Lolo like himself.

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Life in Kunming was pleasant and instructive. But it wasn't in pursuit of such a life that I had left Sishan. So I told Fr. Niu that I'd rather return to Chungking, where I could better serve the country. He referred the matter to Archbishop Yupin. Without waiting for the Archbishop's answer I took off for China's Wartime Capital, as Chungking was called.

## X

A FEW DAYS AFTER I ARRIVED in Chungking in June 1939, Dr. Hollington Tong invited me to dinner at his private residence. There were three other guests, all officials of the Ministry of Information—Mr. H.G. Tseng, Director of the Department of International Information, Mr. James Shen, Chief of the English section of the same department, and Mr. Jimmy Wei, chief of Liaison with foreign correspondants in Chungking. As a Christian (Methodist), Dr. Tong was particularly interested in the Christian Missions in the Southwest (Szechwan, Sikang, Kweichow, Yunnan).

After dinner Dr. Tong introduced us into the living room. He then told me that Madame Chaing Kai-shek, who read French quite easily and spoke it quite fluently, would like to have someone, preferably a Catholic priest, to teach her French conversation two or three times a week. The priest, he added, could eventually put out a weekly French bulletin according to materials provided by Mr. Tseng's office. The purpose of the bulletin would be to render service to French-speaking missionaries in the Southwest by keeping them abreast of the government's war efforts. Could I find such a priest? Dr. Tong allowed me a week to think things over. Meanwhile I requested Fr. Raphael to send us Fr. Wilfrid Weitz to serve as Madame Chaing's teacher; and I begged Bishop Jantzen to let me have Fr. Blanchard, the erstwhile pastor of Hochuan, north of Chungking, as assistant editor of the French Bulletin. Graciously, the Bishop complied, not, however, without warning me of Fr. Blanchard's "touchy character". So as to make our task easier, he put at our disposal a corner of



the Catholic Hospital for war-wounded, located halfway between the Bishop's House and the Ministry of Information.

Hurriedly set-up, our office bore no sign whatever. The address, the Catholic Hospital for War-Wounded. The bulletin came out in early July 1939 under the name of "Le Correspondant Chinois". Dr. Tong congratulated us; so did Bishop Jantzen. Two months later Madame Chiang, who came incognito to inspect our improvised installation, declared herself satisfied with Fr. Wilfrid.

Shortly before Christmas, Generalissimo and Madame Chiang invited us to dinner, Fr. Wilfrid and me. This first dinner with the Chaings was a remarkable event. Apart from Dr. Tong and us two, there was no other guest, but Madame Chiang's two elder sisters — Madame H. H. Kung and Madame Sun Yat-Sen — were present. Holding Madame Sun's hands in hers, Madame Chiang said to me, "Fr. Yang, I present my Red sister!" Everybody laughed; Madame Sun smiled. The laughter did not subside until the Generalissimo gave the signal for grace. Like the others, I bowed my head and joined my hands in a prayerful attitude, but I couldn't utter a word to God, so distracted was I by Madame Chiang's playful remark. I knew that out of respect for her illustrious husband's memory Madame Sun had been leaning toward Mao Tse-tung as Mao Tse-tung had been leaning on her; what I did not know was that this fact notwithstanding, the relations between the two sisters were still so warm.

The dinner party was relaxed and comfortable. After the Thanksgiving prayer Madame Chiang presented us with Christmas gifts for Sishan — a box of candies, a radio set, and a young Irish setter. Madame Kung whispered to me, "After

the New Year I should like you to take me to the Catholic orphanage. I want to do something for the Sisters and their poor children."

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Thus all went on smoothly — at least until May 1940, when the Japanese began their large-scale and ruthless air raids on Chungking. Once we had to remain more than ten hours in a pitch dark and stuffy shelter, dug through a thick wall of rock. When we came out we couldn't find the hospital. An incendiary bomb had reduced it into ashes. From the business center miles away we could see flames shooting up like thousands of rockets. Above us the sky was aglow, round about us, we could hear nothing but the heart-breaking cries of terrified children, the wailing of bereaved women, and the moaning of wounded and dying men. It wasn't a war, it was an infernal butchery, which alone psychotic sammurais could perpetrate — and they could perpetrate it to their heart's content, for Chungking was utterly defenseless, except for the steep mountains that encircled it and the Yangtse Gorges that sealed it from possible naval attack.

