



Adsum

Adsum is published by **Mater Dei Seminary** for the enjoyment of our families, friends, and benefactors.

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

In your kindness, please pray for the repose of the soul of Carlos Zepeda, the father of Fr. Zepeda, who passed away Monday, August 5th, in Guadalajara, Mexico. Fortunately, Father was able to return to Mexico from his parish in Denver (Our Lady of the Snow) after his Sunday Masses in time to visit with his father while he was still conscious. What a privilege and blessing for Mr. Zepeda to have a son as a priest and to be with him in his final journey to eternity! Carlos Zepeda was a devout Catholic and died a well-provided death with the Sacraments.

Unfortunately, Fr. Zepeda now has issues with his visa to return to the United States, but hopefully with expedited service, he will return soon to his parish.

As our 35th year of seminary classes at Mater Dei Seminary will commence shortly, we encounter a “good problem.” This September we will begin with twenty-one seminarians and our facilities will be filled almost to full capacity. Over and above this, our boarding students at Mater Dei Academy will number nearly forty (twenty-one boys and eighteen girls). All together, when we combine the priests, seminarians, religious Sisters, and boarders, there will be over seventy people each day to feed. Nevertheless, Divine Providence always provides for our needs, especially with large donations of fruit and vegetables. Our Midwest is the bread basket of the United States—“the fruited plains”—and year after year we have been truly blessed with truckloads of sweet corn, potatoes, peaches, and apples, to name a few items.

One of the challenges we have faced in recent years is the acquisition of seminary textbooks. One of



The late Mr. Carlos Zepeda and his wife with their son after priestly ordination

the great things about technology (when it works) is the ability to reprint manuals in philosophy, theology, and Canon Law, which are either no longer in print or very difficult to find, and/or are very expensive to purchase. Although it is a slow and tedious process, we have been able to reprint *Canon Law* by Archbishop Amleto Cicognani, *Canon Law* by Rev. Bouscaren and Rev. Ellis SJ, *The Administration of the Sacraments* by Rev. Nicholas Halligan OP, *Pastoral and Moral Theology* by Rev. Henry Davis SJ, and the collection of philosophy books by Monsignor Paul Glenn. Ideally these books are kept by our seminarians after their ordination as

helpful resources. It is so necessary for all of our priests to be well equipped with a good personal library.

On another note, one important means to foster priestly and religious vocations is to have our priests and religious interact with our youth. To this end, several summer camps for our Catholic boys and girls were held around the country. Fr. Sellner, Fr. Sandquist, Fr. Molina, and Fr. Craig organized a boys' camp in Wisconsin, near Our Lady of Grace Church by the Mississippi River; there were nearly 70 boys in attendance. Here in Omaha the Congregation of the

Mother of God (CMD) Sisters sponsored their 29th girls' summer camp with over 150 girls participating. With daily Mass, Rosary, and outdoor activities, the children had a wonderful time.

Thank you for your prayers and support over the years, which greatly contribute to the education and formation of our future priests!

With my prayers and blessing,
Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI



The Life of Fr. Pierre De Smet: Apostle of the Rocky Mountains

an excerpt by Fr. E. Laveille, SJ

Fr. De Smet crossed the Atlantic 19 times, bringing back funds and recruits to help with the missionary work. Between the years 1821 and 1871, he traveled 260,929 miles — nearly nine times the distance around the earth.

On his European travels, Fr. De Smet encountered great interest in his missionary work. He would always ask for a list of the Christian names of the children he met in Europe so that he could give these same names to the Indian children he would baptize on the other side of the globe.

Fr. De Smet was known to the Indians as “the white man whose tongue does not lie.” In 1862, having witnessed the terrible treatment of the Sioux that was perpetrated and/or allowed by the U. S. Government, Fr. De Smet wrote, “Heaven will mete out justice to a country that permits such atrocities.” Also: “The civil war is in my opinion a punishment, and, alas, little is being done to propitiate heaven.”

The Indians’ trust in Father De Smet was evident when a chief told the Methodists: “You wish to enrich your wives and children at our expense. The Black Robe has neither wife nor child; his heart is not divided; he lives only for God and the happiness of the people who surround his cabin.”

Fr. De Smet offered the first Mass ever offered in the Rocky Mountains (July 3, 1840). Again and again on his journeys the missionary would preach the Gospel, baptize, rectify marriages, hear Confessions and give Holy Communion. Very frequently he was edified by the excellent dispositions of the Indians and by the wonderful fruits which grace wrought in their souls.

After a long drought around 1863, a distressed tribe had asked “Black Robe” if he could make the rain come. Father De Smet replied that only the Great Spirit could do this. But he added: “Let us implore Him together and offer

our hearts. I will say the greatest of prayers (the Mass)!” The next day, the suppliants were blessed with rain for 24 hours, and after renewed prayers a few days later, a heavier shower followed, leaving green fields and the promise of a rich harvest.