From May 1940 to December 1941 our office moved five times. Air raids or no air raids, "Le Correspondant Chinois" had to come out every Thursday. For safety's sake, we would work by night under the flickering light of a candle or a crude-oil lamp. We ate as we could; we slept whenever it was possible and wherever there was room — sometimes we did not sleep at all.

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After Pearl Harbor, China followed in the footsteps of the United States by declaring war on the Axis.

On one Spring day of 1942, Dr. Tong invited me to dinner at the Ministry of Information. To my great surprise I found there Mr. Wang Shih-chieh, Minister of Information, General Shang Chen, Minister of National Defense, and General Tai Li, Chief of the Security Police. I felt like “an ant on a hot stove”, as we say in Chinese. The table was presided over by Mr. Wang but the conversation was conducted by Dr. Tong. The two Generals hardly said a word. Dr. Tong revealed to me that the government was expecting the arrival of an American military mission. The ministry of National Defense needed hundreds of interpreters. Candidates would soon be recruited among college students by means of competitive examination. Could I be one of the examiners? Each batch of recruits would be given a special and intensive training of three months. Could I join the teaching staff? The matter was urgent. If necessary I could put off publication of the French weekly. The unusually solemn manner in which Dr. Tong spoke allowed no bickering nor a negative answer on my part. I told him that I’d do my best “in order to avoid disappointing the Honorable Minister of National Defense”. General Chang Chen nodded approval; General Tai Li graced me with a smile. Still I left the place with a strange feeling of uneasiness and suspicion, due mainly to the unwonted presence of Tai Li, the most mysterious and the most dreaded man in the Chinese government.

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The recruits were lodged in a vacated military barracks. Lectures were given in the mess hall. I gave conversational English every afternoon from 2 to 4 o’clock. The

first batch of recruits was excellent. Carefully selected from among the best college students, they were all intelligent, attentive, and well-behaved. But they were the only ones I came in contact with. Before the end of the first quarter, two of them—the smartest—disappeared mysteriously. A student from Java told me secretly and in Indonesian that, denounced as Communist spies, they had been interrogated, beaten, and led away by Tai Li’s agents. I did not wait for the opening of the second quarter to tender my resignation to Dr. Tong, on pretext of overwork.

“When you have fully recovered,” Dr. Tong said, “I want you to help me with another project.”

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This time I settled in the basement of the rectory of a bombed-out church, loaned to Fr. Leo Ferrari, an American Franciscan representing the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Mario Zanin. It was damp and dismal, but it provided privacy.

Father Ferrari’s situation was rather ambiguous. For different reasons neither Bishop Jantzen nor Generalissimo Chiang recognized his official status. The bishop bore a grudge against the Apostolic Delegate, who had failed to notify him of Fr. Ferrari’s arrival; the Generalissimo could not forgive Archbishop Zanin for refusing to leave the occupied territory of China’s Wartime Capital. As a result, the good Fr. Ferrari could deal only with junior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I have said “good Fr. Ferrari”. Good he was indeed—always available, always ready to do anything for anyone. His residence was open to visitors, any visitors, twenty-four hours a day. I met there American journalists such as Theodore White of *Time* magazine and Harrison

Foreman of *New York Times*; American and Chinese Officers; American diplomats and Chinese government officials; Chinese Communists such as Thal Me Nang from Chou En-lai's Chungking headquarters, and those young men from the Hsin-Hua Book store, the main distributor of the Hsin-Hua daily news. Fr. Ferrari showed no interest at all in politics, whether Chinese or international. And he did not seem to care about his visitor's political persuasions or affiliations.

A good deal of tales and rumor circulated around the place. But one day I learned by chance that General Joseph Stilwell ("Vinegar Joe"), the Commander-in-Chief of the U. S. Forces in China, would withdraw them unless Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek came to terms with Mao Tse-tung and joined forces with him in a united front against the Japanese. The situation was critical, so I overheard, because the U. S. Embassy and all Americans in China were behind Stilwell.

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Dr. Tong summoned me to his office. "As I have told you, I want to discuss a project with you. Could you resume publication of the China Correspondant in an English monthly edition for distribution among U. S. service men?" I asked for twenty-four hours to answer—the time necessary for discussion with Bishop Jantzen and Fr. Ferrari; and, more important, to secure the cooperation of an American Passionist missionary, correspondant of "Sign" magazine—Fr. Cormac Shanahan.

The next day, all was settled. The English monthly was not to be anonymous like the French weekly. It would bear the name of Fr. Shanahan, "Executive editor", and mine "Editor-Publisher". Our official address would be that of Fr. Ferrari;

"Representative of the Apostolic Delegate." The articles would deal chiefly with religious and cultural questions and stories of human interest. The editorial alone would touch on political matters.

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In Mr. Tseng's office one day, I learned that the foreign journalists were planning to go on a trip to Yen-an, Shensi, the Chinese Communist stronghold. I encouraged Fr. Shanahan to go along as a "special correspondant of Sign magazine".

Upon his return Fr. Shanahan told me interesting things about Yen-an and the journalists' reaction. Most of the journalists had been won over by Mao Tse-tung. Soon they were likely to play up Yen-an's "agrarian reform" and denounce Chungking's "corrupt regime". This, Fr. Shanahan surmised, would have serious consequences on China's future, because the U. S. Embassy in Chungking and the State Department in Washington were already quite unfriendly towards the Chinese nationalists. Fr. Shanahan asked me if he shouldn't take up the problem in his coming editorial. "Absolutely not", was my firm answer. We were free to write about anything whatsoever, but there was a tacit agreement whereby we must abide at all cost—namely that we should refrain ourselves from saying anything critical about the United States or Yen-an.

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Fr. Shanahan's prognostic was quick to materialize. Soon thereafter Dr. Tong called me. "Come with me", he said, "we'll attend a tea party in honor of Madame Chiang."

All official China was on hand—the three Yuan (Executive, Legislative, and Judicial), the Cabinet, the General Staff.



Madame Chiang, usually warm, spirited, brilliant, looked rather tired and sad. Someone whispered in my ear, "Madame just came back from Washington, where she got a cool reception from President and Mrs. Roosevelt and slanderous comments from the press." Yet no one ventured the slightest reference to the incident. Everybody put on a happy look as though Madame Chiang's mission to America had been crowned with the greatest success.

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In early Autumn 1943, Fr. Shanahan told me sadly, "Taddy, my superior general recalls me to Boston. I must leave you within a month. A confrere will replace me as editor of the monthly." After all we had gone through in the last few years I became fatalistic. "Oh, well", I answered with a wry smile, "it's only another one of that doomsday prophecy of yours!"

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Right from the outset, I felt strongly that Fr. Caulfield had come not only to take Fr. Shanahan's place but also to reform our set-up and orientation. The China Correspondant is a Catholic Paper, isn't it? Well, then, it should be more Catholic in contents and outlook. It should avoid politics. It should be completely free from government interference. It should. . . It should. . . "So be it," said I to myself, "We have no one to help, and the work must go on."

It did go on for six or seven more months. Then one day, at the U. S. Military Mission H. Q., I discovered by chance that the last three issues of the Correspondant had not been distributed. Honesty obliged me to tell the truth to Dr. Tong. "To go on like this", I said to

him, "would be wasting time and money. Besides, deprived of Fr. Shanahan's collaboration, I feel no better than a disabled war veteran. I have been too long outside my monastic community. I need to rejoin my brothers in religion."

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During a "family dinner" at Dr. and Mrs. Tong's, Dr. Tong said to me, "In recognition of the services you have rendered us, Generalissimo and Madame Chiang offer you a trip to the United States." I wanted to say something but not a word could come out of my mouth. I was so flabbergasted. "Talk it over with your superior," Dr. Tong went on, "and then drop me a line. Take your time. There's no hurry."

Two days later, in company with Dr. Tong, I took leave of Generalissimo and Madame Chiang.

It was a cold, rainy day of November, 1944. Perched atop an open truck of the British Embassy, I shivered all the way from Chungking to Chengtu — some 250 miles of bumpy mountain road.