Father De Smet was a true pioneer in every way. His devotion to the missions caused him to undergo many perils and hardships. A fellow priest said, “I lived with him for some time and more than once accompanied him on laborious journeys over bad roads, through bad weather

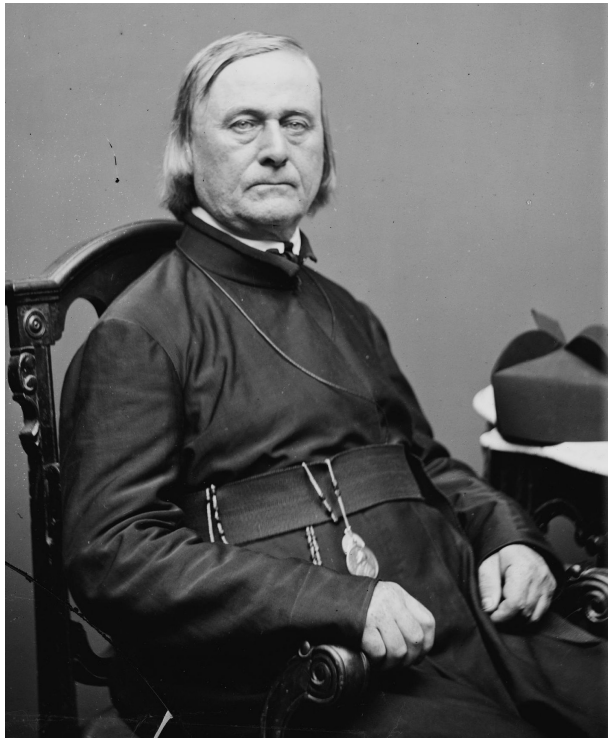
and countless other difficulties, and what always struck me was his unalterable cheerfulness and equanimity of temper.”

A fellow priest described a journey he made with Father De Smet to various tribes: “With my own eyes I saw the respect, love, and esteem in which he is held by the Indians, and which he richly deserves. One cannot fail to be touched by his charity and his tenderness for a race universally despised and persecuted. The Indians call him their Father, but his feelings for them are more those of a mother.”

United States Government agents marveled at the virtues of the new Christian Indians. One agent

wrote: “Thanks to the untiring labors of the missionaries, the Indians have made great progress in agriculture. They are being instructed in the Christian religion; they have abandoned polygamy, are pure in morals, and edifying in conduct. The work of these Fathers is truly marvelous.”

After a month of caring for sick and dying Indians during a cholera epidemic, Father De Smet had written: “To me was given the happiness of pouring the waters of Baptism upon the foreheads of 1586 children and adults, many of whom have since succumbed to the scourge, and whose eternal happiness is now assured.” Toward the end of his life Fr. De Smet wrote, “My heart, I admit, is ever with the Indians.”



Fr. Connell Answers Moral Questions

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

MILITARY ACTIVITIES CONTRARY TO THE LAW OF GOD

Question A: What course should be followed by a Catholic in the air corps if he is commanded to bomb a target which he knows is not a lawful military objective according to Catholic principles?

Question B: What advice should a Catholic chaplain give when such a case is submitted to him for judgment by the soldier in question?

Question C: Is it lawful for a young man to enter the air service if he realizes that he may be commanded to participate in activities forbidden by the law of God?

Answer A: If a soldier is commanded to do something he knows is forbidden by the law of God as interpreted by the Catholic Church, he must refuse to obey, no matter how grave the consequences. Even if he foresaw that he would be courtmartialed and perhaps punished by death, he would not be justified in violating the law of God -- for example, by directly bombing a group of noncombatants. It is interesting to note that the Nuremberg tribunal upheld the principle that "the fact that the defendant acted pursuant to order of his government or of a superior shall not free him from responsibility" (cf. Kenny, *Moral Aspects of Nuremberg* [Washington, 1949], p. 55). It is to be hoped that as a correlative of this principle our government would judge a soldier deserving of praise if he disobeyed a command in war when he is convinced in conscience that what is commanded is against God's law. However, if a soldier only doubts as to the lawfulness of what is commanded, he may and should obey, since it is a general principle that a subject is bound to submit to lawful authority unless he is sure that what is being required of him is sinful. Such would be the case of the airman who is told to bomb a military objective, but is not certain whether the advantages to his side will be sufficiently great to justify the concomitant destruction of a considerable number of noncombatants.

Answer B: If a soldier explicitly proposes to a chaplain a problem as to the morality of a mission assigned to him, the chaplain should give him a correct and definite answer, as far as this is possible, according to Catholic principles. Thus, if the young man asks about the morality of a direct attack on noncombatants, it is the duty of the chaplain to inform him that this is contrary to the divine law, and cannot be justified under any circumstances. However, when the chaplain is not consulted, he is ordinarily not bound to take the initiative in condemning a measure, even though he is certain that it is unlawful, since usually such a protest would be futile.

Answer C: Since not all the activities of our air force in war are opposed to the law of God, it is not forbidden to a young man to enter this branch of the service, as long as he is determined to take no part in any particular activities that are unlawful. However, it is most desirable that Catholics who enter the air corps (in which moral problems of warfare are most likely to arise) should receive from the priests assigned to their spiritual care adequate instructions as to the laws of God concerning the means and methods of waging war, and should be told that in the event of a conflict between the law of God and a military command, they must obey the law of God.

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MATER DEI SEMINARY
7745 Military Avenue
Omaha NE 68134-3356
www.materdeiseminary.org