## XI

FR. RAPHAEL WELCOMED with enthusiasm the perspective of my going to the United States. He saw in it a providential sign in favor of a permanent removal of our monastery from Sishan (Nanchung) to Chengtu, and of the establishment, alongside the new monastery, of a Chinese and Western cultural study center. We had discussed this project with Bishop Rouchouse of Chengtu and friends in Chungking, particularly the Minister of Education and the Minister of Justice. We had reached the conclusion that funds were needed for the new venture, and that under prevailing

circumstances only in the United States could funds be raised with any success.

I embarked at Bombay, India, on a U. S. military transport ship, arriving in San Pedro, California, on May 3, 1945. Thanks to Abbot Alcuin Deutsch of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota, I was able to meet with bishops, Benedictine Abbots, college professors, and Catholic newspaper and magazine editors. They were all interested in China, though all were convinced that China could be saved only by carrying out at once the "agrarian reforms" mapped out

by Yen-an. They were echoing faithfully the voice of the big secular press (*New York Times*, *Time* magazine, *The Saturday Evening Post*, etc.), which presented the Chinese Communists as "agrarian reformers"—nothing more nor less.

Fr. Shanahan whom I went to see in Boston introduced me to Archbishop Cushing. I told the archbishop about our project. "What!" he cut me short, "Millions of Chinese peasants are dying of starvation because your stupid Chiang Kai-shek has hunted down the agrarian reformers, and you have the nerve to



speak to me about intellectual apostolate!" He stood up and showed me out.

Too long accustomed to being treated with consideration by the leaders of my ancestors' country, I could feel my blood boiling with a violent anti-clericalism. But I soon regained control of my emotions by reminding myself that in the presence of a bishop a beggar must always say, "thank you, your Excellency", even if "His Excellency" gave you nothing else than a resounding kick in the backside.

But most bishops and priests I met were even as courteous and generous as the Chinese bishops and priests. After ten months of this loathsome begging expedition I could return to Chengtu with enough money to build the main section of the new monastery.

## XII

THE NEW MONASTERY WAS inaugurated on March 21, 1949. But community life had begun three years earlier in an old Chinese house given us by Bishop Ronchouse, and the study center (called Institute of Chinese and Western Cultural Studies) had been in operation for a year or two.

Everybody was counting on us, Benedictine monks, to instill a new spirit, more dynamic, into the Church of Szechwan which a long-drawn war had more or less paralyzed. On the inauguration day of the monastery, Fr. Alphonse Poisson, made administrator of the Chengtu Diocese following Bishop Ronchouse's death in January 1949, unreservedly praised the monks for what they had already accomplished in the field of intellectual apostolate. Mr. Anoynet, the French Consul, recalled the "unique role" played by the

Benedictine Order in the development of Western civilization and expressed the conviction that we would succeed in our endeavor to bridge the gap between this civilization and the ancient civilization of China. Prof. Sun Fu-yuan of the National Szechwan University and dean Ly Yeouhsing of the Szechwan Provincial Academy of the Fine Arts expressed the same conviction. Buddhist Abbot Chuan-Hsi Fa-Shih congratulated himself on being elected to serve on the board of advisers.

I did not share in their optimism. Our program was over-ambitious, and none among us had the necessary Chinese intellectual training. Before I left for America, Mr. Hsieh Kuan-sheng, the Minister of Justice, said to me on this subject, "All the Fathers ought to study the Chinese language and culture for five or ten years." As a former Chinese university dean, Mr. Hsieh knew what he was talking about. But upon my return to Chengtu, Fr. Eleutherius Winance was teaching scholastic philosophy at the West China Union University; Fr. Wilfrid Weitz was teaching English at the National Szechwan University; and Fr. Werner P. De Morchoven was teaching the history of European art at the Szechwan Provincial Academy of Fine-Arts.

A teaching career undoubtedly is one of the most noble, and Chinese ecclesiastical authorities took pride in the fact that monks and priests were teaching at non-Catholic schools. But by experience I dare to say that it is impossible to prepare and teach college-level courses and study the Chinese language and culture at the same time. How many years of schooling has not a European or an American have to go through in order to gain a fair knowledge of the language and



culture of his own country. The Chinese language and culture are by far more difficult to learn. All the more so in our case because as foreigners and Catholic priests our Fathers were not accepted by the better non-Christian society, guardians of the authentic Chinese tradition. The only distinguished non-Christian family with which they were acquainted was that of Mr. Liu Ti-chiu, son of General Liu Ch'eng-hou, the retired governor of Szechwan. His sons came regularly to the monastery to receive drawing lessons from Father Werner; his eldest daughter brushed up her English with me in preparation for her college studies in the United States.

Mr. Hsieh Kuan-sheng was over-liberal in allowing us ten years as the maximum time to be well-versed in Chinese language and culture. That is the length of

time which takes a Chinese college graduate to specialize in any single branch of this 4,000-year old culture.

Fr. Alberic de Crombrughe, who fled to Hopachang following the last Japanese air raid on Chengtu, chose to remain with the inmates of the Home for the Aged in that secure mountain fastness.

Fr. Vincent Martin, back from the Chungtiosha front and a Japanese concentration camp, was badly in need of recuperation in Europe.

Only Fr. Emile Butruille continued to study classical Chinese (Ku-wen) and Chinese Buddhism, and he was laughed at as being "odd" . . . Actually, the really odd ones are those who refused to study Chinese culture because, they claimed, "it is pagan" and "there is nothing in it . . ."

Fr. Raphael Vinciarelli, being the Prior, did not have the leisure to devote himself to time-consuming studies.

As for me, well, the hectic life in Chungking, coupled with the begging tour of the United States, ended up by corroding my health. However, I resumed as best I could my oft-interrupted study of Chinese literature and philosophy, this time under the scholarly tutorship of Prof. Sun Fu-Yuan—two hours of lessons in the morning, and two hours of exercise in calligraphy in the afternoon. At night, I had to put up with coughing spells that were choking me. I did not say a word about this to anyone. But one evening the secret blew up. In the middle of supper, suddenly dark, coagulated blood gushed out of my lungs. Dr. Michael Siao rushed me out of the dining room and into the hospital.

Brutally, this accident brought my "Chinese adventure" to an end. ❄





## BOOK REVIEW

MARY KAUFFMAN, OBL.OSB

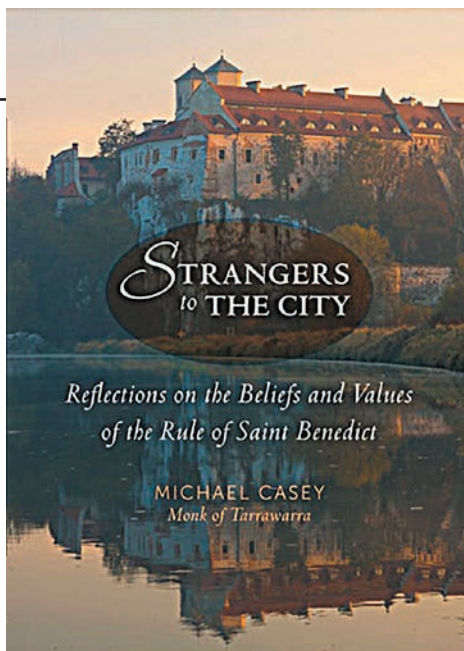
*Morning by morning I will silence  
all the wicked in the land,  
Uprooting from the city of the Lord  
all who do evil.* (Psalm 101: II, 8)

*What book of holy writers does not  
resoundingly summon us along the true  
way to reach the Creator?* (RB 73)

*By constant reading and long  
contemplation he had made his  
heart a library of Christ.*  
(St Jerome, regarding a friend)

THE PHRASES “CITY OF GOD” and “City of Man” come to us from Augustine, who used them to distinguish two opposing standards of human living: those in the City of God live by the Spirit and love of God; those in the City of Man by the secular standards of the flesh and an all-encompassing self-love. They are contrasting places of faith and unbelief, and will be unavoidably entangled with each other until the passing of this temporal world. It is to this City of Man that Michael Casey invites us to be strangers—to be foreigners, aliens, unfamiliar and out of place, as uncomfortable as possible with the customs and culture of the extreme secular mores of a society in which we must live. In *Strangers to the City*, he helps us find the path of Benedictine values that lead to a way of life that is more conformed to the City of God.

Australian author Michael Casey is a Cistercian of the Strict Observance; his book began as a series of lectures given to monastic groups and so is tailored to those who live a cenobitic life. Each of thirteen chapters, all drawn from the



### STRANGERS TO THE CITY

*Reflections on the Beliefs and Values  
of the Rule of Saint Benedict*

MICHAEL CASEY, OCSO

Rule of Benedict, is devoted to a particular virtue or value that underlies the Benedictine monastic life and lifestyle. He integrates both abstract theology and concrete actions, discussing and enlarging on the Christian theology embedded in each value and then various practical means of living it. He intersperses his text with quotes from a variety of spiritual writers, among them Merton, Cassian, Aquinas, and Bernard of Clairvaux, to give his readers as developed a perspective as possible on the importance of these traits in living in the spirit of Benedict. Casey is a masterful writer; I have read a few of his books, and each one—though never a quick and easy read—is a gift of insight, clarity, and beautiful prose. *Strangers* is packed with these, and I found each paragraph



to contain the fullness of a page, each chapter a book, and the whole book a library in their expressions of ideas, thoughts, and reflections.

His primary audience for the book is a monastic one, those who live in a community that is structurally designed and organized to replicate the City of God in earthly society as much as possible. How then are those of us who live in a culture that is definitely the City of Man, and perhaps becoming more so, to integrate these values into our lives? How do we, as Christians and some as Oblates, with one foot in each city, incorporate the values of the “strict observance” into our daily lives?

I have a cousin in Australia and friends in England, and over the years have collected some favorite cookbooks from these places. But many of the measurements and terms are foreign to American cooking—what is a damson, and what is a damson and apple tansy? Where do I get digestive biscuits? What is the difference between caster and demerara sugar, what kind of cheese is Caerphilly, and what is a rasher? And then there are all the measurements in grams and milliliters . . . and so it is with some of Casey’s recipes; for those of us who live outside the monastery, they don’t appear to be directly applicable to our secular lives. As I could modify the foreign recipes to fit American measurements and tastes, we can discern and modify his ingredients to fit our lives in the world while working

towards a deeper daily life in God. So for example, based on his first discussed trait of Distinctiveness, we do not live in a special environment or wear a unique habit as monks do; but we can make our homes a place that reflect a kind of holiness and display our values (can people who come to your home tell you are Christian when they enter?), and we can dress in ways that are not modeled on the latest fads and celebrities of our time, styles that are often faddish, immodest, or that ask us to spend too much for too little. We can emulate some of the peace of monastic ambience by our choices of what electronics are on and off, what kind of music we play, what and how much television we watch. We can create corners of prayer and contemplation in our homes and as much as possible follow the schedule of the monastic prayer hours, adapted to allow us to fulfill our vocations in the world. We are not asked to reject the world—indeed, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves—but are to ensure our priorities are directed toward a lifestyle that conforms to the mores of the city of God.

Each chapter discusses a trait that can thus be modified for us who live in the world while at the same time leading us to a fullness of the Gospel-based life. Casey always stresses balance and awareness for each virtue, as each one requires us to examine our lives in the light of ultimately living a Christ-centered life, every day and in all our activities. He



places a special emphasis on reading as part of spiritual formation: "The act of reading symbolizes something of what monastic life is all about: withdrawal from what is apparent to seek the reality that underlies appearances, in solitude, in silence, in recollection." He does not neglect the place of exterior practice in interior formation and places a high priority on regular private prayer and liturgical participation. From examining our entertainments and leisure to persevering on the path to Christ-centered contemplation, readers are encouraged and enlightened by this book in the richness and depths of direction it opens to us.

I have now read this book three times, and I am never finished. I have also found it fruitful to read it with others interested in following the Benedictine path as the perspectives of other readers has aided my own understanding and implementation of the qualities. Father Francis has wisely recommended this text to be read and discussed with those discerning a call to become an oblate of St Andrew's Abbey. *All* communities that share the common spiritual goal of Gospel living can benefit from this book, whether the group is oblate, parish, ministry participants, men, women, co-workers, or family. And "group" is emphasized—Casey is writing for *community*; we need each other to enable us both to live our virtues and know our weaknesses. (Certainly this is a lesson from Covid—"Communal liturgy must always play a central role"—our churches' closures may have damaged

this lay Catholic commitment; Zoom is a wonderful technological tool but creates an ersatz communal liturgy, very different from the act of worship in place together.) From the mundane to the mystical, from the priority of prayer to the love of liturgy, Casey expounds on the Rule of Benedict to help us incorporate these elements more fully into our lives.

After this reading, *Strangers to the City* left me ruminating on three words: conformity, integrity, and immersion. The herd mentality and impulse come naturally to humans, and we must stay alert and aware to ensure we are continually conforming ourselves to be citizens of the City of God rather than the City of Man; we must never cease working to create in our lives the city of the Lord, no matter how futile our own efforts sometimes seem. We must strive for integrity in our lifestyles, whatever they may be, by continually endeavoring through God's grace to integrate our actions with our consciousness of the virtues by which we are seeking to live. Our task is to work towards that "purity of heart" that continually focuses on God while we live in a secular 24-hour electronic world that invites constant distraction. Immersing ourselves in Scripture, which is immersing ourselves in Christ, will lead us to create our own inner "library of Christ." And as the Rule encourages us, we enlarge our own souls by reading the works of great spiritual authors, among which I'd include *Strangers to the City* by Michael Casey. ❖

magis quam lucem. **H** figurā gerit ppli iudeorū  
q̄ aduenientē dñm ⁊ sal  
uatorem nrm ad saluā  
dum eos. repulerūt eū  
a se dicentes. **N**on habe  
mus regē nisi cesarē. **H**ūc  
autē quis sit nescimus.  
**E**t magis dilerunt te  
nebras qm̄ lucē. **T**ūc cō  
iūt se dñs ad nos gētes.  
⁊ illuminauit nos seden  
tes in umbra mortis ⁊ te  
nebris. ⁊ in regione mor  
tis lux orta est nobis.  
**D**e hoc pplō saluator p  
p̄ham dicit. **P**opulus  
quem nō cognoui serui  
uit m̄. **E**t alibi **V**ocabo  
nō plebē meā. plebem  
meā. ⁊ nō dilectā meam

dilectam meam. **D**e illo  
autē pplō iudeorū qui ma  
gis amauerūt tenebras  
qm̄ lucem. dicit dñs in  
psalmo. **F**ili alieni men  
titi sunt m̄. fili alieni in  
ueterati sūt. ⁊ claudica  
uerūt a semitis suis. **E**t  
**P**redictor est **h**imolog  
⁊ ip̄a noctua et est  
Auis lucis fuga ⁊ solem ui  
dere non patitur.

**D**e coruo.







## 2021: UPCOMING RETREATS

Due to the ongoing effects of COVID-19, the remainder of this year's retreats are listed as tentative dates. We will be confirming each month's retreats as the year goes on. Please be aware that dates are subject to change due to the pandemic. We will post the latest retreat updates on our website "Retreats" page or our "Home" page. We thank you for your patience and understanding.

### JUNE

- 22 Release-Renew-Reinvent **Cancelled**
- 23-25 Discernment in Daily Life
- 25-27 Faith and the Human Condition:  
A Look into the Writings and  
Relationship between Adrienne von  
Speyr and Hans Urs von Balthasar
- 28-7/1 The Transformative Power of Story

### JULY

- 2-4 Marriage Enrichment
- 7-11 Benedictine Spirituality: The Rule of  
St. Benedict as a Wisdom Document  
to be Implemented in Every Age
- 16-18 Medieval Monastic Mystics  
and Their Worlds

- 22-25 Sacred Summer Dance  
Workshop: Moving to Reunite  
Our Hearts with Mother Earth
- 26-30 Paths to the Heart

### AUGUST

- 6-8 Who Am I? Meeting the  
Self in the Prodigal Son
- 10 Release-Renew-Reinvent
- 9-13 Three Witnesses to Higher Truth:  
20th Century Martyrs  
of the Nazi Regime
- 13-15 Thomas à Kempis as Spiritual Guide
- 20-22 In the Spirit of AA:  
A Twelve-Step Retreat
- 23-27 Hildegard of Bingen:  
Prophet of the Cosmic Christ

For complete and current details about all upcoming retreat offerings,  
including descriptions and presenter information, please visit our website:

**SAINTANDREWSABBAY.COM** (Click the Guest House link)

FOR RESERVATIONS, CALL THE RETREAT OFFICE: (661) 944-2178

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